

Eight Spiritual History Tools

The function of a spiritual history tool is to identify “the specific religious needs and resources of the patient” (Jankowski et al., 2011, pp. 106-107). Spiritual history tools should be: brief, easy to remember, obtain appropriate information, patient-centred, and validated as credible by experts (LaRocca-Pitts, 2012, p. 27). The aim is not to fix anything, only to understand what a person believes and how their beliefs can facilitate positive coping (LaRocca-Pitts, 2012, p. 26). A range of spiritual history tools are available to facilitate an awareness of a client’s spirituality and its potential effect on their care. Eight tools are detailed below.

1. The **SPiRiT Model** (Maugans, 1997, p.12; Massey et al., 2004, pp. 215-216)

- Spiritual belief system
 - Do you have a formal religious affiliation?
 - Can you describe this?
 - Do you have a spiritual life that is important to you?
- Personal spirituality
 - Describe the beliefs and practices of your religion that you personally accept.
 - Describe those beliefs and practices that you do not accept or follow.
 - In what ways is your spirituality/religion meaningful for you?
 - What is the importance of your spirituality/religion in daily life?
- Integration and involvement in a spiritual community
 - Do you belong to any spiritual or religious group or community?
 - How do you participate in this group/community?
 - What importance does this group have for you?
 - What types of support and help does or could this group provide for you in dealing with health issues?
- Ritualised practices and restrictions
 - What specific practices do you carry out as part of your religious/spiritual life?
 - What activities or practices does your religion encourage, discourage or forbid?
 - To what extent have you followed these guidelines?
- Implications for medical care
 - Are there specific elements of medical care that your religion discourages or forbids?
 - To what extent have you followed these guidelines?
 - What aspects of your religion/spirituality would you like to keep in mind as I care for you?
- Terminal events planning
 - Are there particular aspects of medical care that you wish to forgo or have withheld because of your religion/spirituality?
 - Are there religious or spiritual practices or rituals that you would like to have available in the hospital or at home?
 - Are there religious or spiritual practices that you wish to plan for at the time of death, or following death?

- As we plan for your medical care near the end of life, in what ways will your religion and spirituality influence your decisions?
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2. The FICA Spiritual History Tool (Puchalski & Romer, 2000, p.131; Massey et al., 2004, pp. 216-217; McClung et al., 2006, p. 154; Saguil & Phelps, 2012, p. 548)

- Faith, belief, meaning
 - Do you consider yourself spiritual or religious?
 - Do you have spiritual beliefs that help you cope with stress?
 - Importance of religious/spiritual beliefs and practices
 - What importance does your faith or belief have in your life?
 - Have your beliefs influenced how you take care of yourself in this illness?
 - What role do your beliefs play in regaining your health?"
 - Community of belonging
 - Are you part of a spiritual or religious community?
 - Is this of support to you and how?
 - Is there a group of people you really love or who are important to you?
 - Addressing issues while in care
 - How would you like me to address these issues in your care?"
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3. The HOPE Model (Anandarajah & Hight, 2001, pp. 84-85; Massey et al., 2004, pp. 217-218; Saguil & Phelps, 2012, p. 548)

- Sources of Hope
 - What is there in your life that gives you internal support?
 - What are your sources of hope, strength, comfort, and peace?
 - What do you hold on to during difficult times?
 - What sustains you and keeps you going?
- Organised religion
 - Do you consider yourself to be part of an organized religion or religious/spiritual community?
 - How important is that for you?
 - What aspects of your religion are helpful and not so helpful to you?
- Personal spirituality and practices
 - Do you have personal spiritual beliefs that are independent of organised religion? What are they?
 - What kind of relationship do you have with God?
 - What aspects of your spirituality or spiritual practices do you find most helpful to you personally?
- Effects on medical care and end of life issues
 - Has your current situation affected your ability to do the things that usually help you spiritually or affected your relationship with God?

