

SPIRITUAL CARE RESOURCES FOR EXTRAORDINARY TIMES

(A joint project of spiritual care staff in Eastern and Central Zone)

Spiritual Care resources for staff working with patients dying alone

If you have spiritual care staff in your hospital, they are a good source of information and in-person support for patients and families. If your area does not have spiritual care staff, but is reliant on community-based clergy, you may not have access to the usual human and material resources. Use of phone, ipad, and other technology is strongly encouraged where possible to connect families and/or faith leaders.

When this is not possible, secular/non-religious rituals rooted in our shared humanity are often helpful, and can be profoundly spiritual for patients and family members:

- Reminiscing about the life of the person dying
- Remembering other people who were important to the dying person, who would be present if they could and mentioning their names.
- Taking note of parts of the body, and expressing gratitude for them
 - Hands, which worked hard for the good of their family
 - Arms, which held children and grandchildren with gentleness and love
 - Legs, which allowed them to stand firm even in hard times, etc.
- Remembering what was important in the life of the person
- Offering thanks for the blessings the person has received, and the blessings they have bestowed on others in their life
- Use of poetry or other meaningful reading if family wishes, including but not limited to religious texts such as those below.
- **A brief Christian ritual** at time of death can include
 - a statement of why we are here:
 - We gather to pray for [Name] whom we love
 - or
 - We gather to pray for [Name] who has died
 - Pray together a simple prayer such as the Lord's Prayer and/or listen to a brief reading like Psalm 23 (below)
 - If family wishes, brief memories or special words can be shared
 - A simple blessing using words such as, "May God bless [Name], those here present, and those who are unable to be with us at this time. Amen"
 - This can be done with or without family present if the staff is comfortable. A simple non-Christian ritual is presented below
- **The Lord's Prayer**
Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the Kingdom, the power and the glory are your, now and forever. Amen.
- **Psalm 23 (NJKV)**
The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters.
 He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil;
 For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff they comfort me.
 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
 You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over.
 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life;
 And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

- On-Line Access to Bible through the Gideons:
 - <https://gideons.ca/contact/request-scriptures.aspx>

- **A Brief Non-Faith-based Ritual for Death During Isolation:**

- Death, like birth is a sacred human moment, even for people who do not adhere to any particular faith traditions. Ritual can help.
- Observe a brief time of silence, turning your mind to the deceased, and giving silent thanks for his/her life. Even a brief pause to mark the passing of a life can help to both ground the clinician, and comfort the family.
- If a family or support person is present, and it is safe to do so, they may wish to touch or kiss the deceased, and/or share a memory, or something they are thankful for. If no-one can be present, using a phone or ipad to bring them virtually into the room may help if possible.
- If loved ones cannot be present in person, or virtually, it can be helpful for the names of the people who loved this person to be said in the presence of the body, sharing their goodbyes and thankfulness for his/her life. If there are too many people to name, simply saying that all the people who loved him/her are thinking of him/her at this time is sufficient.
- Knowing that this death did not go un-honoured will help loved ones in their grief.
- Staff who are free to do so may choose to stand silently as the body is removed from the floor.
- Other ways of acknowledging a death include:
 - Lighting a lamp provided for this purpose at the entrance of the unit, or other available symbol so staff coming on will know a death has occurred.
 - Recording names in a memorial book or on a sheet posted in a staff only area to preserve privacy, yet alert other staff who may not have been working at the time of the death.
 - Mentioning the death, followed by a brief moment of silence during shift change.
 - These and similar practices help staff feel they are appropriately honoring the life and death of the people they care for, particularly when the circumstances are not ideal. It also helps them to be able to confidently communicate with families and loved ones, and comfort them by reassuring them that the death of their loved one was appropriately honored.

Religious Resources by Faith Tradition

Many faith traditions have rituals and guidelines around healthcare and spiritual/religious practices before/after death. Asking about these early on in an admission when possible will be most helpful to assess/meet patient and family needs. Some areas to explore include:

- Particular spiritual practices that are important and bring comfort such as sacraments, rituals or prayers/chanting
- increased value placed on modesty, preferences for same-gender care providers/ respectful ways to care if this is not possible

- religious symbols that should not be removed from the body, or for which permission needs to be sought prior to removing. This may include:
 - jewelry such as cross, bracelet, string around wrist, comb in hair etc.
 - items of clothing
 - hair – on head, body and/or beard
- special prayers or chants to be said as death nears, or after death
- how the body is prepared after death
- how decisions are made, and who needs to be involved in the discussion
- Dietary restrictions

While not all of the preferences may be able to be met, particularly in these difficult times, a frank conversation helps to convey interest, compassion, and respect for the values of the patient and the family. It may offer opportunities for creative solutions (ie recordings of special words if faith leaders cannot be present), or help to obtain necessary resources/services in a timely manner.

Anglican Resources:

Anglican Diocese of Nova Scotia and PEI

- Online services
 - <https://www.nspeidiocese.ca/covid-19-in-the-diocese-of-nova-scotia-and-prince-edward-island--183/pages/local-anglican-live-worship>

Baha'i

- Short Obligatory Prayer
 - I bear witness, O my God, that Thou has created me to know Thee and to worship Thee. I testify, at this moment, to my powerlessness and to Thy might, to my poverty and to Thy wealth. There is none other God but Thee, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.

Baptist Resources:

- Canadian Association of Atlantic Baptists
 - <https://baptist-atlantic.ca/coronavirus/resources-for-churches-during-covid-19/>
- African United Baptist Association of Nova Scotia
 - <http://www.aubans.ca/web/>
- Baptist Peace Fellowship (North American)
 - <https://www.bpfna.org/covid19>

Buddhist Resources:

- Buddhist / Multi-faith Prayer for Dying

Through blessing, positive energy, grace and guidance,
Through the power of the light that streams from you and the universe;
May all your negative energies, destructive emotions, obscurations,
and blockages be purified and removed.

May you be forgiven for all the negative actions you may have thought
and done intentionally or unintentionally
At the moment of your death, may you remember the spiritual qualities and beautiful moments you
experienced in life.
May you accomplish the profound practice of peace, joy and wisdom and have a good and peaceful death.
- Buddhist Healing Prayer (Theravada)

Just as the soft rains fill the streams,

Pour into the rivers and join together in the oceans,
 So may the power of every moment of your goodness flow forth to awaken and heal all beings – those here now, those gone before, and those yet to come.

By the power of every moment of your goodness,
 May your hearts wishes be soon fulfilled
 As completely shining as the bright full moon.
 As magically as by a wish-fulfilling gem.

By the power of every moment of your goodness,
 May all dangers be averted and al disease be gone.
 May no obstacle come across your way.
 May you enjoy fulfillment and long life.

For all in whose heart dwells respect
 Who follow the wisdom and compassion of the Way,
 May your life prosper in the four blessings
 Of old age, beauty, happiness and strength.

Catholic Resources:

Catholics patients may wish to receive Sacrament of the Sick. This may or may not be available to them as it must be provided by a priest, and in our present circumstances, priests may not always be able to be present. It may help RC patients/families to know that the Church is praying for them, and Pope Francis has specifically noted that the prayers of the Church will help to provide necessary grace when Sacrament of the Sick is not able to be celebrated in its fullness (details on this are available on the Loyola website below).

- Traditional Catholic Prayers
 - Doxology
 - Glory be to the Father,
 and to the Son,
 and to the Holy Spirit.
 As it was in the beginning,
 is now, and ever shall be,
 world without end.
 Amen.
 - Lord's Prayer – (above)
 - At time of death
 - Eternal rest grant unto him/her O Lord, let perpetual light shine upon him/her. May his/her soul, and all the souls of the faithful departed to the mercy of God rest in peace.
 Amen.
 - Hail Mary:
 - Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
 Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.
 Amen.
 - Hail Holy Queen
 - Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy,
 hail, our life, our sweetness, and our hope.
 To you we cry, the children of Eve;

to you we send up our sighs,
 mourning and weeping in this land of exile.
 Turn, then, most gracious advocate,
 your eyes of mercy toward us;
 lead us home at last
 and show us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus:
 O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

- Daily Mass from Antigonish Diocese
 - Mass for Shut-Ins airs Sundays, 11:30 a.m., on CTV, from October through May.
 - Past episodes can be seen on our
 - [Diocese of Antigonish YouTube Channel](#)
 - or **CTV Mass** button on [MyParish App](#).
 - Vision TV also has daily Mass at 9:00 am and 11:00am
- Sunday mornings Mass from St Ninian's Cathedral in Antigonish is broadcast on: CJFX 98.9 FM
- Daily Mass from The Halifax Catholic Diocesan Centre Chapel with Archbishop Mancini
 - <http://livestream.com/halifaxyarmouth/events/9047466>
- Letter From Archbishop Mancini and Co-Adjutor Archbishop Dunn (Archdiocese of Halifax and Yarmouth):
 - To read the full text of the message please [click here](#).
- Daily Mass and other resources from RC Archdiocese of Toronto
 - <https://www.archtoronto.org/covid19/Pages/spiritual.aspx>
- Loyola University
 - <https://www.loyola.edu/about/coronavirus-update/resources/spiritual-support>
- National Association of Catholic Chaplains (US and Canada)
 - <https://www.nacc.org/resources/coronavirus-resources/>
- Dominican Friars (USA)
 - <https://opsouth.org/c19>

Evangelical/Nondenominational/Christian

- Online Church services
 - **Online Life Church** - Each service lasts about an hour and features worship music and a relevant, life-changing message. Attend by yourself, or join the conversation on a live chat platform hosted by caring, helpful volunteers. [Join a service](#) [Join a life group](#)
 - **Live Church Service Schedule** Looking for online live *church services*? Check out the live streaming *church* schedule for upcoming *church* events in your area. [View Schedule](#).

