

## Spirituality & Grief

### Supporting your spirit

Spirituality is foundational to our identity and refers to the way we seek and express meaning and purpose, how we experience our connectedness to the moment, to self, others, to nature, and the significant or sacred. Everyone is spiritual, and some express it through religious practice. Fundamentally, spirituality is the way in which you awaken and come to know yourself as you truly are beyond your temporary thoughts, feelings, attachments to the body or life experiences.

### Spiritual distress

Spiritual distress is the inner struggle we experience when our identity and ability is eroded away by the dying process. This includes grief, the reaction to losing someone who had been a part of our world and identity. Some common examples of spiritual distress include:

Loss of hope, meaning and purpose, a sense of futility, the inability to contemplate, fear of suffering, feeling you are a burden, worry about loved ones, feeling abandoned by God, despair, worry of what will happen to you after death, or how you will continue after someone dies.

Spiritual distress is often expressed in ways that don't seem spiritual: withdrawing from others, loneliness, frustration, contemplation, unpleasant dreams. It is unique to each person. Spiritual practice is, then, about what we do with our suffering.



### How to support your spirit

Spirituality has been found to be the most important factor in supporting resilience in the face of suffering. You can engage this by:

- Being compassionate to others.
- Being kind to yourself by allowing and observing your thoughts and emotions
- Contemplating this moment with gentle, deep presence and awareness.
- Talking about your struggle and sharing your life story with a good listener.
- Using rituals that help to connect you to the mystery of life, to community and God.