SPIRITUAL HEALTH

Data supporting a revised definition based on spiritual need fulfillment

Presented by
Janet Kanter, BSN,MPH, PhD.
November 6, 2007

5 MAIN OBJECTIVES FOR TODAY

- ☐ Introduce a new definition of Spiritual Health

- ☐ Present supporting research

- ☐ Share the benefits, constraints and conclusions from the study

- ☐ Identify Next Steps

- ☐ Spark a new discussion on a Spiritual Health Assessment tool and its potential effects on traditional medicine and alternative therapies

CURRENT DEFINITIONS OF SPIRITUAL HEALTH

"Optimal spiritual health may be considered as the ability to develop our spiritual nature to its fullest potential. This would include our ability to discover and articulate our own basic purpose in life, learn how to experience love, joy, peace and fulfillment and how to help ourselves and others achieve their full potential." Chapman. 1987

"A high level of faith, hope, and commitment in relation to well-defined worldview or belief system that provides a sense of meaning and purpose to existence in general, and that offers an ethical path to personal fulfillment which includes connectedness with self, others and a higher power or larger reality." Hawks. 1994

[i] Chapman, L. Spiritual Health: A Component Missing from Health Promotion. American Journal of Health Promotion, 1986; 1:83-41.

[ii] Hawks, S. Spiritual Health: Definition and Theory. Wellness Perspectives, 1994; 10: 3-13.

# WHY WOULD WE CONSIDER REDEFINING SPIRITUAL HEALTH?

CURRENT

- Nebulous constructs of meaning and purpose. No conclusions. Too general
- 48 CAM studies posted on the NIH website for 2007 discuss an inability to draw conclusions regarding spiritual wellbeing.
- Previous definitions have not established the interfaith approach necessary for application in healthcare.
- Previous definitions have limited application without an understanding of the emotional nature of CAM modalities.
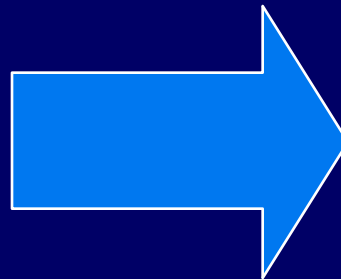
NEW

- The literature suggests that people knowledgeable about spirituality are better prepared to render spiritual care
- Empirical research can utilize the structure of spiritual need fulfillment to more accurately assess the potential of alternative therapies.
- When we break down the structure of this new definition, we can identify and measure spiritual need deficits.
- Sourcing world religions as instruction for fulfillment of spiritual needs clarifies the construct of "spiritual health" for a multiple faith population and, thereby, is applicable in health care.
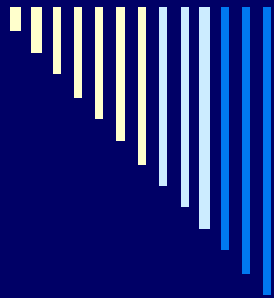
THE NEW DEFINITION OF SPIRITUAL HEALTH

Spiritual Health involves a life long developmental process toward non-duality motivated by deficiencies in the human spiritual needs of faith, community, honor, love, joy,
life lessons and life work.
Spiritual health is defined as a spectrum rather than a static state due to the ever changing process of maturing (or developing) during times of stress, human suffering, life changes, or life events.
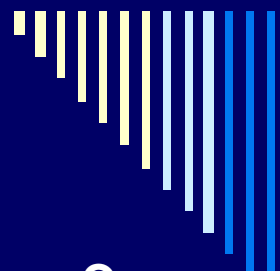*Greater satisfaction of the spiritual needs for faith, community, honor, love, joy, life lessons, and life work indicate higher achievement of spiritual health.*
Poorer spiritual health is evident as greater deficiencies in the fulfillment of spiritual needs.

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SPECTRUM OF SPIRITUAL HEALTH

Non-duality -- **Duality**

THE SEVEN SPIRITUAL NEEDS

Community

The spiritual need for **community** is a human need to feel a sense of belonging, supported and protected. The fulfillment of the spiritual need for community involves the development of reciprocal relationships that are mutually supportive and protective.

Honor

The spiritual need for **honor** is a human need to feel respected and to have dignity. The fulfillment of the spiritual need for honor involves conducting oneself with respect and being respectful of others.