First Nations:

- <https://www.fnha.ca/what-we-do/communicable-disease-control/coronavirus>

Hindu Resources:

- <https://www.localprayers.com/CA/Halifax/698507176900433/Hindu-Temple-Halifax>

Islamic Resources:

- Guidelines on staff support for Muslim patients at end-of-life in an isolated clinical setting
 - Throughout the process, it is important that a Muslim's modesty – which is often a deeply spiritual practice in life – be maintained even in death. To the best of your ability, please try to keep the patient's body covered with the available linens.
 - As death approaches:
 - The patient's linens should be clean, if possible.
 - Using an iPad, navigate to YouTube and search for "Qur'an Recitation", and launch one of the thousands of available playlists. The recited Qur'an is always in Arabic, making it something every Muslim - regardless of background - will be familiar with, and hopefully find meaningful. There might be some cultural differences over which passages from the Qur'an are most appropriate at the end of life, but the team should rest assured knowing there is no 'wrong' or 'inappropriate' passage from the Qur'an. Chapter 13 (Surah Ra'd), and Chapter 36 (Surah Yasin) are very common in such times.
 - Family may wish to be 'present' in the room via speakerphone/ipad, so they can say relevant prayers. There is a strong belief that a person, if at all possible, die in a state of belief in God by physically affirming their faith through speech. Loved ones will often coach those at the very end of their lives to express and affirm the foundational beliefs of Islam.
 - In the moments after the individual's death:
 - The deceased's eyes should be closed.
 - The deceased's limbs should be straightened, if possible, and the feet brought together.
 - The deceased's head may be wrapped around the chin and over the top, in an effort to keep the mouth shut, using available means (like an ACE bandage wrap).
 - The deceased's head may be tilted towards their right shoulder.
 - The deceased should be covered with a clean linen.
 - Further care:
 - Muslims prefer to bury their dead as soon as possible, within 24 hours, unless some medical or legal concern demands otherwise. Family will try to have their funeral home move quickly to secure the release of the deceased.
- **Spiritual Advice for Muslims In Light of COVID-19 Shutdown: Shaykh Dr. Yasir Qadhi**
 - <https://youtu.be/0F86VvrXCCg>

Jehovah's Witnesses Resources

- Scripture is important to Jehovah's Witnesses, so if they do not have a bible with them, they may be helped by having access to one. If you have spiritual care on site, they may be able to provide a bible that the patient can keep.
 - <https://www.jw.org/en/bible-teachings/peace-happiness/deal-with-isolation/>

Jewish Resources:

- Conservative : Shaar Shalom, Halifax
 - <https://theshaar.ca/>
- Orthodox: Beth Israel, Halifax
 - <http://thebethisrael.com/>
- General resources
 - <https://www.jmoreliving.com/2020/03/20/one-local-rabbis-spiritual-guide-for-covid-19/>

Latter Day Saints (Mormon)

- <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/topics/inspiration-and-news/inspiring-media?lang=eng>

Orthodox Church

- Antiochian
 - <https://saintantonios.ca/cal>
- Greek
 - <https://www.facebook.com/pages/St-Georges-Greek-Orthodox-Church/102092313206671>
- Russian
 - <https://www.halifaxorthodox.org/>

Presbyterian Church in Canada

- <https://presbyterian.ca/covid-19/resources/>

Salvation Army

- <https://www.wthr.com/article/salvation-army-launches-nationwide-emotional-spiritual-support-hotline>
- <https://salvationist.ca/covid19/>

Seventh Day Adventists

- <https://www.halifaxadventist.ca/>

Sikh

- Excerpt from the *Guru Granth Sahib* – Guru Nanak
 - I have no friend like God who gave me soul and body, and infused in to me understanding He cherishes and watches over all creatures; He is wise and knows the secrets of hearts. The Guru is like a lake and we are his beloved swans; in the water are many jewels and rubies. God's praises are pearls, gems and diamonds; singing them makes soul and body happy.
 - My soul is in fear; to whom shall I complain? I have served Him who causes us to forget our sorrows; He is ever and ever the Giver. Night and day serve the Lord, and in the end He will deliver thee. Hark, hark my friend thus shall you cross over. O Merciful One, by Thy name shall I cross over; I am ever a sacrifice unto Thee.

