ASSESSMENT FOR SPIRITUAL DISTRESS

- INDICATORS OF POSSIBLE SPIRITUAL DISTRESS
  - Questions meaning/purpose of illness, pain, life itself
    - Asks, “Why me?”
    - Expresses hopelessness, despair
    - Withdraws from or loses relationships
    - Grieving
    - Cannot accept change, loss
  - Expresses feelings of abandonment by religious group or God
    - Anger at God
  - Feels guilty / deserving of punishment
  - Feels self to be bad, sinful, unlovable
    - Anxious about hell or the afterlife
    - Questions the moral or ethical implication of therapies
  - Interruption of religious practices / activities
  - Raises religious issues / themes

- DIRECT QUESTIONS FOR HEALTH PROVIDER TO ASK
  - Do you feel at peace with the changes in your life that have come about because of your illness?
  - Are there any religious activities or practices that have been interrupted because of your illness?
  - Pain is a hard thing physically. Has it been a hard thing for you spiritually?
  - Would you like to speak with someone about your spiritual concerns?

PASTORAL CARE REFERRAL

Consider a referral to Pastoral Care if the patient’s answers indicate the possibility of spiritual distress, or if indicators of spiritual distress are present.

Indicators are based on, but not confined to, the North American Nursing Diagnosis Association diagnosis of Spiritual Distress. J. Ehman, K. Wieser, R. Ciampa, J.L. Abrahm, authors..