Love

The spiritual need for **love** is a human need to feel and express caring attention. The spiritual need for love is fulfilled through thoughts, words, and actions that communicate the caring that is innate in the experience of love. The spiritual need for love is reciprocal in that it is both being cared about and compassionate toward others.

Joy

The spiritual need for **joy** is the human need to feel freedom and excitement associated with 'living in the moment.' The fulfilled spiritual need for joy presents as a balance between self-regulation (limitation/focus/training) and limitless freedom of expression.

THE SEVEN SPIRITUAL NEEDS

Life Lessons

The spiritual need for **life lessons** is a human need for growth (particularly to outgrow victim consciousness). The fulfillment of the spiritual need for life lessons is learning to cope by taking responsibility. Thereby the spiritual need for life lessons is reciprocal as the fulfillment of this need requires embracing difficulties as growth opportunities for both self and others.

Life Work

The spiritual need for **life work** is a human need to feel valuable and to experience meaning in our lives. The fulfillment of the spiritual need for life work is expressed as using one's gifts and talents in such a way as to provide meaning for oneself and value for others.

Faith

The spiritual need for **faith** is a human need to feel at peace (at one; whole) or to feel comforted. The fulfillment of the spiritual need for faith involves the attainment of wisdom. This process of developing wisdom involves balancing (or reconciling) knowledge based on experience and an awareness of what we do not currently know or cannot know (beyond human comprehension). Faith is a belief in a higher nature of our existence that leads to experience or knowledge of an ultimate reality of transcendence.
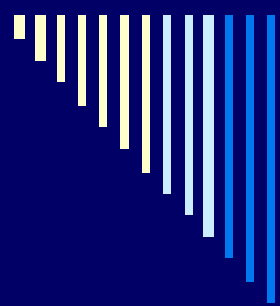
DEFINITIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF EACH NEED

- Each need is measurable as a component of overall spiritual health

- Each need describes the desired emotional state experienced as health

- Each need requires balance and/or reciprocation as structure describing how spiritual needs are fulfilled.

STUDY METHOD

Random telephone survey

- Hampton Roads Virginia residence (N=870)
- Administered by Old Dominion University (Norfolk, Virginia) Social Science Research Center
- Likert scale survey assessed:

  1. accuracy of the proposed definition for each need.

  2. accuracy of the proposed structure requiring balance/or reciprocation

  3. religions as source of spiritual need fulfillment

  4. universal application
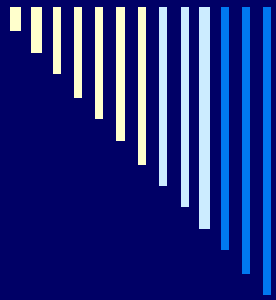
POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS
N = 870

- Adults 18 -92

- 30.9% Male
    69.1% Female

- 62.5% Caucasian
    1.8% Hispanic
    27.0% African Amer/Black
    1.0% Asian
    7.6% Other/ref

- 75% had education beyond high school

79.0% Christian

0.7% Muslim

0.7% Jewish

0.3% Buddhist

0.2% Hindu

9.0% Other

9.9% None

0.2% Refused

Is each spiritual need defined accurately?

	N	Total Agree/Strongly agree	Other n=19 Agree/strongly agree	None n=86 Agree/strongly agree
Faith Human beings have a need for a faith that provides comfort and peace.	870	93.1%	84.2% n=16	75.6% n=65
Community Human beings have a need to feel secure and protected.	870	99.1%	100%	100%
Honor Human beings need to be treated with respect.	870	98.2%	100%	93.0% n=80
Love Human beings need to be loved.	870	97.6%	94.8% n=18	93.0% n=80
Joy Human beings need enjoyment.	870	96.5%	100%	94.2% n=81
Life lessons Human beings have a need to not be victims.	870	88.7%	89.5% n=17	82.6% n=71
Life work People need to express how they are valuable.	869	79.3%	73.7% n=14	74.4% n=64

