

SPIRITUAL CARE NONRELIGIOUS

Appendix A

Hebrew SeniorLife Spiritual Assessment Model (©HSL 2015)

1. LOVE and BELONGING *hesed*

The need to love and be loved; to belong; to feel a connection with family, friends, community, people, and/or God. This often presents as loneliness.

Spiritual Care focus: Offering relationship, appreciation, affection, facilitating connections to others (individuals and groups). Nurturing a sense of relatedness, a feeling of being interwoven in the fabric of life, and held by the ongoing kindness of people and/or God.

2. FORGIVENESS and RECONCILIATION *teshuvah u'mekhila*

The need to forgive and to be forgiven, to heal broken relationships with people, self, institutions, the world, and/or God, and to address any unfinished business. This often presents as guilt.

Spiritual Care focus: Offering rituals and liturgies of forgiveness, and seeking closure and/or reconciliation in relation to significant others. Working to attain wholeness through forgiveness.

3. TRUST *emunah*

The need to find trust, or faith toward self, others, and/or God. This often presents as fear.

Spiritual Care focus: Reducing anxiety by being a non-anxious presence and by showing faithfulness in attendance and fidelity to promises. Exhibiting full acceptance of other and commitment to their well-being. Finding centeredness based in trust and faith that life is manageable or that comfort can be found in faith.

4. HOPE *tikvah*

The need to have hope in looking ahead. This often presents as despair.

Spiritual Care focus: Helping a person grieve old hopes and identify new hopes, and offering consistent relationship. Looking to the future with a sense that each new day can hold promise and meaning.

5. MEANING *kavanah*:

The need for one's life to matter, and to retain dignity. For one's actions, past, present, and future to have import. This often presents as feelings of meaninglessness or ennui.

Spiritual Care focus: Exploring the meaning of experiences, Offering opportunities for meaningful participation in daily life, to do life review, and possibly an ethical will. Fostering a commitment that life itself is meaningful.

6. GRATITUDE *hodayah*

The deep desire to express thankfulness in appreciation of the blessings of life.

Spiritual Care focus: Being fully present for a person as they verbalize, sing, write, pray, and smile in expression of gratitude. Receiving gratitude. Increasing awareness of deep seated joy in life's blessings, and offering thanks.

SPIRITUAL CARE NONRELIGIOUS

7. IDENTITY *neshamah*:

The need to continue living true to one's unique identity, and to not be confined or defined by one's illness or diminishment.

Spiritual Care focus: Exploring resources for knowing earlier identity, building on it in conversation and ritual, building a unique relationship with person. Helping a person sustain their unique spirit in the world.

(HSL, 2015)

SPIRITUAL CARE NONRELIGIOUS

Appendix B

The Verbatim

This verbatim conversation is adapted and shared with the permission of the student who wrote it (a male rabbinical student retired from the business world). All identifying information of the patient has been modified for purposes of confidentiality.

Chaplain Intern: “C”

Visit # with this person: 3

Time and length of visit: 15:30 | 40 minutes

What I want to learn from writing up this conversation: I have been finding it very difficult to get into spiritual conversation with men. No matter how many lines I put out there, it seems that I just can't bridge the gap. Having said that, I also know that there is something comforting about the companionship for the men, and perhaps it's just me needing to learn how to be that non-anxious presence and accepting whatever each man has to give.

The Person

Person's pseudonym: Max

Institution and unit: [a nursing home]

