

## Spiritual History

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- Spirituality should be included among topics covered in a comprehensive biopsychosocialspiritual assessment
- If spirituality emerges as an issue of some relevance to the client's service plan (either as a strength or a problem), a more detailed history should be taken
- Be sure to frame all questions in terms of what you know to be the client's frame of reference. For example, if your client is a member of an organized group, you might frame many of your questions in terms of the client's involvement in that group. Or if you know something of the content of that group's belief system, you might term questions in those terms, e.g. "How did you experience God at that time?"
- Topics for a spiritual history include:
  - Childhood experiences
    - Was spirituality a part of your upbringing?
    - How did your family express itself spiritually?
    - When did you first become spiritually aware?
    - What experiences brought you to this awareness?
    - Were your spiritual experiences positive, negative, or both?
    - How have these experiences stayed with you?
  - Adolescent experiences
    - Did you experience changes in your spirituality as part of being a teenager?
    - Did you find yourself moving away from the spirituality of your childhood? Or did the childhood experience continue or deepen?
    - Did spirituality figure in your emerging sense of self? Did it become more or less relevant to you as you made basic life decisions?
    - Did you go through a rite of passage?
    - Was there an experience which was particularly meaningful to you?
  - Young Adult Experiences
    - How did spirituality influence your choice of vocation?
    - How did spirituality influence your choice of an intimate partner?
    - Did you seek involvement with particular organized groups?
    - Were there specific ideas or practices which became important to you at this time?
  - Middle Adult Experiences
    - How did your spirituality inform your life choices (career, family, etc.)
    - Was spirituality a factor in the way you built a family? Organized your life?

- (If you had children) how did having them influence your spiritual life? Did your spirituality influence the way you raised your children?
  - How did your spirituality help you face life problems?
  - Was spirituality a positive factor in solving a particular life problem?
- Later Adult Experiences
  - Have you come upon any new spiritual experiences as you have moved into this part of life?
  - Are there certain ideas or practices that seem especially helpful to you right now?
  - As you look back, do you see any patterns in the way you have lived life? Any regrets? Any unfulfilled hopes?
  - Has being retired affected your spiritual life?
  - Have you had any particular spiritual experiences at this stage in life?
- For All Ages (frame in terms appropriate to the client's development and their experience)
  - How has your spiritual life experience (referring to specific ideas or practices they have shared) been a factor in the bringing us to the problems we are working on now?
  - How can your spirituality support you in dealing with the problems we are working on?
  - Is your spirituality holding you back from doing something you know you need to do now to solve a major life problem?
  - Are you experiencing a change (a shift) in your spirituality? How will this change affect the way you go about working on your life problems?
- Additional framing questions
  - How do you feel about discussing your spirituality with me right now?
  - Do you think that spirituality (or this spiritual problem) is something that will make a difference in the work we are doing together?
  - Do we need more help with this? What would be especially helpful to us right now?
  - Are there particular individuals who could be of help to us right now?