Unitarian Universalist

- <https://www.uua.org;braverwiser>

United Church of Canada

- <https://www.united-church.ca/covid-19>

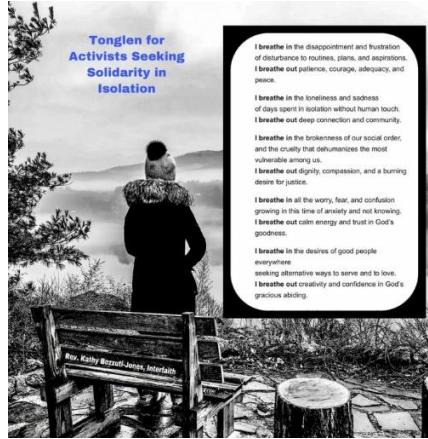
Letters of Support from the Interfaith Council

- Canadian Council of Churches
 - <https://www.councilofchurches.ca/news/hope-gratitude-and-solidarity/>
- World Council of Churches
 - <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/general-secretary/messages-and-letters/pasoral-letter-18-march-2020/view>

Non-Sectarian Mindfulness/Spiritual Practices

- Interfaith resources
 - <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/practices/features/view/28880/spiritual-resources-for-the-covid-19-pandemic>
 - <https://www.earthandspiritcenter.org/programs/spiritual-support/spiritual-resources-for-covid-19/>
 -

- Tonglen meditation in isolation



- **Short relaxation meditations for Buddhists and Non-Buddhists**

- [A short Guided relaxation meditation](#)
- [Guided relaxation I enjoying the joy of present moment](#)
- [A short guided meditation on Loving-kindness](#)

Spiritual Care Resources for Families

Glen Horst MDiv, DMin, BA (cf Virtual Hospice)

Most of us live our lives focused on the future. We make plans for our career, our children and our financial security. Illness can take the enjoyment out of thinking about the future. You may feel worried, frightened or uncertain about it. Or, you may feel that illness has taken away your ability to plan for the future, creating a hole in your life. Focusing on the present, instead of the future, may be one way to find new meaning.

Ways to stay in the here and now and to calm your fears about the future include:

- focusing on today's routines and getting on with them;
- finding whatever is good about the present moment and being grateful for it;
- adjusting to simpler tasks or smaller duties that give satisfaction.

It may be difficult for you to accept that life right now is enough and that you have much to live for in the moment. Even though life is difficult, you may find that there are still moments that offer joy, peace or appreciation. A phone call from a close friend, for example, may help you see value in life, even in the midst of a difficult day.

Finding meaning in relationships

For many people, relationships are central to their understanding of meaning and purpose. These relationships may be with family – partners, spouse, children, grandchildren, parents, and siblings – or with other people who know them well. You can affirm the meaning you find in relationships in many ways:

- reminiscing together
- talking about the way the illness is changing family life or relationships
- enjoying favorite activities, places or rituals together
- openly expressing your love, affection and gratitude to people who are important to you
- working through treatment decisions and changes in roles and needs
- letting go of old hurts and resentments
- asking for forgiveness from those you have hurt
- celebrating each birthday, anniversary, and holiday as if it were your last.

This may be a very tender and difficult time in your family relationships. You and your family members know in a new way that family relationships are both fragile and precious. You and your family may struggle with fears of losing your connection through death. Your family may wonder how to support you during your illness. You may worry about how some family members will survive without you.

Both you and your family are grieving because of the possibility that death may separate you. You and your family face the difficult challenge of holding each other close during your illness while also letting each other go. Sometimes you will find yourselves out of tune with each other. However, your illness will also provide new opportunities for you and your family to express your love for each other in deeply meaningful ways.

Finding meaning in artistic activities

Creating something can be very satisfying and meaningful for some. For example, writing or drawing can provide a way to express thoughts or feelings about your illness that are difficult to speak aloud. Perhaps you appreciate the works of other artists and find meaning through one of the following:

- looking at a piece of art
- listening to music
- watching a live play or a movie
- sitting in a sacred space – interfaith places of prayer and meditation (chapels) are available at many NSHA sites – remember to practice social distancing in these spaces
- reading poetry, novels or biographies.

Such activities may deepen the meaning of your own experiences and connect you with other people and the larger world.

Resources to Revive the Spirit of Staff:

- For us working in health care, this article by Atul Gawande, author of Being Mortal, is very reassuring
 - <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/keeping-the-coronavirus-from-infecting-health-care-workers>
- Harvard Divinity School Resources
 - <https://chaplaincyinnovation.org/2020/04/chaplaincy-coronavirus>
- For Health Care Clinicians from the American Association of Professional Chaplains
 - <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/you-cant-pour-from-empty-cup-why-clinicians-spiritual/?fbclid=IwAR0GRkRO7lGai8b6vzO8LS3lIQNgcWOvdyxYdlHaXcQzyVQlhZJu6y-cts>
- EFAP through NSHA
 -