

Spirituality and Mental Health Recovery in Eastern Kansas Social Work

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Consumers' Insights Related Questions

Q1: What types of spiritual beliefs, practices, and symbols are portrayed (whether religious or non-religious)?

A: The first spiritual concept mentioned in the slides is “youthful spirit” and praying. Acceptance of perfection and imperfections is the key to being an individual with a healthy spirit, mind, and body. Youthful spirit is portrayed as an acceptance of one’s self and understanding that we are not perfect. Praying is the source of gaining wisdom and strength. Another important spiritual belief is the hope to get better and have a sustainable life. Fear and love are portrayed as the hardships and leisure in life. The perception of each feeling and its effect on a person’s life. “Let there be light” is a way of salvation from a person’s darkness and is portrayed as a path of removing the mask we hide behind and shedding light into the darkness. Dixie Moon explained in his essay how reading the bible is helping him feel God’s love around him. Jesus is around to protect him from depressed thoughts and negativity. Jeffrey Holland sees spirituality as a focal point of hope in his darkest despair and confusion.

Another concept is faithfulness with your prayer and medication. Attending church to bring harmony and understanding of the responsibility to others. It brings a sense of unity and not feeling alone in the journey of recovery. “Free your spirit” and accept others with all of their weaknesses and strengths. Another artwork representing thankfulness and God’s power is a sun, a star, and a flower. Consumer represents a fantastic experience of being parted from the Tree of Life and getting back to it through God. People believe spirituality, right meds, fitness, and support lead to hope, love, faith and good self-esteem. Community spirit is represented by a row of people holding hands in harmony and lighting candles outside the church, and the star and moon represent recovery.

Q2: How is hope portrayed? Why is having hope important?

A: Hope is depicted as a necessary step involved in the recovery of mental health. Consumers see hope as a beginning of light in their dark lives, and people around them are a source of their hope. Medical professionals are the hope for mentally ill patients. Positive thinking and hope promote physical and psychological well-being. To recover from a mental illness, hope plays an important role. It helps in taking the medication properly and saves us from feeling despair in case of failure or

relapse. Recovery from mental illness is often a long process that requires patience and hope to continue on the path (Verghese, 2008). Religion brings hope in the form of prayers. Prayers help people overcome negative and impulsive thoughts about themselves. Acceptance is another virtue of hope. It enlightens the inner self of a person.

Q3: What are ways that these consumers indicate that they gain strength from their spirituality?

A: Consumer believes that faith in God opens new doors and gives strength to walk on the right path. Their strength comes from God Himself and following the spiritual practices of their ancestors. Prayer is an approach to gaining wisdom and power (Koenig, 2010). For some consumers, reading the bible is a way to increase strength in despair and feel God's love around them. The community plays an essential role in the recovery of patients; the support system that the loved ones provide is the foundation of gaining strength. Consumers get strength by sharing their hopes and fears with the people around them.

Q4: In what ways are relationships and community connections represented?

A: The community and relationships are presented by churches, representing unity and going to the churches to help other people in rehabilitation and recovery. The strong relationship with the community and the people around consumers encourages them to get support when needed and gives them hope for a workable future. Joining the 12-step meetings for recovery, consumers felt the responsibility of continuing the rehabilitation process and recognizing the significance of helping others in the community. The feeling of "I am not alone" is a connection between community and consumer. The relationship with God is depicted in the reading of the bible. When a consumer reads the bible, he can sense the affection of God around him (Koenig, 2009).

Q5: Overall, what is the link between spirituality and recovery according to the artwork and essays?

A: According to the artwork and essays, spirituality is linked to recovery through the hope of getting better and having a maintainable life in spite of severe mental illness, strength to overcome negative thoughts, acceptance of the true self, shedding light on the darkness behind the mask, the perception of life with respect to fear and happiness, salvation through reading the bible, asking for help with the support of Jesus, and helping the community (give and take rule). Spirituality gives a sense of direction and purpose to the mysteries and understandings of life. It takes away the sense of being isolated and fragmented as part of the whole and gives an intellect of belonging (Seybold & Hill, 2001).

Considering Cultural Context Questions

Q1: Consider the cultural context implied by the artwork and essays created by local consumers of eastern Kansas. How does cultural context affect their expressions of spirituality?

A: The artwork and essays represented a certain community and religion to show various spiritual effects in the recovery of mental health. Different religions value different varieties of experiences. For example, a prayer can be defined as asking for help from God, but in some religions, such as Islam, prayer is a physical exercise. It is a process of submitting to God physically, mentally, and spiritually. The meaning of prayer is also different from the culture. These art effects are specific to the Christian and the Kansas consumers, which limits its spiritual expressions across different cultures. Spirituality is not the same everywhere, but it is a universal aspect of human experience (Piedmont & Leach, 2002).

Q2: How might this be similar or different from what you would likely find in your social work practice community context? What are the spiritual perspectives in your local area?

A: In my local community, the representation of getting strength from God is the same as in the Kansas community. People go to church, pray and read the Bible, help communities and share their fears and happiness with people around them. The hope of getting better by praying to God is the same. However, the degree of desperation among people is increasing significantly; this leads them to a spiritual journey for the redemption of their minds and bodies. Unlike Kansas Self- self-acceptance is not very common in my community.

Q3: How do the insights from the presentation and discussion suggest ways that you can prepare to address spirituality in mental health recovery or other social work practice settings?

A: The first and most significant way to address spirituality in mental health recovery is through hope. Hope is essential to keep a person's faith in God and his/her betterment. To nurture hope in people, making them accept themselves is important. Self-discoveries and mindfulness of the limitations a person has and how to overcome these limitations with the help of spirituality are vital in mental health recovery. We can create a community where self-awareness and recognition are practised, and faith in God is strengthened by organizing spiritual activities, whether it's listening to a religious figure

in the church or practising prayer routines along with other people (Fukuyama, Siahpoush & Sevig, 2005).

Self-Awareness/Reflection Questions

Q1: What are your reactions or thoughts on discussing spirituality/religion with your clients?

A: In my opinion, spirituality or religion is a personal choice of a client, and if I want to suggest a solution through spirituality, I must understand the meaning of this in that client's particular culture. I agree with the serious effects spirituality can have on mental illness recovery, and therefore, I would suggest my clients take religion as a meditation in the process of recovery (Rowling, 2008).

Q2: What is your key takeaway from this assignment?

A: It is natural to feel down or desperate with any long physical or mental illness surrounded by the feeling of isolation. We often forget our role in helping others recover from an illness as a community. The patient often feels hopeless or isolated; it is our responsibility to take care of them. Hope is the key to recovery from mental illness, and telling people how much God loves them and how there is always something good coming after every hardship can make a difference in mentally ill patients and their compliance with taking medication and therapies. The peace of mind is achieved through thankfulness and acceptance. Belief in God can help control the negative thoughts of a patient (Mathews, 2009).

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