

MCS Selective Spirituality and Healthcare

Illness is a powerful spiritual experience for patients and their physicians and that both physicians and patients can experience spiritual growth in the partnership of healing. This selective will address some of the most important questions in spirituality and healing:

- How physicians can assess the spiritual resources of their patients.
- What do physicians need to know about theology and spirituality to effectively care for their patients?
- What role does the spirituality of the physician play in the healing of the patient?

What spiritual skills can physicians use to speak more honestly with patients about death and dying?

Instructors



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Syllabus

This selective is not a course in comparative religion. It is not an abstract and distant evaluation of traditions of belief. It is rather an opportunity for students to discover the power of medicine to partner with spiritual realities such as faith, trust, and forgiveness, and healing. We will focus on ways to speak with patients about spirituality and how to understand faith and experience that is different than one's own. We will also discuss how to work and collaborate with spiritual leaders such as chaplains, pastors, and spiritual advisors. The course is open to interest of the students who attend and some modification of the syllabus to meet interests is welcomed and desirable.

Educational Objectives

At the conclusion of this course you will have the ability to:

1. Describe the meaning of spirituality and its function in the lives of patients and physicians.
2. Understand how physicians, chaplains, and other health care professionals work together for the spiritual good of patients.
3. Be able to articulate one's own spirituality and the role it will play in the practice of medicine.
4. Articulate the function of spirituality in health at certain critical moments, especially suffering, giving bad news, death, and critical care.
5. Understand how physicians can support, and interact with the spirituality of their patients.

Topics and Dates

1. Taking one's own spiritual pulse:
 - We begin with ourselves. The many different ways of describing and becoming aware of our own spirituality..
 - The important difference between religion and spirituality
 - Different roles: Physician, Spiritual Care, Theologian
2. Physicians as Spiritual Guides and Advocates

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- Theology for Physicians :: Understanding When and how to use spiritual concepts with patients
 - Voices of physicians who believe spirituality is part of primary health care.
 - Understanding differing religious traditions.
 - What is the relationship between body and spirit.
3. Spirituality, Giving Bad News, Coping With Suffering:
- The role of spiritual resources when bad news is given.
 - We focus on the spiritual impact of this moment for both patient and physician.
 - Pivotal questions: Why do we suffer? What comes after death?
 - After death, physicians as bereavement counselors.
 - We meet with professional grief counselors to understand how physicians can assist families in the time after bereavement.
4. Prayer and Meditation:
- Exploring the methods and meanings of prayer
 - Learning how to use prayer experiences in ones own life and work

Evaluation

1. Use our online blog to post at least blog entry per session.
2. Attendance and active participation in discussion.

Class Size

Minimum 5

Maximum 12