Spirituality in the ICU

Deborah Cook
Critical Illness Triggers.....

- Existential questions about
  - purpose
  - meaning
  - relationships
  - destiny

- Spirituality attends to
  - matters beyond the physical
  - where hope, support, peace and comfort live
“The Patient is Dying, Please Call the Chaplain”: The Activities of Chaplains in One Medical Center’s Intensive Care Units

Philip J. Choi, MD, Farr A. Curlin, MD, and Christopher E. Cox, MD, MPH

J Pain & Symptom Mangmt 2015

- 6% ICU patients seen by chaplain
- 80% decedents seen by chaplain
- 1 day between consult and patient’s death
Objective: to explore contributions of spiritual care providers in healthcare

Setting: 2 tertiary care & 7 community Canadian hospitals

Methods: interviews, focus groups, document analysis; interpretive description of themes

Participants: 14 spiritual care providers & 7 spiritual care volunteers
Legitimizing the role

Crafting the role

Becoming part of the team

Spiritual Care Providers

Brokering diversity
Relevant Trends

• Globalization of information
• Diversification of religion
• Secularization of society
• Popularization of spirituality

….. Unprecedented spiritual plurality
A Definition of Spirituality

the aspect of humanity that refers to the way individuals seek and express meaning and purpose, and the way they experience their connectedness to the moment, to self, to others, to nature, and to the significant or sacred
Spirituality and/or Religiosity Have No Role
Spirituality but not Religiosity
Spirituality > Religiosity
Spirituality = Religiosity
Physician Views on **Spirituality**

**The Past**
- Obscure
- Ignored
- Avoided
- Outsourced

**The Future**
- Understood
- Acknowledged
- Embraced
- Integrated
National Consensus Project
For Quality Palliative Care

1) Structure and processes of care
2) Physical aspects of care
3) Psychological-psychiatric aspects of care
4) Social aspects of care
5) Spiritual-religious-existential aspects of care
6) Cultural aspects of care
7) Care of the imminently dying patient
8) Ethical-legal aspects of care
Who Else Says It Matters?

- **WHO**: spirituality as a core dimension of health, which may sustain people at times of distress
- **Joint Commission & National Quality Forum for Palliative Care**: spiritual care as a component of quality of care standards
- **ATS Policy Statement**: identifying spiritual needs is a core competency for ICU practitioners
- **Families of ICU patients**: often want their spiritual values incorporated into discussions, which is associated with family satisfaction
Goals of care conversations in 40 ‘religious conferences’ in 6 US centers

77% SDMs: spirituality was fairly/very important

Professional responses:
- review medical plan
- commitment to quality care
- empathetic statement or closed statement
- change the subject
The value and role of spiritual care clinicians in ICU:

- Support of patients, families and staff - not just when patients are dying

Nurses’ experience working with spiritual care clinicians:

- Relating to culturally and spiritually diverse persons - knowing the right thing to say - and do

ICU nurses provide spiritual care:

- Intention, presencing, acts of compassion

Bone et al, 2016
It Matters to ICU Patients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I FEEL:</th>
<th>sad</th>
<th>angry</th>
<th>happy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>afraid</td>
<td>✋️</td>
<td>😡</td>
<td>😊</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>worried</td>
<td>😞</td>
<td>😞</td>
<td>😊</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uncasey</td>
<td>😞</td>
<td>😞</td>
<td>😊</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>terrified</td>
<td>😞</td>
<td>😞</td>
<td>😊</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shocked</td>
<td>😞</td>
<td>😞</td>
<td>😊</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nervous</td>
<td>😞</td>
<td>😞</td>
<td>😊</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLEASE:</th>
<th>prayer</th>
<th>blessing</th>
<th>song</th>
<th>poetry</th>
<th>talk with me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Siddur</td>
<td>Tanakh</td>
<td>Tefillin</td>
<td>candles</td>
<td>help me with a decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>תדרי</td>
<td>תננך</td>
<td>תפילין</td>
<td>מטרלים</td>
<td>עזרתי לי ב再到</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christian Bible</td>
<td>Quran</td>
<td>make an altar</td>
<td>chanting</td>
<td>visualization /meditation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>תְנַנְדִּיק</td>
<td>القرآن</td>
<td>מעשה</td>
<td>שירת</td>
<td>תוד httpRequest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communion</td>
<td>Anointing</td>
<td>Confession</td>
<td>Rosary</td>
<td>read to me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ריון</td>
<td>סלקיה</td>
<td>בישוף</td>
<td>Rosary</td>
<td>בואתי להב.getInstance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>leave me alone</td>
<td>get my nurse</td>
<td>get my family</td>
<td>hold my hand</td>
<td>sit with me</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MY SPIRITUAL PAIN IS:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>none</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>extreme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Berning, Picture Guide to Improve Spiritual Care & Reduce Anxiety in MV Patients
Anxiety Before and After First Picture-Guided Spiritual Care With Chaplain Among Mechanically Ventilated ICU Adults (n = 25)

Blue Lines: connect individual before-after VAS scores. Red Line: mean change in VAS scores.
Overall Goal of The 3 Wishes Project

To improve the quality of the dying experience for patients and their families

3 Wishes Project
Wish Categories

- Humanizing the Environment
- Tributes
- Connections
- Rituals
- Paying It Forward
What is a Wish?

A wish is a Process.... And a Product

• A manifestation of hope
• An act of compassion
• A therapeutic connection
• A means to recognize the patient
• An example of dignity-conserving care
• An opportunity for reflection
• A vehicle for inter-professional care
• A transitional activity
• An expression of spirituality
• A secular prayer
There are times in life when we are called to be bridges - not a great monument spanning a distance and carrying loads of heavy traffic - but a simple bridge to help one person from here to there over some difficulty such as pain, fear, grief, loneliness, a bridge which opens the way for ongoing journey.”

-Joy Cowley
Some Spiritual Care Interventions

- Presencing
- Reflective listening
- Story telling
- Life review
- Reconciliations
- Celebrations
- Diaries/journaling
- Biofeedback
- Meditation

- Pet therapy
- Outdoor therapy
- Music therapy
- Touch therapy
- Dignity therapy
- Readings & rituals
- Counselling
  - Individual, group
  - Spiritual, grief
Reflections

• Medicine, in its fullest expression, may be a spiritual discipline
• The austere ICU setting can suppress spirituality
• Expressions and experiences of spirituality abound in the ICU

….. and can bring clinician humanity and compassion to the fore
Spirituality doesn’t have to be a black box.

.....It can be a bright light.