Is the structure of balance and/or reciprocation accurate?
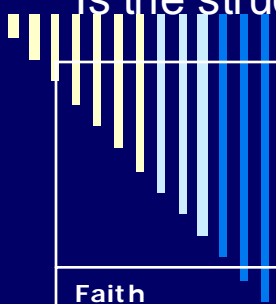
	N	Total Agree/ Strongly agree	Other n=19 Agree/strongly agree	None n=86 Agree/strongly agree
Faith Inner peace results from navigating your life based on both previous experience and faith in a higher power.	870	96.0%	83.7% n=14	55.8% n=48
Community Human beings build communities by both giving and receiving support.	869	80.3%	84.7% n=18	95.4% n=82
Honor Self-esteem is a result of conducting oneself with respect and being respectful of others.	870	69.4%	94.7% n=18	93.1% n=80
Love Giving and receiving caring attention can be interpreted as love.	870	97.4%	94.7% n=18	91.8% n=79
Joy Joy results from a balance of play, freedom, excitement and effort, discipline and focus.	870	94.1%	94.8% n=18	90.7% n=78
Life lessons Most difficult experiences contain growth opportunities for yourself and for others.	870	97.6%	84.2% n=16	91.9% n=79
Life work Using talents, experiences, or personal gifts has both meaning for you and value for others.	870	95.1%	94.8% n=8	96.5% n=83

# Does your personal religion offer instruction for fulfillment of these needs?

	N	Total Agree/Strongly agree	Other n=19 Agree/strongly agree	None n=86 Agree/strongly agree
Faith Your religion provides instruction to obtain inner peace.	784	87.0%	57.9% n=11	N/A
Community Your religion provides instruction for building community.	781	86.5%	63.2% n=12	N/A
Honor Your religion provides instruction for being respectful.	784	94.1%	73.7% n=14	N/A
Love Your religion provides instruction about love.	783	93.9%	68.4% n=13	N/A
Joy Your religion describes joy as a need for human beings.	784	73.7%	57.9% n=11	N/A
Life lessons Your religion offers instruction for viewing difficulties as growth opportunities.	783	90.3%	57.9% n=11	N/A
Life work Your religion provides rituals for life events such as births and marriage that describes the meaning of such events.	784	92.1%	63.2% n=12	N/A

	N	Total Agree/Strongly agree	Other n=19 Agree/strongly agree	None n=86 Agree/strongly agree
Faith Inner peace is an important need for you.	870	96.0%	94.7% n=8	88.4% n=76
Community Being supported by your social group is important to you.	870	80.3%	89.5% n=17	66.3% n=57
Honor Being highly regarded is important to you.	868	69.4%	63.1% n=12	53.5% n=46
Love Being loved is important to you.	870	97.4%	94.8% n=18	91.9% n=79
Joy Having fun is important to you.	870	94.1%	100%	93.0% n=80
Life lessons Learning from life's opportunities is important to you.	870	97.6%	88.5% n=17	100%
Life work Having a personal purpose is important to feeling valuable.	869	95.1%	84.2% n=16	87.2% n=75
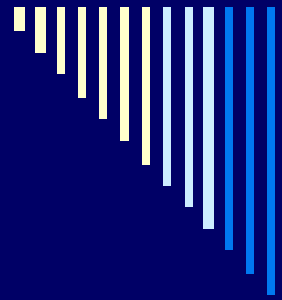
LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

☐ Limitation of Study Design: Self reported cognitions

☐ Limitation of Conclusion: Small representation of minority religions

BENEFITS/CONCLUSIONS

The New Definition of Spiritual Health…

- ☐ Offers objective markers for measurement
- ☐ Offers direction for fulfillment of the state of health being defined
- ☐ Offers clarity in evaluating the spiritually/emotionally restorative properties of alternative approaches
- ☐ Assessable for a religiously diverse population

NEXT STEPS

☐ Investigate application of spiritual need fulfillment in in-patient setting, ultimately giving us a framework for patient treatment

☐ Develop a spiritual assessment tool to prove the impact of alternative therapies.
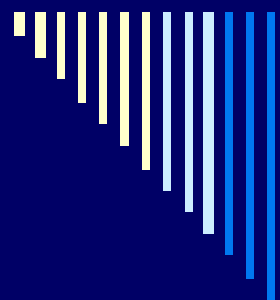
Contact: Janet Kanter, PhD.
Old Dominion University
jkanter@odu.edu