



National Guidelines for Spiritual Care in Aged Care Implementation Tools

Domain 3: Identifying and meeting spiritual choices, preferences and needs

Outcome 3.1: *Upon commencement of care services, spiritual choices, preferences and needs are identified to establish immediate and ongoing care, with the consent of the older person.*

The audiences for this tool include:

Executive	Leaders & managers	Frontline & clinical	Support Services
CEO	Spiritual/pastoral care	Spiritual care	Information Technology
Executive	Lifestyle/activities	Lifestyle	Building & maintenance
	Allied Health	Nursing	
	Clinical	Personal Care	
	Human Resources	Food Services	
	Innovation & strategy	Cleaning & laundry	
	Training & education	Allied Health	
	Research & development	Case managers	
	Hotel services		
	Volunteer coordinator		

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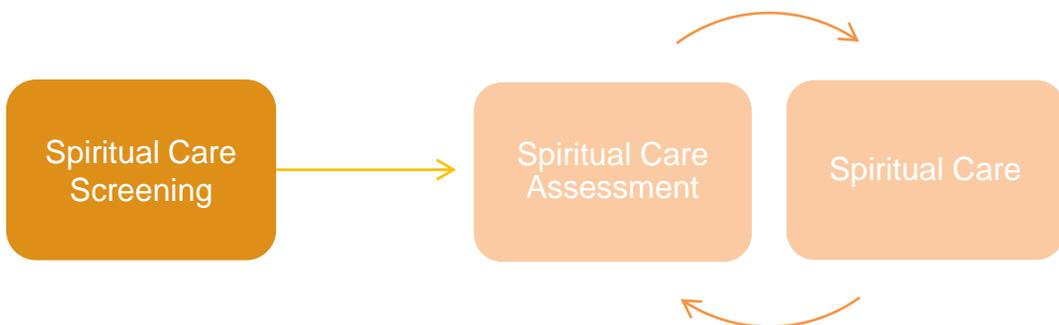


1. Introduction

This tool is a guide for conducting spiritual care screening with people (care recipients) new to your service. Spiritual care screening aims to discover the spiritual choices, preferences and needs of the person to enable spiritual care to commence early. It takes place as a short series of questions that can be included in an intake process. The screening is a concrete information gathering session and is the first step in building a relationship of meaning and trust with a new client or resident. It is therefore important to ask the questions with demonstrated empathy, warmth and skilled listening. Spiritual screening also identifies possible spiritual distress, and enables staff to refer to spiritual care practitioners immediately for more in depth assessment and support if required.

If these ideas are new to the organisation, a training program for staff will need to be completed before it can be successfully implemented. A short spiritual care orientation program for all staff is available for members of Meaningful Ageing Australia. This can be accessed at: <https://meaningfulageing.org.au/product/facilitators-guide/>
This tool also links to Outcome 2.7 of the Guidelines.

This screening forms the first part of a two-tiered approach. The second tier is a more in depth process of spiritual assessment (links to Outcomes 3.2 and 3.3). It is appropriate for use in residential aged care facilities (RACF) and home based aged care. Spiritual care screening can be implemented by any staff member with a basic level of spiritual care practice, which is dependent upon staff having adequate induction and orientation.



For RACFs, it is recommended that spiritual care screening takes place prior to a person moving in. Following screening, the Guidelines recommend referral to a staff member with some spiritual care training to conduct a full spiritual care assessment within one month (please see Outcome 3.2).

For example, at Bethanie Group WA, best practice is demonstrated in that the spiritual care specialist spends time with every new resident before they move in to the facility. Reviews take place after a period of settling in, and regularly thereafter in order to accommodate the changing needs of each resident over time.

2. Considerations

This section provides a list of self-review questions for the organisation to consider.

