

Prehabilitation and Spiritual Care

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It is common to worry about having surgery. You may feel anxious at different times, for different reasons. You may feel uncertain about your future, feel afraid to have surgery, or worry about difficult decisions you need to make.

Spirituality is an important part of health, and some people may have spiritual distress as they prepare for surgery. Spiritual Care is caring for your whole self (body, mind and spirit). It involves paying attention to your beliefs, values, and experiences related to spirituality, religion and culture. Taking time for spiritual care can help reduce stress and help prepare the mind and body for surgery.



What is spiritual distress?

Spiritual distress occurs when someone feels confused, hopeless, lost or disconnected from what gives their life meaning. Your values, faith, personal beliefs, or a sense of purpose may be challenged during times of crisis or illness.

Common signs of spiritual distress can include:

- Fear of the unknown or asking why this is happening to me
- Feeling powerless or without purpose
- Feeling lost, isolated, alone or abandoned
- Feeling disconnected from your spiritual support resources
- Questioning your values, personal beliefs or your faith
- Feeling a loss of pleasure in what usually restores you.

What can I do if I have spiritual distress?

There are many ways to give yourself spiritual care when you need it. To start, here are a few ideas:

1. Take time and ask yourself:

- What does spirituality mean to me?
- Who am I?
- What helps me feel connected?
- What gives my life meaning?

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Questions?
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2. Find and use spiritual practices that work for you. Here are a few examples:



Visit sacred spaces. A sacred space is a place where you can have quiet reflection, practice meditation, pray or attend religious services.



Practice mindfulness meditation exercises.



Talk to a trusted friend, family member, or faith community leader.



Journal about your thoughts, feelings and worries.



Schedule and make time for activities that help you feel energized, calm, or bring feelings of joy and connection.

3. Request spiritual care support.

Many hospitals across Alberta have Spiritual Health Practitioners (SHPs) as part of the health care team. SHPs are health care professionals who are uniquely trained to provide spiritual health care. You can ask any member of your health care team, like your nurse or doctor, to help you meet with a Spiritual Health Practitioner while you are in the hospital. Spiritual Health Practitioners:

- Can help you understand your unique health journey based on your personal beliefs, values, relationships and experiences.
- Provide confidential, inclusive, compassionate and respectful care.
- Will listen compassionately and work with you to determine the support you want and need.

Additional Resources

Alberta Health Services Spiritual Care Services

For more information about spiritual care services visit www.ahs.ca/spiritualcare. You can click the following links to download a spiritual practices [brochure](#) and [workbook](#).

Prehabilitation Services

For more information, visit our website ahs.ca/prehab or contact us by phone **1-888-852-3383** (toll free) or email prehab@ahs.ca