Date of admission: 3 years previous to this visit

Age: 95

Gender: M

Race/Ethnicity: Caucasian

Family status: Widower

Number of children: Two daughters, two sons

SPIRITUAL CARE NONRELIGIOUS**Religious affiliation/practice growing up:** Jewish**Religious affiliation/practice now:** Jewish**Home location (local or transplanted):** Raised his family in working class part of city, then moved to an affluent suburb, then to an elegant retirement community, then to nursing home.**Admitting diagnosis:** Anemia, depression, hypertension**Additional factual information:** Born and raised in a working class part of a nearby city, one of nine children. Graduated from high school and studied engineering near home. Owned and operated an industrial heating and cooling supply company which his father founded and which is now being managed by his son and grandson. His wife developed cancer and died 3-1/2 years ago. Max suffered from a lot of depression during his wife's illness, and is still on antidepressants. He fractured his hip 3 months before she died, had it surgically repaired, and was in rehab at the time of her death. Post rehab, without his wife at home for support, he needed to move into a nursing home. He has 10 great-grandsons and no granddaughters. He has regular visits from family; I noticed visitors twice in the past week.**Summary of any previous visits with this person:** My visits before had been somewhat social – getting to know him. The second time I sat with him at dinner. He was talkative, but not a very articulate person. Dinner behavior with staff was gruff, as he only likes the simplest of foods and didn't know what he was eating. He is a thoughtful, loving family man, but with very little social polish.**Occasion of this visit (routine, follow-up, referral, etc.):** Follow-up**The Visit****Plan for this visit:** To see if I could find a way into a more spiritual conversation.

SPIRITUAL CARE NONRELIGIOUS

Observations: Max was sitting in his wheelchair at a random spot in the hallway. I'd seen him about 15 minutes earlier in the same spot, but asleep. I pulled up a chair to sit and chat. Max is permanently bent over somewhat, so even sitting, it's hard to make eye contact with him and his voice is soft and raspy. He's ill-groomed.

The text of the visit:

C01: Hi, Max. How're you doing today?

M01: Fine. How's about you?

C02: Great, thank God.... (A lot of back and forth social conversation ensues about family members and about the business, which is a large family business dealing with heating and cooling; there are some half a dozen branches in the region. The business was started by Max's father.)

C03: So, did you start the business or did your dad?

M03: My dad used to work for my uncle (names him) who was in the scrap metal business, and then one day he realized that they were selling all these old pipes for scrap, when they were perfectly good steel or copper so he started refurbishing them and selling them on his own. People really worked hard in those days; my dad could never work for anyone else. First he tried the ice and coal business, but that didn't work out for him. The best thing was to work for yourself and take care of your family.

C04: I loved that generation of Jewish guys. They were so inventive, and there was nothing "beneath" them, as long as they could feed and clothe their families.

M04: Yep. And now I've got kids and grandkids and in-laws, all kinds of people working in the business. Yep. It's all about family (gets quiet and a little wistful for a few seconds).

SPIRITUAL CARE NONRELIGIOUS

M05: My dad was orthodox. They kept kosher and he wasn't allowed to do anything on Shabbes. Sent us to Hebrew School.

C06: Yeah. You went to Hebrew School.

M06: You bet! Twice a week after school and then on Saturday morning. We all did that.

M07: I wasn't very religious though. My kids all went to schul and were Bar Mitzvahed and all that. My wife was really in charge of all that. You know I just wrote a big check to a religious school that's going to be named for her. It's important that those schools can keep going. Yeah, I once was at this schul and, you know, the roof was leaking, and I said, "What's with the roof?" And they said they couldn't afford to replace it. So I told them to get a new roof and to send me the bill.

M08: Yeah. My wife and daughter would go shopping together every Saturday. They were a real team those two. They'd come back with so many packages (chuckles), and then she'd ask if I wanted to see the things and I said that I'd wait to see it until it was on her. That it'd look much more beautiful that way. I just asked her to give me the slips, and then I'd pay them, whatever she spent.

C08: Smart man.

M09: Yeah. I was blessed that money was never a problem. I always seemed to have a lot of luck in business and, you know, with my investments.

M10: She was the most beautiful girl I ever saw in my life. We never went to bed angry. If we'd had a fight about something, I'd always be happy to apologize. You never want to go to be angry. I'd get into bed every night, kiss her good night, and we'd fall asleep holding hands.

C10: You must have nothing but good memories about her if you never went to bed angry.

SPIRITUAL CARE NONRELIGIOUS

M11: Absolutely. I never slept on bad feelings. She was the most beautiful girl I ever saw, and she was the best mother. Sort of the center of our family. She loved to wear white all the time. She just looked so beautiful.

C11: She must have looked like an angel dressed that way. (He's quiet.)

M12: Yeah. (Says the company's name and slogan, a regular interjection throughout all the conversations we've had.) Now we've got branches all over the region. Every kid who joins the company wants to run their own branch, so we keep opening new branches.

(Chuckles.) And you know, they all really do a good job too!

