

Spiritual: support mapping for care teams

Spiritual themes and considerations often come to the fore in discussions about end of life with an importance and immediacy unsurpassed by most other life events. Spirituality is something that is deeply personal and not easy to define which will make it particularly difficult to explore with the person we are supporting on the autism spectrum. Following a diagnosis of a life-limiting illness it is natural, and for many people imperative, to consider themes such as: personal meaning, culture, religion, and self in the context of our own life and our relationship to the world around us.

Spiritual themes and ideas often involve quite abstract and difficult to define concepts. How do we provide meaningful explanations for things we find difficult to explain?

Religious and cultural customs



What are the important beliefs the person has as a result of their culture or religion?

'Peaceful, pain free and dignified: a good death'

'What if: celebrating my life' could be helpful

Terms and phrases used	Understanding of term	Strategies to support understanding/alternative means of communicating information

Are there customs, rituals or cultural expectations we must adhere to when considering issues of end of life?

What would a 'good death' be for the person you are supporting?

Who is important in the person's life?

What is important in the person's life?

If support staff feel that their knowledge of the cultural and religious customs practised by the person or their family is insufficient, it is important to seek advice to ensure a consistent and informed support approach that is respectful of people's beliefs.

'Religious Expression: a fundamental human right' could be helpful

Creating a life story book could be helpful
 Encouraging the person you are supporting to create a life story book is a useful way of helping them reflect on what is meaningful in their life

- You can use a range of media: images, written word, objects, video, audio
- Life story doesn't have to be explored chronologically, be guided by the person.
- Use of a loose leaf format means that the sequence is flexible and can be changed or added to.

Does the person require support to place themselves in the context of their life story?

What are the experiences that have shaped the person's life?

Personal meaning in life