- Is there anything that I can do to help you access the resources that usually help you?
- Are you worried about any conflicts between your beliefs and your medical situation/care decisions?
- Are there any specific practices or restrictions I should know about in providing your medical care?
 - If patient is coping well, then either support and encourage or reassess at a later date as patient's situation changes.
 - If patient is coping poorly, then 1) depending on relationship and similarity in faith/beliefs, provide direct intervention: spiritual counselling, prayer, Sacred Scripture, etc., 2) encourage patient to address these concerns with their own faith leader, or 3) make a referral to the hospital chaplain for further assessment.

4. CSI-MEMO (Koenig, 2002, p. 490)

- **CS** - Do your religious or spiritual beliefs provide **Comfort** and support or do they cause **Stress**?
- **I** - How would these beliefs **Influence** your medical decisions if you became really sick? Do you have any beliefs that might interfere or conflict with your medical care?
- **MEM** - Are you a **Member** of a religious or spiritual community and is it supportive?
- **O** - Do you have any **Other** spiritual needs that someone should address?

5. The FAITH Model (King, 2002)

- Do you have a **Faith** or religion that is important to you?
- How do your beliefs **Apply** to your health?
- Are you **Involved** in a church or faith community?
- How do your spiritual views affect your views about **Treatment**?
- How can I **Help** you with any spiritual concerns?

6. FAITH (Neely & Minford, 2009, p.183)

- Faith/spiritual beliefs
 - Do you have any particular faith, religious or spiritual beliefs?
 - What gives your life meaning?
 - What helps you cope in times of stress or illness?
- Application
 - In what ways do you apply your faith in your daily life?
 - Do you belong to a particular church or community?
 - Is prayer or meditation important to you?
- Influence/Importance of faith in life, in this illness and on health care decisions.
 - How do your faith and spiritual beliefs influence your life? Are they
 - important to you?

- How do your faith and spiritual beliefs influence you in this illness? Have
 - they altered your attitude or behaviour?
 - Has this illness influenced your faith?
 - Do your beliefs influence or affect your health care decisions that would
 - be helpful for me to know about?
 - Talk/Terminal events planning
 - Do you have anyone you can trust to talk to about spiritual or religious issues?
 - Do you have any specific requests if you were to become terminally ill?
 - Help
 - Is there any way I or another member of the health care team can help you?
 - Do you require assistance or help with prayer?
 - Would you like to speak to a chaplain?
 - Would you like to discuss spiritual issues or your beliefs with your doctor?
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7. FACT (LaRocca-Pitts, 2012, pp. 29-30)

- Faith (or beliefs)
 - What is your **Faith** or belief?
 - Do you consider yourself a person of Faith or a spiritual person?
 - What things do you believe that give your life meaning and purpose?
 - Active (available, access, applicable)
 - Are you currently **Active** in your faith community?
 - Are you part of a religious or spiritual community?
 - Is support for your faith **Available** to you?
 - Do you have **Access** to what you need to **Apply** your faith (or your beliefs)?
 - Is there a person or a group whose presence and support you value at a time like this?
 - Coping (or comfort), conflicts (or concerns)
 - How are you **Coping** with your medical situation?
 - Is your faith (your beliefs) helping you **Cope**?
 - How is your faith (your beliefs) providing **Comfort** in light of your diagnosis?
 - Do any of your religious beliefs or spiritual practices **Conflict** with medical treatment?
 - Are there any particular **Concerns** you have for us as your medical team?
 - Treatment plan
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8. The OPEN INVITE - “a patient-focused approach to encouraging a spiritual dialogue” (Saguil & Phelps, 2012, p. 549)

- Open the door to conversation
 - May I ask your faith background?
 - Do you have a spiritual or faith preference?
 - What helps you through hard times?

- Invite the patient to discuss spiritual needs
 - Do you feel that your spiritual health is affecting your physical health?
 - Does your spirituality impact the health decisions you make?
 - Is there a way in which you would like me to account for your spirituality in your health care?
 - Is there a way in which I or another member of the medical team can provide you with support?
 - Are there resources in your faith community that you would like me to help mobilize on your behalf?

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