

# Spirituality and Aging

Research Institute for Aging

Translating Research into Practice

Friday, April 13, 2007



# Purpose

- To better understand how ‘spirituality’ is understood and expressed by residents, staff and family members of residents in the Oakwood Retirement Communities and the Village of Winston Park.

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# Spirituality

- That which lies at the core of each person's being that is concerned with ultimate meaning and purpose and that is expressed through values, hopefulness, vocation and relationship with oneself, others, the natural world and the transcendent. It may or may not include religious practices.

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- The word 'spirituality' came into common usage in the 1960's. People born before 1935 may experience 'spirituality' as a foreign concept, for some it may even have negative connotations. This group is more likely to be sustained by familiar religious practices.
- (Henry Simmons, PhD)

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# Questions

- 1. Tell a story or describe an experience in your life that you would describe as 'spiritual'?
- 2. When you hear the phrase 'spiritual care' what word, phrase, or idea comes to mind?
- 3. What would you say is your most important spiritual need?
- 4. Who do you talk to when you have a spiritual concern?
- 5. Name two wishes you have for the spiritual care at *[name of facility]*.

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# Locations

- Tauton Mills, Whitby Staff
- Riverside Glen, Guelph Retirement Home Residents
- Winston Park, Kitchener Residents with early dementia and Family members
- Wentworth Heights, Hamilton Family of residents with dementia
- Humber Heights, Toronto Younger Adults
- Erin Meadows, Mississauga Family of residents with dementia
- Sandalwood Park, Brampton Residents not attending religious/spiritual programming

Total Participants: 32 residents, 15 family members, 15 staff, 5 chaplains

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- Religious affiliation was not asked for, but residents and family members who self-reported considered themselves either Christian or non-religious.

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# Themes

- A Diversity of Spiritual Expression

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- Men and Women Expressed Spirituality Differently

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- The Significance of Spiritual Care for Persons with Dementia

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- The Significance of the ‘Spiritual Environment’ at Oakwood Retirement Communities and The Village of Winston Park

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# Considerations for the Future

- Spiritual care is an essential component of care for seniors that should be thoroughly integrated into the life of the care facilities.
- Given the increasing diversity of spiritual expression with incoming residents, it will be important to continue to be intentional about offering spiritual care that is respectful of the diversity of spiritual expression.

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# Current Research and Educational Initiatives

- 1. User friendly Multi-faith manual of spiritual practices and rituals
- 2. Fall one-day seminar on “Spiritual Care for Persons with Dementia”
- 3. Research: Identifying Spiritual Practices that assist transition into long-term care

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