C12: (This is a long visit, and I really need to stay very focused because of the lowness of his voice. It's also physically straining because I have to stay bent over as his head is always pointed down. I'm getting a little loopy and know I need to wrap up.) So, Max, I've got to go do some paperwork now. You know what that's like!

M13: Yeah. There's always paperwork, whatever your job is.

C14: So, I'm going to scoot out now. Thanks for your time.

M14: It's always a pleasure talking to you.

C15: See you soon.

M15: Any time!

Analysis

The chaplain intern "C" who wrote the verbatim was troubled that he couldn't get 95-year-old "Max," a nursing home resident, to engage in spiritual conversation. C's attempt to insert more religious/spiritual language into the conversation – suggesting that Max's wife might have "looked like an angel" – fell flat (C11), and Max remained silent until he turned the conversation back to a subject comfortable to him: the heating and cooling business.

SPIRITUAL CARE NONRELIGIOUS

With his peer group's and supervisor's help, C discovered that this conversation was already spiritual – using the primarily concrete language with which Max expressed his meaning. As the group considered the HSL Spiritual Assessment model and what Max had shared with C, a picture of a spiritually vibrant man emerged, with his Judaism well integrated into his sense of self and his life's meaning:

Love/Belonging: Max is well connected to his family: the previous generation, his wife, and subsequent generations. His belonging to the Jewish people is so second nature that when he enters a synagogue with a leaky roof, he pays for it to be fixed.

Forgiveness: Max and his wife made sure not to go to sleep angry. They had a practice of forgiveness. Max also wants C to understand/forgive that while his religious behavior would not have met the standards of his forbears, his own way of being Jewish has integrity for him.

Hope: He has hope that his wife will be remembered in naming a day school for her. He has hope that his extended family will be well provided for by the family business and will continue to thrive for generations. He has hope that Jewish education and worship will continue.

Trust: He trusts the Jewish community's provision of housing and health care for elders, as seen in his own choice of providers. He trusts the honesty of Jewish organizations, and gives money with confidence.

Meaning: Max has a clear sense that his life has meaning. He is proud of being a provider for a family he is devoted to, proud of his business success, and proud of the Jewish people and institutions his legacy reaches.

SPIRITUAL CARE NONRELIGIOUS

Gratitude: He expresses gratitude for his business success, and the joy he takes in his family implies gratitude for them.

Identity: At 95, his identity is intact as a faithful son, husband, father, businessman, philanthropist, *mensch*.

Max knows and draws on his spiritual strengths, and is free from significant spiritual distress. C's conversational meetings with him work well for his spiritual support. With this "new lens" of seeing the spiritual in the secular and concrete, C can now return to Max and offer more finely tuned visits. C might, for example, draw on some detailed life review tools, or see if Max is interested in writing (or speaking aloud) an ethical will to leave for the younger generations. C can also verbally underscore the spiritual depth of Max's conversation.

The Kaplanian spiritual assessment model paints a picture of Max that complements the one above. Max does not focus on religious belief. He does show behaviors expressing core Jewish values such as *tzedakah* (charity) and making sure that Jewish legacy is transmitted from generation to generation. His behaviors are not so much from religious ritual (attending synagogue himself, praying, refraining from exchanging money on the Sabbath, etc.) as from Jewish culture. Max's sense of belonging to the Jewish people is fully integrated into his sense of himself as an individual, family man, business man, and member of the wider Jewish community. With this additional map of Max's religiosity, C knows to let go of the language of religious belief, and to focus more on the ways Max's life is infused with Jewish values and identity.

Perhaps instead of talking about paperwork at the end of the visit, C could make a personalized blessing:

- *Max, you inspire me in how you have lived your life: family,*

SPIRITUAL CARE NONRELIGIOUS

community, caring for others.

- *May your life continue to be a blessing to your family and our Jewish community.*
- *How gratifying to know you have lived your life so deeply according to your Jewish values!*
- *Yasher Koach – may you go from strength to strength!*

This verbatim serves as an example of how a person's spiritual dynamics can be expressed in concrete language, without reference to personal religious belief. Once a chaplain can use spiritual assessment as fluently with secular content as with religious, they are well situated to provide spiritual care to the growing proportion of Americans who are nonreligious.