

Comparison of the Content of the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations' "Frequently Asked Questions" Web Page on Spiritual Assessment Between 2004 and 2008

Compiled by John Ehman

January 01, 2004

Q: Does the Joint Commission specify what needs to be included in a spiritual assessment?

A: Spiritual assessment should, at a minimum, determine the patient's denomination, beliefs, and what spiritual practices are important to the patient. This information would assist in determining the impact of spirituality, if any, on the care/services being provided and will identify if any further assessment is needed. The standards require organization's to define the content and scope of spiritual and other assessments and the qualifications of the individual(s) performing the assessment.

Examples of elements that could be but are not required in a spiritual assessment include the following questions directed to the patient or his/her family:

- Who or what provides the patient with strength and hope?
- Does the patient use prayer in their life?
- How does the patient express their spirituality?
- How would the patient describe their philosophy of life?
- What type of spiritual/religious support does the patient desire?
- What is the name of the patient's clergy, ministers, chaplains, pastor, rabbi?
- What does suffering mean to the patient?
- What does dying mean to the patient?
- What are the patient's spiritual goals?
- Is there a role of church/synagogue in the patient's life?
- How does your faith help the patient cope with illness?
- How does the patient keep going day after day?
- What helps the patient get through this health care experience?
- How has illness affected the patient and his/her family?

November 24, 2008

Q: Does the Joint Commission specify what needs to be included in a spiritual assessment?

A: No. Your organization would define the content and scope of spiritual and other assessments and the qualifications of the individual(s) performing the assessment.

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