

Spirituality – the new Religion?

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“In much of the modern developed world ‘religion’ can no longer be equated with familiar mainstream church and denominational forms but takes on a plurality of guises that render the boundaries between religion and non-religion bewilderingly fuzzy.”

“Whereas previously, men and women were able to draw upon a Christian-centred culture to find guidance about how they should behave, and how they should think about their lives, from the 1960’s a suspicion of creeds arose that quickly took the form of a rejection of Christian tradition and all formulaic constructions of the individual.”

Callum Brown (2001) *The Death of Christian Britain* p193

Spirituality: Recovering the idea of journey?

“Human history is not a morality play in which the good are rewarded and the evil punished, but a struggle for salvation, enlightenment, progress, or community in which many, indeed most of the participants have been and are caught up in tragic conflicts and dilemmas”

Talcott Parsons (1978), *Action Theory and the Human Condition*, The Free Press, Macmillan Publishers, p262

**“Life’s truth is in the moment...
I am a Buddhist, and I am a Jew...”**

Sylvia Boorstein Spirituality in the 3rd Age.

Religion: Religion is an organized system of beliefs, practices, rituals, and symbols designed (a) to facilitate closeness to the sacred or transcendent (God, higher power, or ultimate truth/reality) and (b) to foster an understanding of one's relationship and responsibility to others living in a community.

Spirituality: Spirituality is the personal quest for understanding answers to ultimate truth questions about life, about meaning, and about relationships to the transcendent, which may (or may not) lead to or arise from the development of religious rituals and the formation of community.

Religion

- (1) Community focused**
- (2) Observable, measurable, objective**
- (3) Formal, orthodox, organised**
- (4) Behaviour orientated, outward practices**
- (5) Authoritarian in terms of behaviours**
- (6) Doctrine separating good from evil**

Spirituality

- (1) Individualistic**
- (2) Less visible and measurable, more subjective**
- (3) Less formal, less orthodox, less systematic**
- (4) Emotionally orientated, inward directed**
- (5) Non authoritarian**
- (6) Unifying, not doctrine orientated**

Meaning – making sense of life situations; deriving purpose from existence

Existential – searching for personal means within one's life, death, and concerns about freedom and isolation

Transcendence – appreciation of dimension beyond self; creating ability to rise above 'here and now; experience

Connecting – relationships and communication with self, others, environment, higher power, the sacred

Becoming – links to identity, personal growth, through reflection on life experience

Coping – means of using or developing strategies in critical life events; achieving inner peace

Spirituality - the search for existential or ultimate meaning within a life experience, such as illness. (This belief usually refers to a power other than the self, which people may or may not describe as God, higher power, or forces within nature, and with which they communicate. The power helps the person to transcend the here and now, re-establish hope and the ability to cope)

Religion – is an expression of spiritual belief through a framework of rituals, codes, and practices; the sense of otherness or a power being a deity of supreme being

Philosophical – relates to the same searching, but with a rejection of any influential power external to the self

“Spirituality is the outward expression of the inner workings of the human spirit.”

(Swinton, p20)

For an adequate understanding of spirituality it is necessary to consider: first, the human need for ultimate meaning in each person, whether this is fulfilled through relationship with God, or from some sense of 'other'; or whether some other sense of meaning becomes the guiding force within the individual's life. Secondly, every human spirituality involves relationships with others. Spirituality is a part of every human being.

MacKinlay, Ellor & Pickard (2001) Ageing, Spirituality & Pastoral Care.

Spiritual coping mechanisms in chronically ill patients

Aru Narayanasamy

British Journal of Nursing; Dec 12, 2002-Jan 8, 2003; 11, 22; ProQuest Nursing & Allied Health Source
pg. 1461

Table 1. Descriptions of spirituality

The essence or life principle of person (Clark et al, 1991)

A sacred journey (Mische, 1982)

The experience of the radical truth of things (Legere, 1984) and ultimate values (Cawley, 1997)

Giving meaning and purpose in life (Legere, 1984; Clark et al, 1991; Fitchett, 1995; Sherwood, 2000)

Relating to unconditional love (Ellison, 1983; Clark et al, 1991; Ross, 1997)

Connectedness within oneself (Reed, 1992) and others (Sherwood, 2000)

A life relationship or a sense of connection with mystery, a higher power, God or universe (Reed, 1992)

A belief that relates a person to the world (Soeken and Carson, 1987)

A quality that invokes a need to transcend the self in such a way that empowers, not devalues, the individual (Sherwood, 2000)

Inner dimension of being human attuned to the most valuable aspect of life that motivates and guides one's significant choices (Emblen, 1992)

Being rooted in an awareness which is part of the biological make up of the human species (Narayanasamy, 1999)

Referring to meaning and unity, and a transcendent, usually referred to as God in the West (Aldridge, 2000)

That which gives meaning, purpose, hope and value to people's lives. This is part of a wide concept which may include but is not defined by religious faith and culture (Swinton, 2002)

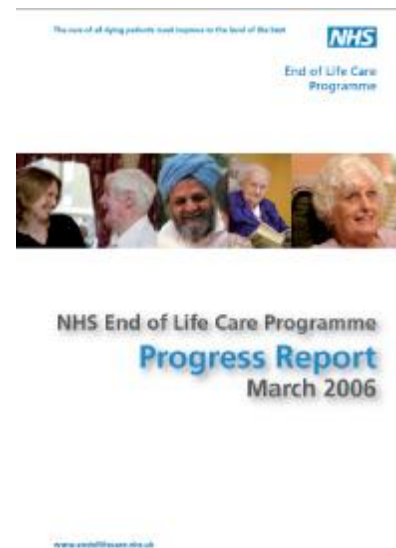
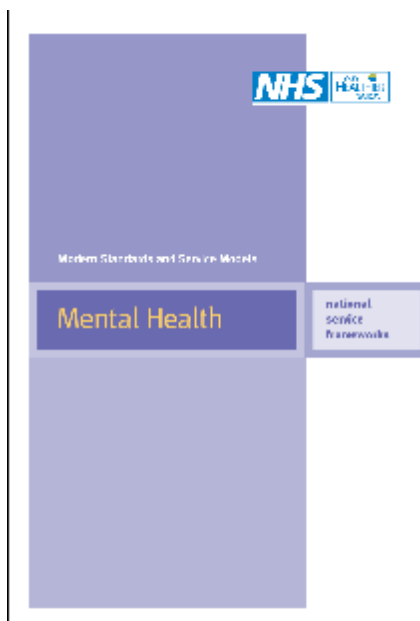
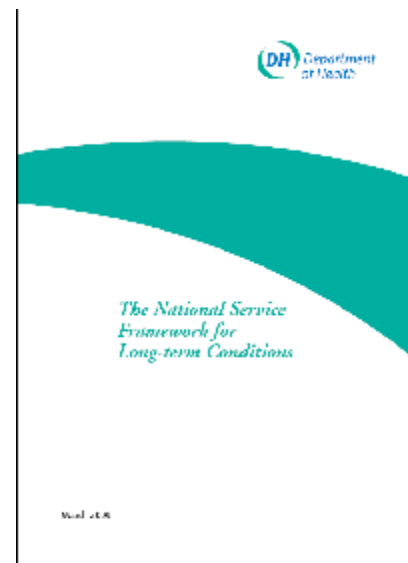
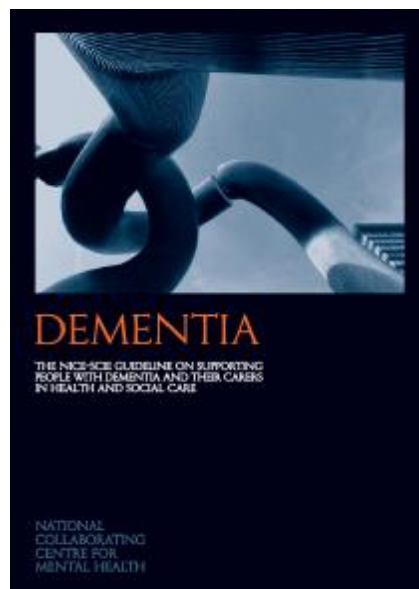
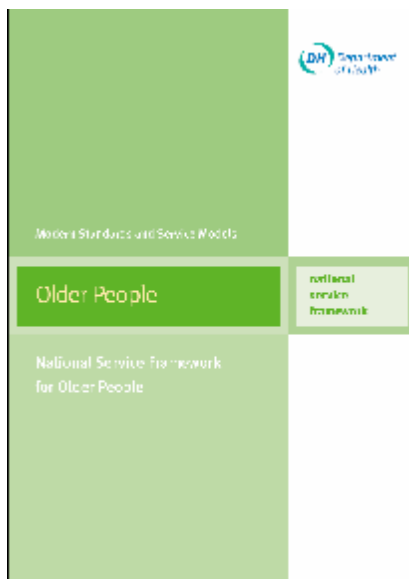


“‘Spirituality’ is a slippery word, one that is both difficult to define with precision and subject to a wide variety of understandings. In many circles today, it is associated with vague feelings of purposefulness or serenity and disassociated from religion, especially from religious community. Even in religious environments, however, ‘Spirituality’ is often understood as vague emotion without substantive content, or as an experiences that can neither be validated nor challenged.”

(Gorman, 2001, quoted in Bash 2003 The Emperors New Clothes.

“Alongside a developing evidence base, there remains a debate over language. Do we talk about religious care, spiritual care or a combination of the two? Religious care alone values peoples structured belief systems and is of relevance to people from minority backgrounds but excludes people who would not wish to describe themselves as religious. Whereas relying only on the descriptor of spiritual care excludes people who would consider themselves religious and value the structure of their belief system. Perhaps the central driver to this debate is the way that it goes to the very core of the participant, when we write, talk, or research about religion or spirituality we are entering the territory of belief from which we cannot exclude ourselves as it communicates with the core of our own values, hopes and meaning.”

