<u>Title:</u> Skill-Building Course: Spirit & Soul

Description: This course is designed assist a Whole Health Coach or other educator working with Veterans who would like to incorporate "Spirit & Soul: Growing & Connecting" into their Personal Health Plans. It reviews six different "subtopics" related to this aspect of self-care, designed to give Veterans additional ideas, insight, and resources to support them on their Whole Health journey.

Objectives and Key Points

- Define "religion," "spirituality" and "soul"
- Discuss how Spirit & Soul is linked to health
- Explore and more clearly identify one's beliefs and values
- Discuss how Veterans' health can be influenced by moral injury, grief, and forgiveness, and how self-care and care by the health care team can support work in these aspects of life
- Experience a mindful awareness exercise related to Spirit and Soul
- Learn from a chaplain about the role of chaplains in the VA, experiencing an exercise or practice they might offer a Veteran in their care
- Identify local resources that can support Veterans with this aspect of self care at a local level
- Create a Personal Health Plan focused on one aspect of Spirit & Soul

Sample Agenda (total time 60-80 minutes)

- Ground Rules, Definitions, and Why Spirit & Soul Matter (5-10 minutes)
- Exercise: Exploring Values, Meaning and Purpose with a Partner (10-15 minutes)
- Exercise: Spiritual Practices and Mindful Awareness (10-15 minutes)
- Grief, Moral Injury, Recovery (5-10 minutes)
- Chaplains and other experts, with discussion/demo (15 minutes)
- Partner activity: Setting a Spirit & Soul goal, large group sharing (15 minutes)
- Wrap up, questions, and evaluations

Preparation

1. Pre-Reading for Instructors

- Passport to Whole Health, Chapter 19. Spirit & Soul: Growing and Connecting. Available at <u>https://wholehealth.wiscweb.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/414/2018/09/Passport-to-Whole-Health-3rd-Edition-2018.pdf</u>. Pay particular attention to the clinical tools. Chapter 7, Personal Development, features a Forgiveness clinical tool that may be relevant as well
- It might help to keep a list of all your different ideas for "making one small change"
- Be willing to share a little about your own definitions of spirituality and religion
- The Whole Health Library has a number of additional materials that are worth a look. <u>https://wholehealth.wisc.edu/overviews/spirit-soul/</u>. Be sure to look over the Spirit & Soul overview, as time allows

- 2. Prepare course materials and handouts
 - We strongly encourage you to have a conversation with local chaplain services to have them partner with you to teach this course. Ideally, they can also demonstrate one of the exercises or activities they might do with a Veteran
 - Read over the script for the mindful awareness exercise in advance
 - Each participant will receive a copy of the Veteran Handout designed to accompany this course. It may be easiest to have handouts at participants' seats when they arrive, or you can pass them around later. Review the handout in advance, so you can be ready for questions
 - You will need sheets of paper and pencils/pens for the mindful awareness experience
 - You may wish to provide some additional Veteran handouts related to Spirit & Soul, available at <u>https://www.va.gov/PATIENTCENTEREDCARE/veteran-handouts/index.asp#spirit-and-soul</u>
 - Be sure to have an evaluation form ready to give them at the end as well. There is a general evaluation form that is provided as part of the materials for this course
- 3. Set up AV and other equipment
 - Be prepared to share the PowerPoint slides related to this course. A guide to each of the individual slides is featured later in this document
 - Connect with the AV support person at your site
 - A flip chart and markers, or a dry erase board, may be helpful
 - If you do not have a slide projector, you can simply take them through the Veteran handout after you give each person a copy. Alternatively, you can print out the slides and give them copies. Then, just take them through the slides, following the faculty guide
- 4. Identify local and other resources
 - You should know how to contact the chaplains at your site. Are there other churches/clergy that are especially important in your local community? It may be helpful to know them/reach out to them as well
 - Add to the slide set (and/or Veteran Handout) to include local resources, including classes, group visits, and group therapy sessions available locally
 - Develop your own list of favorite resources to share

Slide-By-Slide Guide

<image/> <complex-block><section-header><section-header><section-header><section-header><section-header><image/><text><text><text></text></text></text></section-header></section-header></section-header></section-header></section-header></complex-block>	 This is a picture of Justus Belfield, Army Veteran from Glenville NY. At 98, on Veteran's Day, he was too weak to get out of bed, but he still had his caregivers put on his uniform. He died the next morning. This course is about our meaning and purpose and what we do because of it This is a good time to introduce yourself. Be sure to share your own title/role related to the VA and teaching Might be worth it to have the participants do quick introductions as well, but be mindful of time This can be a tricky topic to discuss, because people have such different beliefs. Lay a ground rule right away – this is about respect of everyone's beliefs and opinions, and being careful not to try to force our own beliefs and opinions on others This can, of course be a contentious subject. It is important that, as facilitator, you prevent arguments about differing beliefs
 Ground Rules Listen to everyone's views Share your views, too Do NOT try to impose your beliefs on others Respect that everyone has a unique point of view 	 Again, take time with each of these points All the points on the Spectrum of Spirituality are valid It is best not to specifically ask people what their beliefs are in a large group venue

