SPIRITUAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT
Healing through Self Awareness

Based on “Healing the Four Dimensions of Spiritual Pain” in the classical Sacred Art of Living & Dying tradition

NAME/CARE RECEIVER ___________________________ CARE GIVER [optional] ___________________________
DATE ___________________________ TIME ___________________________ LOCATION ___________________________

INSTRUCTIONS
- Quiet yourself and take a moment for reflection.
- Circle the deepest truth that describes “How you are within yourself” today.
- Use the optional questions as a guide for insight.
- Record and compare your answers at regular intervals in order to discover patterns of spiritual health or distress.
- Trust that awareness is the first step towards healing. Instead of trying to fix spiritual pain, it only needs to be listened to and received.

MEANING

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life is filled with purpose and meaning</td>
<td>I feel generally motivated</td>
<td>Life has become meaningless</td>
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What is giving me life and energy right now? ____________________________________________________________
Who or what keeps me from being fully alive? __________________________________________________________

FORGIVENESS

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel a deep sense of reconciliation towards myself and others</td>
<td>There are no outstanding issues that are calling for forgiveness in my life</td>
<td>I feel a strong sense of un-forgiveness towards myself and/or another</td>
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Who or what do I need to forgive? __________________________________________________________
From whom do I need to seek forgiveness? ________________________________________________________

RELATEDNESS

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<tr>
<td>I feel a strong sense of connection with the persons and things that matter most to me</td>
<td>Most important areas of my life seem balanced</td>
<td>I feel seriously alienated from someone/thing that is important to me</td>
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Who or what means the most to me? __________________________________________________________
Who or what do I fear losing? ________________________________________________________________

HOPE

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<tr>
<td>I feel hope-filled and optimistic</td>
<td>I generally trust what the future holds for me</td>
<td>I am experiencing deep depression and hopelessness</td>
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What dreams keep me alive? ________________________________________________________________
Why might I feel depressed or hopeless? _____________________________________________________
Background for the Spiritual Health Assessment Tool

- The **Spiritual Health Assessment (SHA)** was originally developed as part of a North American healthcare education initiative to help caregivers and care receivers better understand and respond to the impact of existential suffering on physical health and emotional well-being.

- **SHA** was designed by internationally acclaimed educators, Richard and Mary Groves, co-founders of the Sacred Art of Living Center in Bend, Oregon USA. Based on more than thirty years of clinical caregiving experience they developed the *Soul & Science of Living* programs and the *Sacred Art of Living & Dying* series, as international training courses for healthcare professionals.

- The **SHA** tool was designed in consultation with physicians, nurse practitioners, mental health therapists and spiritual caregivers from a wide range of faith and cultural traditions. Underlying the **SHA** is the concern that, "Western Medicine has no model to help someone live through their suffering" (cf. Mortally Wounded: Stories of Soul Pain & Healing, Michael Kearney, MD, Medical Director for Sacred Art of Living Center).

- Since 1997 the **SHA** has been utilized as a ‘best practice’ in hundreds of care facilities in North America, Europe, Asia and Australia (including hospices, hospitals, long term care facilities and a variety of social and faith community venues).

- The purpose of the **SHA** is to assist persons living with serious, chronic or terminal illness through enhanced awareness of emotional and spiritual concerns. The presumption of the tool is that self-awareness is the first step towards healing and wellness.

- The goal of the **SHA** is to invite a person to reflect on “How you are within yourself” a question designed by Dr. Cicely Saunders, founder of the modern hospice movement. Saunders’ Total Pain Management approach to suffering attempted to measure not just physical pain but emotional, social and spiritual dimensions as well.

- The **SHA** measures four dimensions* of existential suffering: Meaning, Forgiveness, Relatedness and Hope which are universal experiences, regardless of a person’s age, gender, culture or belief system.

  *For more background on related theory and practice of the four dimensions of spiritual suffering, consult The American Book of Living & Dying: Lessons in Healing Spiritual Pain, by SHA author Richard Groves.

- The benefit of the **SHA** is the support it provides for both caregivers and care receivers by assessing emotional and psychospiritual needs. The **SHA** is always optional however utilization rates of the **SHA** among care receivers range from 86-92%.

- Responses to the four dimensions of spiritual suffering should be prescribed only after caregivers have received mentorship appropriate to their profession and experience. It is highly recommended that, before introducing the **SHA**, institutions and their personnel receive appropriate training through the *Soul & Science of Living* or *Sacred Art of Living & Dying* programs. To learn more about these series and the related Anam cara Project, which are offered worldwide, contact Sacred Art of Living Center: [www.sacredartofliving.org](http://www.sacredartofliving.org) More than 20,000 caregivers worldwide have graduated from these education and training programs.

  “The work of the Sacred Art of Living Center is essential because spiritual suffering is the least diagnosed cause of pain.”

  Dame Cicely Saunders, MD