(Merchant, 2006)



Spiritual care & recognising peoples culture

My culture is an important part of my identity, of ME. My health values and beliefs are a product of my cultural upbringing (my primary culture) as well as my cultural negotiation with the culture of the host country (my secondary culture) I found myself living in as a young adult. My values and beliefs are not static but continue to be modified as both my primary and secondary cultures change with time. Thus to ignore my culture when providing nursing care to me, is to ignore ME.”

Dr. Rena Papadopoulos *The Papdopoulos, Tilki and Taylor model for the development of cultural competence in nursing.* Journal of Health, Social and Environmental Issues (2003) Vol 4, No 1.

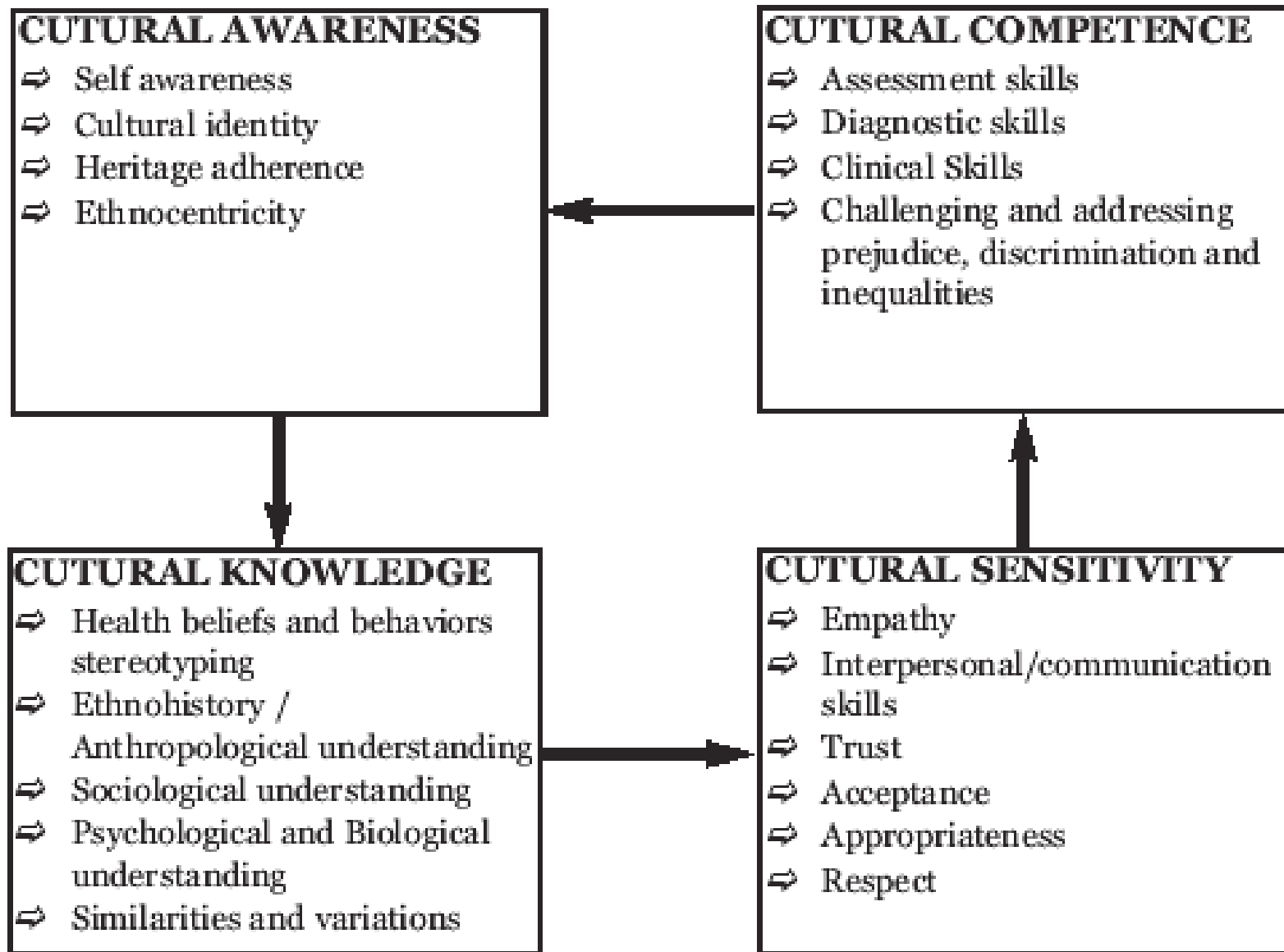


Figure 1: The Papadopoulos, Tilki and Taylor Model for Developing Cultural Competence

Recommendations from Bell et al – Alzheimer's Quarterly 2002.

- **Enable to the person to be connected**
- **To be respected and appreciated**
- **Value the Person**
- **Celebrate the person's religious heritage**
- **Embrace simplicity**
- **Nourish your own spiritual life**
- **Give spiritual care throughout the illness**