 Solution of the state of the st	 This is the list of learning objectives for the course. You can review these in detail, or go quickly over them to save time As you move through, remember the subtitle for this circle is "Growing & Connecting." Spiritual issues are connected to every other part of our lives and all the other self-care topics The main message here is that you will benefit from taking time to explore what gives you a sense of meaning and purpose. Build off that central question of "What really matters to me?" Highlight Spirit & Soul's location on the circle Can read the quotation and ask them if they agree, if time permits Be sure to point out that while it is important to think about definitions, there is a lot of overlap Some people may describe themselves as not spiritual
 Spirituality – directly experiencing the sacred Soul – what makes something or someone alive A person can be spiritual, religious, and soulful at the same time 	and religious. There will still be suggestions in this module that can be of use to them. It can help simply to ask, "What gives me a sense of meaning and purpose?"
 Spirit and Soul may include Meaning and purpose, what we value Seeking well-being, inner freedom, and inner peace Living, flourishing, and being resilient when challenges come Connecting with others, or with something beyond us. Belonging Being in the present moment (mindful awareness) 	 This slide is optional, for if you feel you want to go deeper with defining Spirit and Soul

	• Spirituality and religion have powerful links to health.
<text><list-item><list-item><list-item><list-item><list-item><section-header></section-header></list-item></list-item></list-item></list-item></list-item></text>	 Spirituality and religion have powerful links to health. Most studies have involved religious attendance. The benefits occurred regardless of which religion a person belongs to, so long as it is a positive experience for them
<text><list-item><list-item><list-item><list-item><list-item><list-item> <section-header></section-header></list-item></list-item></list-item></list-item></list-item></list-item></text>	 Take your time reading through these Prayer studies have focused on prayer being done by people who belong to multiple different religions
<text><section-header><section-header><list-item><list-item><list-item><list-item><list-item><list-item></list-item></list-item></list-item></list-item></list-item></list-item></section-header></section-header></text>	 The template for this meditation is included with the course materials They will need paper and a writing implement Be sure to allow time for discussion when completed
Seroing in on Options Make One Small Small Change Work with an Expert Spirit & Soul Practice sare Forgiveness Work with Explore Spirit & Soul Practice sare Forgiveness Work with Report	 This circle summarizes some general topics that can guide Veterans when they add Spirit and Soul as part of their Personal Health Plans Read the name of each circle. We'll cover them one at a time going clockwise There is some overlap between the different topics

Make One Small Change Work with an Expert Explore Growing & Connecting Explore Forgiveness Work with Explore Forgiveness Unit & South Growing & Connecting Consider if Spirit & South Practices are for you	 The first topic is about exploring values, meaning, and purpose. This ties closely to the key personal health planning step of asking what really matters, and outlining Mission, Aspiration, and Purpose If you wish, and if time allowed, you could take them through the "Values: Figuring Out What Matters Most" Clinical Tool in the <i>Passport to Whole Health</i>, Chapter 11, but this may not be appropriate for all reading levels
An important part of self-care is self-awareness	 Part of your health plan may simply be to move forward on your spiritual "quest" in whatever way you feel is appropriate Take time to think about questions like: What happens when we die? Why is there suffering? Are miracles possible? How do you decide what is true for you?
Six Aspects of Spirituality	 This is an exercise designed to help people broaden their concept of what spirituality is Many people equate spirituality and religion, which may not sit well for everyone. There are other ways to think about it
 b) 1. Religious c) closeness and connection to the sacred as described by a specific religion. Sense of closeness to a particular Higher Power 83% of US adults belong to a religious group 91% believe in God or a universal spirit 	 Definition pretty clear in the slide Can remind them of the definition of religion discussed earlier: "A religion is a body of beliefs shared by a community"

 Service A Humanistic Spirituality Closeness and connection to humankind. May involve feelings of love, reflection, service, and altruism. 	 The soldier is Dave Eubank, who has just helped a little girl who was surrounded by ISIS soldiers, to escape Health care providers, police officers, teachers, and people in the military often relate to this aspect of spirituality
<text><text><text><text></text></text></text></text>	This is another one that is important to many Veterans – love of the natural world
 A. Experiential spirituality Shaped by personal life events Influenced by our individual stories Informed by what we love to do and be Experience in war influences Veterans profoundly 	 What happens to us shapes who we are and what we believe, too The guy in the top picture is Noah Galloway, a Veteran who was on Dancing With the Stars despite having lost an arm and a leg in Iraq Military experience will certainly shape your spiritual perspectives
<text><list-item> Seeling connected to all of creation. • Can come up when you think about just how big it all is •like when you look up at the stars or down at a handful of grains of sand</list-item></text>	 Can ask them for other examples that make them feel that sense of the 'bigness' of it all – seeing the ocean, looking out over the Grand Canyon, etc.

