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Pastoral Care Consulting Services

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Health care professionals need to be culturally and spiritually sensitive, because the Joint Commission holds hospitals accountable for addressing and maintaining patient rights. These rights include the accommodation of cultural, religious, and spiritual values and practices. Responding to the unique needs of each patient and their loved ones also contributes to higher patient satisfaction.

These resource materials can improve your knowledge and skills:

[A Dictionary of Patients' Spiritual & Cultural Values for Health Care Professionals](#)

[Cultural & Spiritual Sensitivity – A Learning Module for Health Care Professionals](#)

Testimonials from professionals who have found these materials helpful:

- "I personally found your materials to be invaluable for our workshop 'Developing Cultural Sensitivity in Pediatric Palliative Care'," reported Dorothy Hill, Chairperson of the Helping Hands-Healing Hearts organization in Pittsburgh. Other workshop participants said:

"Eye opening, thought provoking, would like to give to peers to open discussion."

"It helped me to bring my values/beliefs to the forward in order to incorporate the new religions today. The cultural values of others (are) only able to make sense to me as long as I can open my heart and mind to the entire pictures -- including mine and theirs."

- "I work for the Arizona Association of Community Health Centers and have shared your *Dictionary of Spiritual and Cultural Values for Health Care Professionals* with our Community Health Centers around the state—it is an extremely valuable tool."

Lisa A. Nieri

Migrant Health Program Manager

Regional Migrant Health Coordinator, Southwest Region

Arizona Association of Community Health Centers

- From Sandra Stimson, executive director of the National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners:

"*The Dictionary of Patients' Spiritual and Cultural Values for Health Care Professionals* is a guide that should be on the desk of every person who is working with patients – including chaplains, physicians, nurses, activity professionals, volunteer coordinators, recreation therapists, dietitians, dietary managers, social workers, admissions staff, discharge planners, administrators, physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, nursing assistants, etc. from our work with dementia patients, we have found that often their spiritual considerations are not recognized and this guide will help you meet their needs."

- From Sherrie M. (Fessler) Faulkner, LCSW, Director of BSW Field Education and Clinical Assistant Professor at the University of Illinois School of Social Work:

"With your permission I used a couple of the self assessment tools last week as well as had a hospital Chaplain come in and talk about religious and spiritual diversity. I just wanted to provide you with some feedback (as promised!). Our 50 minute class just flew by with all the discuss that was generated from the assessment tools. Even the tools themselves (what questions were asked and what questions weren't asked) were topics of discussion. After grading the journal assignment at the end of the week, multiple students commented on how much the assessments made them think about their own journey and how much diversity is out there. Several felt

that this will make them better people and clinicians.

"I hope, with your permission, to continue to use these materials for years to come!"

- "Thanks for the Dictionary resource."
 - Rhoda Sutton:(Pastoral Life Coach & Care, Special Needs, Community Outreach, Melbourne, Florida)
 - Lesline McEwan, M.A.,C.A.M.F. (Psychotherapist, Ottawa, Canada Area)
 - Derek Hansen (Director of Pastoral Care, Riverview Hospital, Indianapolis, Indiana Area)
 - Susan Wallace Moriarty (Spiritual Counselor at Companion Hospice Care, Greater Los Angeles Area)
- The materials were also used for a senior-level gerontology community health nursing course in an associate degree of nursing program at Delaware Technical & Community College.

Please note: *The Dictionary* is a work in progress, and we welcome feedback via email to Rev. George Handzo, BCC at ghandzo@healthcarechaplaincy.org.

From the Joint Commission: [*Advancing Effective Communication, Cultural Competence, and Patient- and Family-Centered Care: A Roadmap for Hospitals — A Roadmap for Hospitals*](#) is a free online resource developed by the Joint Commission with the expertise of board certified chaplains affiliated with Health Care Chaplaincy and the Association of Professional Chaplains.

The [*Roadmap for Hospitals*](#) is a guide to inspire and support hospitals as they integrate concepts to improve their communication, cultural competence, and patient- and family-centered care. Example practices and "how to" information are included to help hospitals implement the recommendations and comply with related new and existing Joint Commission standards.

Effective communication is the cornerstone of patient safety. For many individuals, effective communication can be inhibited by language and cultural differences, or by the patient's hearing, speaking, or visual impairments, ability to understand and act on health information, cognitive impairments, disease, or disability.

Communication issues have been shown to be the main underlying cause of sentinel events reported to The Joint Commission, and the literature shows that communication vulnerable patients are at increased risk of medical error.

There are significant research data documenting health disparities faced by various groups and subpopulations related to race, ethnicity, language, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity or expression. These disparities are linked to poorer health outcomes and lower quality care. As the diversity of our nation continues to grow, there is an identifiable need to provide hospitals with more robust guidance to address the needs of the population(s) they serve.

The Association of Professional Chaplains has created this useful [*"Joint Commission Review Crosswalk for Chaplain Services from the Association of Professional Chaplains."*](#)

Important: Patient-centered communication standards go into effect July 2012

Joint Commission surveyors began evaluating compliance with these standards on January 1, 2011, but findings did not affect the accreditation decision. The field was given an opportunity to implement the standards and provide feedback regarding any implementation questions or concerns. While two of the patient-centered communication standards were implemented in order to align with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' (CMS) Conditions of Participation (CoPs) on visitation rights, the remaining requirements (HR.01.02.01, EP 1; PC.02.01.21, EPs 1 and 2; and RC.02.01.01, EP 28) will be effective on July 1, 2012. The notes that were added to indicate that the patient-centered communication standards would not affect the accreditation decision will be deleted, and the changes will be reflected in *Update 1 to the 2012 Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Hospitals (CAMH)* in spring 2012. In August 2010, The Joint Commission issued a free monograph entitled "*Advancing Effective Communication, Cultural Competence, and Patient- and Family-Centered Care: A Roadmap for Hospitals*," which provides recommendations to help hospitals address unique patient needs and meet and exceed compliance with the patient-centered communication standards. In February 2011, the patient-centered communication standards were the topic of an R3 Report, which provides the rationale and references that The Joint Commission employs in the development of new requirements.

Another new field guide from the Joint Commission urges U.S. hospitals to create a more welcoming, safe, and inclusive environment that contributes to improved health care quality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) patients and their families. The field guide features a compilation of strategies, practice examples, resources, and testimonials designed to help hospitals in their efforts to improve communication and provide more patient-centered care to their LGBT patients. Click the link to access, [*Advancing Effective Communication, Cultural Competence, and Patient- and Family Centered Care for the Lesbian*](#).

[Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender \(LGBT\) Community](#). The guide was developed with support from the California Endowment.

[Spirituality resources for health care professionals from City of Hope Pain & Palliative Care Resource Center](#) -- includes City of Hope publications and other resources relating to spirituality in health care including articles relating to cross-cultural topics. There is a listing of tools for assessing spirituality and spiritual concerns, links to organizational position statements relating to spirituality, and recommended publications.

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