

End of Life Hope

Embodying God's grace and
faithfulness through
human presence

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Summary

Our Healthcare Context

Healthcare Definitions

Embodying God's Grace and Faithfulness through Human Presence

End of Life Hope

'Something to Ponder'

in Healthcare
Spiritual Care is the.....

Entitlement of every patient

Role of every worker

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)
*“Care at the end of life should be responsive to the personal needs and preferences
of the person who is dying.....”*

“Spiritual care is the responsibility of every worker”
Universities of Hull, Staffordshire and Aberdeen
Department of Health 2011

Healthcare Definitions

End of Life....no longer receiving curative treatment

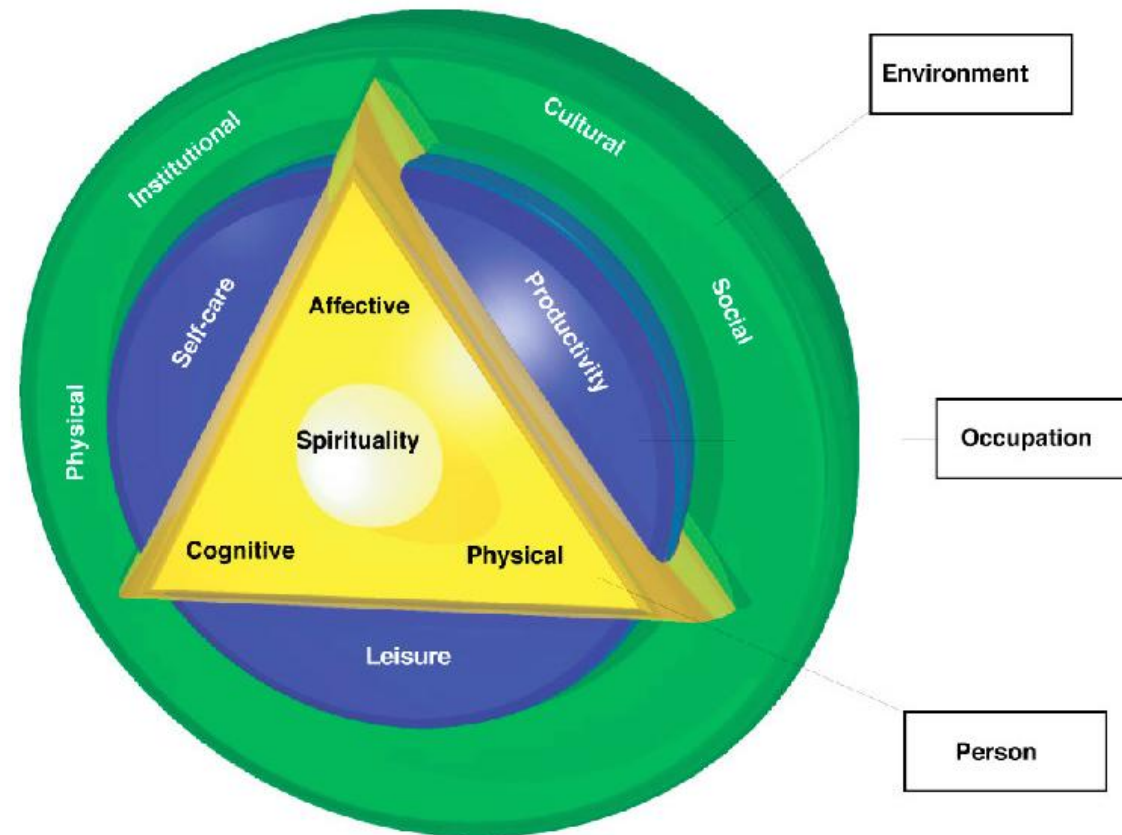
Spiritual Care

“Spirituality is universal, deeply personal and individual; it goes beyond formal notions of ritual or religious practice to encompass the **unique capacity of each individual**” *Prof Wilf McSherry, Staffordshire University and North Midlands NHS Trust*

“.....that care which recognises and responds to the **needs of the human spirit** when faced with trauma, ill health or sadness. It can include the need for meaning, self-worth, faith support or simply for a sensitive listener.” *NHS for Scotland*

Canadian Model of Occupational Performance

“Spirituality is the core of the person where they decide on the meaning of things”







Embodying God's grace and faithfulness
through human presence

A Christian theology of palliative care

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'Watch With Me' (Matthew 26:36-38)

*Even when we feel that we can do absolutely nothing, we will still have to be prepared to stay. 'Watch with me' means, above all, just **'be there'*** (Saunders 2003:4)

Dame Cicely Saunders, founder of the modern hospice movement

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Entering into the Language of the Other

.....Each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Acts 2: 5-6

Supporting the 'person within the patient' in what is important to them (spiritual resilience)

Discerning a topic of conversation they know more about than we do

Empowering a person towards their own internal source(s) of
peace, comfort and spiritual strength.....

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The Sacrament of the Present Moment (Jean-Pierre de Caussade)

- Seeing the sacramental in the small and ordinary: cup of tea; breath of fresh air on the patio, vase of flowers
- Open to the mystical in unexpected moments
- “The **n**owness of everything”; “Seeing the present tense” (Playwright Dennis Potter)

Rob and Kath
on their wedding day

*Sacrament of the
present moment*



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Sharing in the darkness with those who are dying

- Wrestling with God (Genesis 32:24)
- Experiencing a sense of loneliness in the wilderness (Matthew 27: 45-46)
 - 'Why have you forsaken me' (Psalm 22, Matthew 47:26)

"Slowly as the years go by I learn about the importance of powerlessness - the secret is not to be afraid of it, not to run away.....stand our ground at the foot of the cross" Cassidy 1988:64

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Watch with me – 'being there' Matthew 26:36-38

Empowering the language of the other/ spiritual resilience Acts of the Apostles 2:5-6

Open to the sacramental and mystical in every moment Jean-Pierre de Caussade

Sharing in the darkness— Matthew 27:45-46

End of Life Hope for 'Me as a Person'



- “It’s not just about the end – it’s about living well until the very end” *wife of patient*
- Physically pain free as far as possible
- feeling some sense of ‘peace’
- ‘in memory’ gifts – memory boxes, letters, recordings etc
- existential conversations including, for some people, hope in life after death
- symbols of connection eg knitted hearts; photos
- a sense that ‘someone is waiting’ or ‘there’s a place prepared’ or ‘come to collect me’
- signs and symbols eg butterfly; window open; anointing; holding cross
- reconciliation of body, mind and spirit (wholeness) – ‘ready to go’
- words of peace/prayer/blessing
- assurance of support for loved ones

The Edwards family
on their day out



If you would like to explore ways of supporting end of life care
in your chaplaincy or parish
please do get in touch

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Invitation to Ponder.....

‘Being there’: Other than face to face, in what ways might you be alongside someone coming to the end of their life?

References

- Cassidy, S (1992) *Sharing the Darkness*. London: Darton Longman and Todd
- De Caussade, J-P (2013) *The Sacrament of the Present Moment*. USA: Create Space Independent Publishing Platform
- Saunders, C (2003) *Watch with Me*. Sheffield: Mortal Press
- New Revised Standard Version of the Bible
- Seeing the Blossom: Melvyn Bragg interview with Dennis Potter in his last days