**Spirituality Spotlight: Judaism**

*by Chaplain Terry Wilson*

Each Caring Spirit Newsletter focuses on a different religious or spiritual practice in order that we may be better equipped to put Patients and Families First, which is one of our institutional goals. Awareness of different religious practices is also part of MUSC Excellence. This edition focuses on Judaism. Below are several traditions and practices observed by Jewish people. Note there is variation in practice.

**Interfaith Calendar Highlights**

- **April 9. Palm Sunday**

- **April 11. The Lord’s Evening Meal**
  (Jehovah’s Witnesses). Annual commemoration of Jesus’s death, and remembrance of his last meal with his disciples.

- **April 11-18. Pesach**
  (Jewish). Pilgrimage festival remembering the journey from slavery in Egypt to freedom. Also called Passover.

- **April 13. Maundy Thursday**
  (Christian). Commemoration of Jesus’s last supper with his disciples and prayer in the garden.

- **April 14. Good Friday**
  (Christian). Remembering Jesus’s suffering and death on the cross.

- **April 16. Easter Sunday**
  (Christian). Beginning of the fifty-day celebration of Jesus Christ’s resurrection from the dead.

- **May 27. Ramadan begins**
  (Islam). Holiest month of the year, observed with fasting from sunup to sundown, remembering the receiving of the divine revelation recorded in the Qur’an.

- **May 31-June 1. Shavuot**
  (Jewish). Celebration of Moses’s descent from Mt. Sinai with the ten commandments.

In offering spiritual support to Jewish patients we may ask patients and/or health care agents (if patient lacks decision-making ability), what religious support would best meet their healthcare needs. Pastoral Care Services has established relationships with local rabbis who provide spiritual support. Many come to visit the patient in a timely manner. For more in-depth information on Jewish beliefs related to health care decisions, visit [http://www.advocatehealth.com/documents/faith/Jewish4.pdf](http://www.advocatehealth.com/documents/faith/Jewish4.pdf)

Source: [http://www.uphs.upenn.edu/pastoral/resed/diversity_points.html](http://www.uphs.upenn.edu/pastoral/resed/diversity_points.html)

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**Health Care Theater**

This monthly program provides a forum for MUSC care team members to debrief difficult cases and to share strategies that support families, colleagues, and themselves. One hour of Diversity Education training credit will be provided. Participants must register via MyQuest. The following programs are planned for April and May.

**Weight Bias**

**April 11, 2017**

1:30 pm - 2:30 pm

300 Clinical Science Building (CSB)

**Ethics Consultation: Partnership in Decision-Making**

**May 9, 2017**

1:30 pm - 2:30 pm

300 Clinical Science Building (CSB)
Spiritual Care Assessment and Delivery: 
An Interdisciplinary Approach 
by Chaplain George Rossi

Chaplains work with interdisciplinary teams when it comes to knowing who to visit and when to visit. Rounding in a unit and receiving a referral from a nurse or a spiritual care consult from a physician are common ways for chaplains to learn of patient and family needs. In addition, a nurse or physician or RT may know more of a patient’s story and may relay that information to the chaplain. For example, following an accident a patient may ask the hard question, “Will I ever be the same?” or a patient may show spiritual distress with words like, “I can’t go on” following a tragedy where someone died and the patient is dealing with survivor guilt. Here are some suggestions for determining spiritual care needs for patients and families:

• Who or what provides the patient with strength and hope?
• Does the patient use prayer in their life?
• How does the patient express their spirituality?
• How would the patient describe their philosophy of life?
• What type of spiritual/religious support does the patient desire?
• What is the name of the patient’s clergy, minister, chaplain, pastor, rabbi?
• What does suffering mean to the patient?
• What does dying mean to the patient?
• What are the patient’s spiritual goals?
• How has illness affected the patient and his/her family?

This information and more can be found on The Joint Commission website (see below). https://www.jointcommission.org/standards_information/standards.aspx

Sampling of Clinical Spiritual Assessments

During medical school and residency, I received formal training in tending to the spiritual needs of patients. In the face of serious illness, the human spirit is tested just as much as the human body. If I as a clinician ignore the spiritual needs of patients and families, I will not be effective in ensuring comfort and healing. I ask children and their families about the importance of spirituality in their lives and how that might impact their healthcare. I recently learned of an approach I intend to use regularly: “In times of difficulty, where do you find your strength? How well is that working for you right now?”

Conrad Williams, MD, FAAP 
Medical Director, Palliative Care Program Assistant Professor, Department of Pediatrics

As a trained and board certified clinical chaplain I work to provide spiritual care that is focused first and foremost on expressed patient or family need. I work to be an authentic and compassionate presence, open-minded and open-hearted, as I assess for spiritual care needs. My assessments usually revolve around determining how a person makes meaning of his or her medical challenges amidst the person’s known religious and spiritual needs. In particular I am looking for how a patient wants his/her community needs met, and in particular how love, hope, faith, joy, and beauty needs and concerns are being met. Sometimes a patient with an illness has lost hope and it is obvious. I work to find ways to help the patient tap into his/her spiritual resources of hope which can be a new treatment, a caring doctor, a compassionate caregiver or a religious reading. Ultimately, my job is to honor feelings, beliefs, dreams, pain/suffering, and meaning-making of the patient and family.

Chaplain George M Rossi, M.A., M.Div., BCC 
Pastoral Care Services

As a medical professional I did not receive training on how to handle the spiritual needs of patients. It is sometimes looked at as a Chaplain “thing.” However, sometimes giving a prayer for someone who is dying (when no one is around) is how I usually bridge the gap. If the family requests that I pray with them then I will. I believe that we all have a purpose in life and it is up to us to see what that purpose is. I try to take that extra time with the family to make them feel loved. Sometimes it is the silent prayer that I say to a dying patient when they are in there last minutes of life. God gave us free will to determine how we live our lives. We have free will to do good or bad. Sometimes I feel it is up to me to help the grieving and the dying. I try to help them know that I care or spiritually help them with a prayer by asking for comforting, forgiveness, or peace.

Joe Whitlock, RCP 
MUSC Adult Respiratory Therapist

Chaplains are available 24/7/365

Contact Chaplains at MUSC | Main Hospital pager #18089 | Ashley River Tower (ART) pager #17265 | Chaplain Services – 24/7/365

WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

Healthcare clinicians from various professions can assess the spiritual care needs of patients and families. Examples include concerns and issues such as:

A. Coping with suffering  
B. Hopelessness  
C. Feeling disconnected from one’s faith community  
D. All of the above

The first team member to respond with the correct answer will be recognized in a future edition of the newsletter. Send responses to sergents@musc.edu

Tanya Stoehr, MHIT 
Customer Support Analyst

Correct answer from the February-March 2017 issue:  
D. A and C

Do you have topic ideas for future issues or would like to provide general feedback about the newsletter? If so, send an email to sergents@musc.edu

Stacy Sergent, Chaplain, Editor

Compliments, complaints, or other acknowledgements about Pastoral Care Services should be directed to:

Chaplain Terry Wilson 
Manager, Pastoral Care Services 
wilsont@musc.edu 
843-792-9464

OR

Stephanie Taylor, MPS 
Director, Diversity & Inclusion 
taylorst@musc.edu 
843-792-2341