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Spirituality and Health Care

Chapter Twenty-one

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Topics for today:

- Spirituality-what is it?
- religious & secular perspective
- spiritual distress
- spiritual practices in health & illness
- nursing practice & spiritual wellness


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Spirituality

- People have ritualized their recognition of rhythm of *transition* through religion or custom
 - *human life cycle- birth, puberty, etc
 - *solar- lunar cycles
 - *agricultural/ reproductive cycles
- People have learned the importance of transitions and learn thru their own culture/ religions how to behave during each transition
- Nurses are in contact with people within the context of these transitions, times of anxiety and/or vulnerability, and may *facilitate* getting spiritual support needed for perceived spiritual abandonment


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Spirituality

- Definition:
 - a sense of meaning of life or association with a sense of inner spirit
- Concept of 'hope' is central to spirituality
- Creates a set of beliefs and values that influence the way people conduct their lives


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Religious vs Secular Perspective

- Religious Perspective:
 - spirit defined as encompassing the ideology of the image of God or soul that exists in everyone
 - set of beliefs that help explain the meaning of life, suffering, health & illness


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Religious vs Secular Perspective

- Secular Perspective:
 - a set of positive values, such as love, honesty or truth, chosen by the individual that ultimately becomes that person's supreme focus of live and organizing framework
 - values motivate the individual toward fulfillment of needs, goals and aspirations


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Spiritual Distress

- Definition:
 - a disruption in the life principle that pervades a person's entire being and integrates and transcends one's biological and psychosocial nature
 - "mad at God", "what's it all for?", "what does it all mean?", "why me?"*
 - occurs in relation to separation from religious or cultural supports, challenges to beliefs and values, or intense suffering


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Spiritual Practices in Health & Illness

- Spiritual modes of healing are designed to enhance comfort and produce an inner peace with disability, illness, and/or death
 - *prayer- seen as powerful force that can influence events for the better
 - *meditation and healing- relaxation response and prayer have been demonstrated to affect illness ('remembered wellness' or 'placebo effect')


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Spiritual Practices in Health & Illness

- *therapeutic touch- redirecting human energy. Stimulates energy flow, clears congested areas, dampens excess energetic activity and synchronizes the rhythmic waves of energy flow
- *visualization- using an image of a desired outcome or the process of attaining it (athletes often use this approach)


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Nursing Practice and Spiritual Wellness

- Shift the view from 'vocation' (*a calling*) to 'profession' in order to achieve appropriate value in a system that is increasingly economically oriented (back to professional status!)
- Considered a 'vocation' in the context of world's religions: the symbolic and deep meaning of the work that nurses do
- When nursing is carried out with deep consciousness and purpose, it nurtures the client *and* the nurse!

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See you next class.....

Please do your readings & bring thoughtful questions!

