

# Integrating living faith with your practice

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## **Joint commission mandate:**

JCAHO requires organizations to include a spiritual assessment as part of the overall assessment of a patient and leaves the specifics to each organization.

## **Gospel mandate, ministry, and message:**

Reconciliation. It's not all black and white, lots of color and shades of grey.

## **Tripartite Biblical view of Body, Soul, Spirit mandate:**

Biopsychsocial-spiritual (BPSS) approach

## **Integrating spiritual runs into BPSS pressures from within and without:**

Internal, family, work, time, and the opposing influence of the Zeitgeist or “spirit of the age”

## **We have BPSS life and death advocacy choices to make in each encounter:**

How do we do it? Primarily by following Jesus' example of sharing His Truth, in His Way, and allowing His Life to flow.

## **Getting to know people in all BPSS dimensions of their existence:**

We were trained to do the “body” (B) part pretty well, weren't we?

We need to get to know patients personally – the “soul” (PS) part:

- Who are they; what they do; who are they related to; how do they think, feel and act?
- What is important to them, motivates them, inhibits them?

And we're called to get to know them better spiritually (S):

- What are their hopes and fears?
- Why do they think they are ill?
- Where is God in their lives and current situations?
- Do they believe in a God who answers prayer?
- Where do they feel weak? What are their sources of strength?
- Have they found support in a faith community? etc.

## **Be living letters:**

Be alive, lively, active, engaged, interactive, accessible, transparent, and perky vs. dead, dreary, sullen, withdrawn, aloof, inaccessible, opaque, and drab.

Share in language with God-breathed personal content that communicates with others vs. being “closed books” without content that others can't “read” or wouldn't want to.

## **Be genuine ladies and gentlemen:**

Courteous and kind, cheerful, comforting, faithful and hopeful, and loving

**Be 100% available to each person:**

- Greet people warmly, graciously, courteously.
- Ask about their welfare.
- Comment on something attractive or interesting about them, their hair, clothing, facial expression, companion.
- Mix humor and lightheartedness into your conversation.
- Allow space for personal anecdotes if they relate.
- Don't let the world clutter you up or get you down.

**Be observant for nonverbal cues about underlying issues:**

- Ask what brought them to you, then draw them out.
- Look for underlying motives beneath superficial reasons.
- Be sensitive to metacommunication, body language.
- Mix empathy with lightheartedness when probing into potentially painful subjects – “this is such a bad situation you have to either laugh or cry, or both...”
- Don't be afraid to dig around and ask personal questions – people are unusually receptive to someone who cares.
- Take note but don't think you have to do something about everything you uncover.

**Exercise your privilege to “laying hands on” people**

- Don't be afraid to touch people appropriately.
- Do a good examination.
- Be warm but professional, firm but gentle.
- Check things that will confirm that you care enough to be thorough.
- Describe what you're doing and what you're finding as you go along.
- Keep up your personal conversation, weaving in pertinent spiritual inquiry and comment along the way.

**Make a faith connection**

People come to us with bad news. Be prepared and able to share good news with them.

- Be gentle but bold.
- Don't be afraid to wear your Christian heart on your sleeve – “God bless you!”
- Don't be ashamed of the Gospel “for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.”
- Don't hide your light under a bushel but put it on a lampstand.
- Be disciplined – it's the mark of a disciple.
- Let the Holy Spirit be your guide.
- Offer to pray... and then pray openly, then and there.

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