



MISTIC Framework

Prompting conversation on spirituality and mental health

Research shows that spirituality can be important for some people's mental health and recovery. It has also been demonstrated to form a part of person-centred, ethical and compassionate care across healthcare professions and should therefore be considered within clinical training and practice.

Spirituality has a diversity of meanings and can be expressed through religion or in non-religious and more personalised ways. Essentially spirituality is about what gives us meaning, purpose and connection in life and because of that it can impact mental health, wellbeing and recovery.

Both spirituality and mental health are topics which can be difficult to talk about. Although research suggests that spirituality can help people to cope with mental health difficulties, it also suggests that navigating both spirituality and mental health can be challenging, particularly when there is lack of support or guidance.

The 'Spirituality Project', conducted as ESRC funded research at the University of Nottingham, seeks to understand more about people's own experiences about this topic. As part of this study, a framework was developed which describes what participants in published research said was important in relation to their spirituality and mental health. The framework has six main themes, which form the acronym 'MISTIC'.

These themes can be used to help practitioners gain a better understanding about spirituality and mental health from a service user perspective and as reflective tools or conversational prompts to support spiritual care, training and recovery-focused interventions.



MISTIC Framework

Clinical considerations for use of the MISTIC Framework

To find out more visit: researchintorecovery.com/mistic
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To read about the research project:

Milner K, Crawford P, Edgley A, Hare Duke L, Slade M (2020)

The experiences of spirituality among adults with mental health difficulties: a qualitative systematic review, *Epidemiology and Psychiatric Sciences*, 29, e34.

MISTIC Theme Pair: MI



MEANING MAKING

Spirituality can help some people to make sense of their lives and mental health and this can support recovery.



IDENTITY

Spirituality is central to some people's identity which can play an important role in mental health and recovery.

Clinical relevance

Understanding the centrality of spirituality for some people's identities, lives and mental health.

Clinical approaches and some potential questions

- Being aware that people's spiritual experiences and beliefs may form a core part of their identity and their understanding of their mental health difficulties and/or recovery.
- Asking questions about the importance of spirituality in someone's life.
- Asking if religion or spirituality help them to make sense of what is happening and if so how.
- Asking if religion or spirituality are confusing and if so how.

MISTIC Theme Pair: ST



SERVICE PROVISION

People's spiritual needs are often not met within services, necessitating further considerations for spiritual care provision.



TALK ABOUT IT

People can find it helpful to be able to talk in a safe non-judgemental space to help them make sense of their experiences.

Clinical relevance

Practical ways services can meet spiritual needs.

Clinical approaches and some potential questions

- Offering a pro-active yet sensitive approach in addressing the subject if someone would like this.
- Exploring people's spiritual needs whilst using services.
- Offering people the opportunity to talk about their spirituality and needs, and listening with sensitivity, empathy and open-mindedness.
- Listening non-judgementally with care within a person-centred (rather than expert-driven and problem-solving) approach, giving the person space to express themselves, their own experiences and expertise.

MISTIC Theme Pair: IC



INTERACTION WITH SYMPTOMS

Mental health and spiritual experiences can be disruptive or interact with each other in confusing ways.



COPING

Spirituality can help people to cope and recover from mental health difficulties such as connecting with spirituality, practices and communities.

Clinical relevance

Awareness of challenges and coping strategies.

Clinical approaches and some potential questions

- Exploring how people's spirituality and/or practices may be challenging or helpful.
- Asking about what spiritual and religious practices are used or have been used in the past, and if they are helpful or challenging.
- Asking about whether and how spirituality and religion help with coping.
- Asking about whether and how spirituality and religion lead to struggles or difficulties.