“The role of Christian Nurses in advocating for the spiritual needs of their clients”
History of spiritual care in nursing

- Nursing was part of the church duties- James Ch5:14
- Many nurses were from a religious organization- nuns and priests
- Morning prayer was part of a daily routine in many hospitals and healthcare centres
- Spiritual services were held every Sunday and other special days in the hospitals
- Visits from pastors, priests, nuns, etc were a regular part of care in healthcare institutions
- Distribution of bibles and pamphlets were given out to the sick people
Does the nursing profession today support spiritual care?

- Florence Nightingale: (1860)“ The act of utilizing the environment of the patient to assist him in recovery”
- CNA: Included in Parish nursing
- WHO: Culturally sensitive care
- RNAO: Included cultural diversity
- CNO: Spiritual care is included in culturally sensitive & ethical care
- ICN: (2010) Nursing encompasses autonomous and collaborative care of individuals of all ages, families, groups and communities, sick or well and in all settings. Includes promotion of health, prevention of illness, and the care of the ill, disabled and dying people.
Why should we provide spiritual care?

- Nurses are aware of their own spirituality and its effects on human beings
- Nurse leaders are leading the way and researching spirituality and spiritual care in nursing e.g. Leslie Van Dover, Elizabeth J. Taylor, Judith Shelly, Sheryl Reimer-Kirkham
- Gift of the Holy Spirit
- People of integrity
- We are not alone- we have resources and people we can use to help us

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Why should we provide spiritual care?

- Spiritual care is in sync with many foundational values and current trends in nursing practice. Galatians Ch5.
- Nurses see people in the holistic sense.
- Nurses are primary caregivers and get to know their patients and family members.
- Advocates for patient needs.
Spiritual assessment tools

Nurses can use spiritual assessment tools to assess and evaluate a patient’s spiritual needs.

- Ruth Stoll’s guidelines for spiritual assessment
- Howden’s spiritual assessment scale
- FICA- Faith, Influence, Communication, Address
- Espeland’s spiritual wellness reflective questions
- Daily spiritual experience scale (Underwood & Teresi, 2002)

(These assessment tools can be accessed through institutional libraries)
Challenges in advocating for the spiritual needs of our patients

- Process of health care delivery
- Lack of knowledge on spiritual care
- Time constraints
- Lack of “community” perspective
- Low confidence level
- Lack of support
- Internal resistance
- Lack of global awareness
- Do not understand the difference between spirituality and religion

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Grab bag

• How comfortable & competent do you feel in providing spiritual care?
• What factors contribute to your positioning?
• What resources and support systems do you know you can access to meet your needs?
• Which spiritual assessment tool are you going to use?
• How would you influence nurses in your workplace?
Stay connected with NCF
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Videos on Spiritual care can also be found on YouTube.
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