An Exploration of the Meaning of Spirituality Voiced by Persons Living with HIV Disease and Healthy Adults

Inez Tuck, RN, PhD
Professor, School of Nursing
Virginia Commonwealth University
Richmond, Virginia

Wantana Thinganjana, RN, PhD
Professor, Nursing Department
Boromarajonani Nursing College
Songkhla, Thailand

Project Support

- Sample of Persons Living with HIV Disease
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- Sample of Healthy Adults
  The pilot was supported by the Department of Integrative Systems, School of Nursing, Virginia Commonwealth University, Inez Tuck, Principal Investigator.
Research Questions

Questions posed to a sample of persons living with a chronic disease and a second sample of persons who self reported being “healthy.”

Research questions:
- What is the meaning of spirituality to you?
- How does spirituality affect your daily life?

Data Collection and Analysis

- Collected in Session #1 of Spiritual Growth Group Intervention.
  - Small group intervention with 3 -12 members.
  - Data collected from two populations over a period of four years.
- Responses recorded verbatim by research assistant or handwritten and submitted by participants.
- Data sorted by group and gender.
- Responses content analyzed independently using an iterative process by two investigators.
- Agreement regarding the themes for persons with HIV disease by gender and for the total sample.
- Agreement regarding the themes for sample of Healthy Adults.
Description of Sample

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Participants by Group Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Type</th>
<th>HIV/AIDS Participants</th>
<th>Healthy Adults Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sample size</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Age</td>
<td>41 years</td>
<td>52 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>47 (63%)</td>
<td>3 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>28 (37%)</td>
<td>24 (89%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>58 (77%)</td>
<td>14 (52%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>17 (23%)</td>
<td>12 (44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean educational level</td>
<td>12.32 years</td>
<td>17 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Themes for Persons Living with HIV Disease (Total Sample)

- Spirituality is Relating and Believing in God or a Higher Power;
- Spirituality is Being Guided or Helped;
- Spirituality is Being Inspired by or Receiving Gifts;
- Spirituality is Expressed in Outward Ways;
- Spirituality is Journeying, Discovering, Centering;
- Spirituality is Feeling the Presence of God.
Themes of Persons Living with HIV Disease by Gender

Female Participants
- Spirituality as a Belief in God (a higher power or religion);
- Spirituality as a Channel that Helps;
- Spirituality as a Source;
- Spirituality expressed through Actions such as Praying, Meditating and Attending Church;
- God is Present and Giving;
- Spirituality as one’s Essence or Center.

Male Participants
- Dimensions of Spirituality: What it is and what it is not;
- Spirituality as a Channel that Guides and Helps;
- Spirituality as a Force that shapes One’s Being;
- Spirituality expressed Outwardly through Activities;
- Spirituality as a Journey/Path to Explore Life or to Explore or “Be” the Essence of Self.

Themes for Healthy Adults

- A Belief in a Personal Relationship with God;
- A Connection and Relationship with Others;
- Spiritual Journey, Guide or Struggle;
- Spiritual Essence of Self;
- Spirituality Expressed in Actions;
- Integral Spirituality.
Essential Nature of the Themes for Persons Living with HIV Disease

Spirituality is relating and believing in God, who is always present. It is perceived as being guided or helped or being inspired or given unto. Spirituality includes the processes of journeying, discovering, and centering and is outwardly expressed.

Essential Nature of the Themes for Healthy Adults

Spirituality is a strongly held belief and a personal relationship with God that is integral to the life of individuals. There exists a connection with nature, others, and a higher power. Spirituality evolves as a process that can be described as a journey, a guide, or a struggle. Spirituality is the essence of the self and is expressed outwardly primarily in prayer.
Summary and Implications

Thank You!