Please review your existing intake form(s) and consider the following:

- What are your intake processes?
- Who conducts the intake process? What is their level of training?
- Are there different levels of information gathered, from basic to more depth?
- Is there an information gathering instrument? What does it ask?
- How does the intake process attend to spirituality?
- What processes are in place to ensure that clients/residents receive care appropriate to their unique spiritual needs, preferences and choices?
- What referral processes are in place?
- At what point does a more thorough spiritual assessment take place? Who conducts this in-depth assessment? How is it recorded? (please refer to Outcome 3.2)
- What happens to the information shared in these conversations? Who has access to it?
- Does the intake process detect spiritual distress? If so, what is the process for referral? To whom are clients/residents referred?

3. Spiritual Care Screening

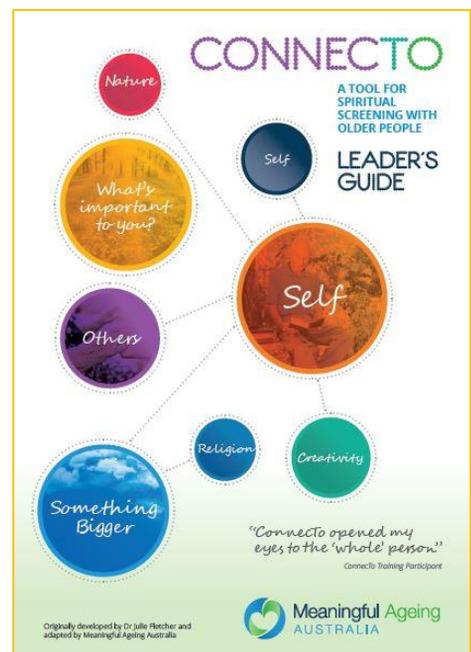
Screening can take place in a range of formats. There are simple tools that can be used, and many organisations have developed their own processes. The spiritual care screening may be one section within a set of intake forms. An example is provided overleaf.

Screening aims to identify the basic information relating to a person's spiritual and religious life. If the screening process identifies spiritual distress, it is important to refer to a skilled spiritual care practitioner.

ConnecTo is a tool that can assist in this process (available from Meaningful Ageing Australia). ConnecTo works with key domains of spirituality through the lens of connectedness. It invites older people to reflect on what is most important to them, looking at connection to self, others, nature, creativity, and something bigger. For some people, 'something bigger' may be through religion or faith:

To access the ConnecTo Leader's Guide, please visit:

<https://meaningfulageing.org.au/product/connecto-spiritual-screening-tool/>





4. Example Spiritual Screening Tool

'Acacia Care' - Spiritual Care Screening Tool
<p>Do you have any faith or beliefs that are important to you? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Comment:</p>
<p>If yes, how is this expressed? (eg. personal practices, connection with faith community, visiting temple/church/synagogue, etc.)</p> <p>How can we support you to maintain these beliefs and practices?</p>
<p>If no, have you ever had a faith or belief that is important? <i>NB. Change in relationship to faith or belief may be a flag for spiritual distress.</i></p>
<p>What keeps you going, or gives you strength, when you're facing challenges? (If they draw a blank, suggest: bowls club, walking in nature, going to religious gathering, making art, meditation practice) <i>NB. If they cannot identify anything, this may be a flag for spiritual distress.</i></p>
<p>For some people, engaging with an aged care service can be challenging, and may mean a big change in their life. How are you feeling about commencing (respite/residential aged care/home care support)?</p>
<p>Recommended for prompt referral to Spiritual Care Practitioner: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Care recipient consents to referral: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Date Referral made:</p> <p>Date Spiritual Care Assessment complete:</p> <p>Comment:</p>

Resources

McSherry, W., & Ross, L. (2010). *Spiritual Assessment in Healthcare Practice*. M&K Publishing: Keswick.

McKinlay, E. (2006). *Spiritual Growth and Care in the Fourth Age of Life*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers: London & Philadelphia.

Centre for Ageing and Pastoral Studies:
<https://centreforageing.wordpress.com/resources/>

We welcome your feedback: admin@meaningfulage.org.au.

Meaningful Ageing Australia offers a consultancy to members to assist you with implementation.

With thanks to Bethanie Group WA, Staff of Resthaven Incorporated, Ellen Bevan (Peninsula Village), and Carole Griffiths (Masonic Village Glen Innes) for their assistance with this resource.

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