



Offering Spiritual Care

A guide for staff and volunteers

Helping people to help themselves in the face of challenge

Spiritual care helps people to draw upon whatever it is that they find comfort and strength in, so enabling them to come to terms with and respond to the problems they are facing.

We are shaped by the people, places, stories and opportunities that matter to us and bring meaning to our lives. Our core beliefs and values, important roles and relationships, achievements and gifts, all that sustains and centres us; these are the areas of our lives which shape our personal sense of self, our spirituality.

- What matters to you?
- What do you hope for in life?
- What helps you to live life your way?

Sometimes in life we go through change, loss or hard times. As we try to make sense of and respond to our new circumstances, we draw upon these resources seated deep within us.

However if these inner resources or our sense of identity are diminished then dealing with challenge becomes even harder.

Ultimately someone may end up in a state of spiritual distress and experience their very foundations shaking.

- Feeling despair, low self-esteem or anxiety
- An inability to see the way forwards
- A sense of disconnect or conflict
- Not coping as they might

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How to help

The Golden Rules

- ✓ **Listen non-judgmentally** showing someone that you care will help them to open up
 - ✓ **If they open up to you then you are already getting it right** even if you don't think so
 - ✓ **Slow down, let them go at their own pace** it's their story, give them time to tell it
 - ✓ **Ask open questions in response to what they tell you** this will encourage them to talk
- ✓ **Reflect back using their language** this will show them that they have been heard
 - ✓ **Accept how they perceive things** gently explore why it is that they see things that way
 - ✓ **Allow emotion to surface** tell them what you see and gently invite reflection on it
 - ✓ **Reassure, remember your role is to listen not resolve** help them to help themselves

Invite a chat about what has got them through tricky times in the past, and think about:

- ✓ How they can **continue in a role** that is part of their identity
 - ✓ How they can **connect with people** who offer support and encouragement
 - ✓ What **activities and resources** bring them joy and comfort
- ✓ **Inviting some gentle growth** by setting an appropriate goal
 - ✓ **Avoid focusing on an unknown future** by spending some time noticing now
 - ✓ **Trying to do even the smallest of things** to help someone else

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