

Many clients have religious or spiritual beliefs that contribute to their health. Religion or spirituality could be important as you cope with your injury.

What is the relationship of spirituality to physical and mental health?

- Studies have shown a relationship between spirituality and longevity
 - Sense of wholeness
 - Sense of meaning and purpose
- Positive association for mental health

Possible pathways to healing through spirituality:

- Health and wellbeing improved
- Making meaning from events
- Establishing and maintaining a healthy social network
- Processing experiences

People often experience spiritual difficulties and struggles after an injury. In particular, returning service members may experience difficulties because of:

- Incidents involving death or harm to civilians or fellow service members
- Combat vs. other traumatic exposures
- Violence within ranks
- Moral Injuries
- Atrocities
- Betrayals

What are some examples of spiritual difficulties and struggles that all people may experience?

- Spiritual Struggles
 - Unprocessed grief and loss
 - Self-Loathing
 - Loss of faith
 - Forgiveness
 - Isolation
 - Guilt
 - Serious doubts about God's role and existence
 - Disconnection from faith
 - Feeling unsure of the role of church/religion
- Returning to your place of worship may be harder than you think. Re-enter places of worship casually without pressure:
 - Be aware of crowds
 - Be patient with yourself and others
 - Offer and receive love
 - Be open-minded



What can you do?

- Develop a spiritual practice outside of the “regular ways.”
 - Find a spiritual practice that you can do by yourself or with a loved one or other support person, such as prayer, meditation, breathing exercises, spending time in nature, etc.
 - Establish a practice that allows you time to reflect and refresh.
- Maintain or reestablish connection with your faith community.
- Talk with a counselor, friend, pastor, clergy member, or chaplain about your struggles.

As you cope with your injury, is religion or spirituality important to you?

- If the answer is yes, how much strength do you get from your spirituality or religion right now? Talking with a chaplain can help guide you towards utilizing those strengths in your coping.
- If the answer is no, a chaplain can help you to explore possible spiritual resources that may help.

Common topics that chaplains can help with:

- Struggling with the meaning of injury or illness.
- Having spiritual or religious concerns or questions.
- Grieving over a loss (e.g., disability, life transition, death in the family or loss of friend.)
- Anxiety about your condition or treatments.
- Wishing to receive prayer, ceremony, or readings.
- Facing difficult decisions.
- Wanting to reflect on spiritual issues and concerns.
- Wishing to celebrate and give thanks for results and positive outcomes.
- Wishing to receive a visit from a clergy member, priest, imam, or rabbi from the community to perform specific rites or ceremonies.
- Requesting a Bible, Tanakh, Koran, prayer book, prayer rug, or rosary.

Additional Comments:

