

Spiritual Care



Spiritual and religious care for patients, families and staff of UHN

To reach a Spiritual Care Practitioner:

Page 416-719-1234 for urgent referrals (from 8:30 am to 11:00 pm daily)

Or

Leave a voicemail at 416-597-3014 for non-urgent referrals.



Spiritual Care: our vision

Spiritual care is care of individuals, focusing on personal beliefs, core values, significant relationships, meanings, and behaviours around which we understand our lived experience. Spirituality refers to that part in each of us which seeks to find meaning and purpose in our lives.

At UHN, we recognize that health care involves the whole person—mind, body and spirit. In times of illness, trauma and loss, people often require more than physical care to help them cope. Many find their spirituality helps them maintain health and provides support in the midst of life transitions by integrating their body, mind, and spirit.

Spiritual Care Practitioners facilitate expression of an individual's beliefs, values, concerns, and emotions in a way that honours all feelings. We understand that spiritual expression can take many forms: interpersonal relationships, ties to community, artistic creation, religious practice, connection to nature, and more. We strive to support all aspects of spiritual expression and to respect the spiritual dimension of all persons regardless of race, colour, culture, belief system, ability, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

Spiritual Care Practitioners are part of the healthcare team providing care to patients and families at UHN, as well as offering spiritual care to staff. Many patient care areas have a designated Spiritual Care Practitioner as part of the team. You can ask to speak with this member of the team at any time.

What we offer

- An opportunity to explore the spiritual significance and meaning of illness, suffering, and life transitions
- An opportunity to express feelings and concerns
- Encouragement and solace
- Support for loss and grief
- Opportunities for prayer, meditation, and reflection
- Facilitation of religious or spiritual rituals when requested
- Support through one to one visits

When to ask for spiritual care

- In response to a request from a patient, family member, or friend
- When faith, spirituality, meaning-making, or all of these together, is obviously important
- When a patient, loved one, or staff member seeks a religious or spiritual ritual
- When a patient, their family members or everyone involved, is struggling with impending surgery, prognosis or diagnosis, death and dying, or significant loss
- When a patient or their family's spirit seems troubled
- When the treatment team requires a religious or spiritual assessment of a patient
- When a patient is separated from or has few visible supports
- When a patient is close to death or has died
- When staff seek support to identify internal or external resources when faced with work place challenges

Education and training

Spiritual Care Practitioners are recognized health care professionals certified with the Canadian Association for Spiritual Care (CASC/ACSS) and registered with the College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario (CRPO). We have a Masters Degree related to our own spiritual tradition, and one year of comprehensive clinical education.

Common misunderstandings

"Some people ask..."	Spiritual Care at UHN—the facts
"What if I'm not a religious person?"	You don't need to be religious to benefit from spiritual care. Spirituality is about finding meaning, value, and connection, especially during difficult times.
"Will you try to convert me?"	No. Spiritual Care Practitioners respect your spiritual and religious beliefs. We are not here to change them.
"Is the spiritual care person a volunteer from a church?"	No. Spiritual Care Practitioners are staff of UHN. We are professionally trained to work with people in hospital.
"Is spiritual care only for someone who is dying?"	No. Spiritual Care at UHN is for everyone seeking personal growth or coping with change, illness or loss.
"Is spiritual care available for UHN staff?"	Yes. Spiritual care is available for all patients, families AND staff.



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