

## *The Prince of Wales Hospice, Pontefract*

# **GUIDELINES TO ASSESSMENT AND MEETING SPIRITUAL NEEDS**

### **AIM:**

How to discover and, if possible, alleviate spiritual and emotional distress and promote well being.

### **HOW:**

By showing patients, in all we do, that they are valued, that their dignity is respected and they will be told all that they want to know. Spiritual care is something we all give when we are fully attentive to another person.

By listening and conversation to be sensitive to signs of fear, anxiety, anger, guilt, doubt, regret, low self esteem, depression. (See signposts overleaf).

By exploring the causes of spiritual and emotional pain; e.g. causes could be family conflict, unfinished business, unresolved problems or a sense of failure.

By asking if their illness has affected the patient's beliefs.

By discovering what has helped the patient to cope with difficulties in the past.

By offering comfort and support if you feel that will be helpful.

By suggesting some ways of dealing with any presenting distress, e.g. "Would you like to talk to the chaplain, your priest/minister, or a social worker, solicitor, or anyone else?"

By indicating ways in which the Hospice team provides help, such as complementary and creative therapies, counselling, helpful literature and information.

By encouraging patients to think of the positive things in their lives, e.g. love of family and friends, happy times, work accomplished, hobbies and interests, music, holidays, and all that brings enjoyment and satisfaction.

By ensuring that patients and carers know there is religious ministry available for those who would find it helpful, e.g. Christian sacraments, prayer, blessing.

### **EVALUATION**

Any indication that signs of anxiety, fear and distress have lessened, and the patient's feelings of security and being valued have increased?

Do family carers feel content that the Hospice is doing all it can to promote the patient's well being?

Review original presenting needs and identifying areas of concern not dealt with.

# **SIGNPOSTS TO SPIRITUAL AND EMOTIONAL DISTRESS**

## **Fear**

- Arising from pain
- Of dying
- Of being alone with no-one to notice or care
- Of not being
- Of leaving family and friends
- Of the unknown

## **Guilt**

- Am I being punished for doing wrong
- I have not done all the good I intended
- I am not on good terms with certain loved ones/friends
- I am causing other people a lot of trouble

## **Anxiety**

- What will happen to ... partner/children/friends/dependants?
- Who will look after the house, feed the cat, budgie ....?
- Who will inherit my property/valuables/money?
- Will the medicine affect my brain, harm my body or spirit?
- That I'm not good enough to go to heaven. Will I go to hell?

## **Anger**

Why me? Why our family?

That there is no justice in the work, life is so unfair.

That my doctor / the hospital / consultant, didn't do something to prevent/cure my illness.

That a loving God allows such horrible things to happen.

That I am not better, stronger and less scared.

That life is so short and I have still so much I want to do.

That I am still here.

## **Value**

- Does my life have any value? Look at me now!
- Is there any meaning? We're born, we die – end of story.
- How can God care about each person; there are billions?
- I've never done anything great, important or very good.
- I'm no-one special – unimportant.
- Who will miss me when I'm gone? No-one's indispensable.

## **Regret**

- I wish I'd spent more time with the children ..... visited cousins, been a better wife/husband
- If only I'd .....

## **Depression**

- Not wanting to live, not interested in anything any more.
- Feeling worthless, everyone is against me, no-one loves me.