6. Mystery There is much that we simply cannot know or understand Perhaps it is not possible to fully grasp or know, and that is okay.	 Many people will say they are agnostic, that there is just a lot we don't know for sure
Partner Exercise- Your Spiritual Perspective Consider the six different aspects of spirituality (and others you may think of) Religious Humanistic Nature Experiential Cosmos Mystery 	 As with all activities, this is optional Give people at least 3 minutes each to speak. Keep track of time Remind them of the ground rules The person listening should truly listen, letting the other person share in as much depth as they would like without interruptions
Make One Small Change Work with an Expert Explore Growing & Connecting Explore Forgiveness Work with Explore Forgiveness Consider if Spirit & Soul Growing & Connecting Work with Explore Grift, Moral Injury, and Recovery	• The next topic relates to whether or not you want to explore having a "Spiritual Practice"
 What is a Spiritual Practice? Something you do that reminds you about what really matters An activity that brings peace and ease Something that helps you feel a sense of connection to something more 	 Take time to read this slide carefully Can ask if anyone has a spiritual practice they would like to share about Again, you decide if any of these suggestions are relevant to you

 What is a Spiritual Practice? Other Examples Carrying an "anchor" Holidays Pilgrimage Niditation Music and Art Joining a community Gratitude Compassion Torsyveness 12-Step Programs You decide! 	 Again, can invite people to share as time allows An anchor is an object that has meaning for you that you can take with you, like a photo, a small stone, a necklace, etc. It anchors you to what gives you meaning and purpose, because you can look at it whenever you need a reminder about those things 12-step programs, such as those with Alcoholics Anonymous, link many people to spiritual practices
Make One Small Change Work with an Expert Explore Forgiveness Expl	 These topics are heavy – they can bring up a lot of emotions and memories Remind people that writing a health plan need not mean tackling their greatest challenges first, or tackling them all at once These are mentioned briefly as some food for thought about areas they may wish to explore as part of their self-care at some point, when they are ready
 More than an emotion Tied to physical and mental problems Complicated grief (7% of the time) Veterans were trained to be stoic, and that can cause problems with healing grief Important to have support 	 There is an entire grief module in the Whole Health Library Complicated grief is grief that doesn't get easier with time and that interferes with a person's ability to live their life
<text><image/><image/><list-item><list-item><list-item><list-item></list-item></list-item></list-item></list-item></text>	 Probably would not encourage too much large group or partner sharing with this topic, given this is a lecture unto itself and a very emotionally-laden topic Can say you just want to make them familiar with the concept

<text></text>	 Can highlight various parts of this circle Alcoholics Anonymous is one example of a 12-step program These programs rely heavily on spirituality
Make One Small Change Work with an Expert Explore Growing & Consider if Spirit & Soul Growing & Connecting Explore Forgiveness Recovery	 This is a key one area, and another one that takes a time and energy investment if you want to draw it into your health plan If you want to read more, the forgiveness information is featured in Personal Development materials in the Whole Health Library
 Forgiveness A freely made choice, and a process Takes time Research supports its use for many health problems Involves setting yourself free, not saying a bad thing that happened is okay Is another area where it is good to get help from your care team 	 It is important to reinforce that forgiveness is primarily about setting ourselves free, and not somehow dismissing the wrongness of something we experienced It is truly an act of courage – one of the bravest things you can do
Make One Small Change Uslaes, Meaning and Purpose Work with an Expert Spirit & Soul Growing & Conneeting Forgiveness Uslaw, and Grief, Moral Recovery	There are many people who can support you with Spirit & Soul

 Spirit and Soul: Experts Chaplains Can help people from many religions and traditions VA has a strong chaplaincy presence They an cover many topics Death and dying Meaning of illness and suffering: "Why is this happening?" Feelings of spiritual anxiety, guilt, anger, loss, and despair Psychologists and others (clergy, pastors, ministers, rabbis, etc.) can help with grief, forgiveness, recovery, and moral injury too 	 After you review this slide, ask them if they have other ideas in addition to this list
Try it out! Demonstration	• This is an opportunity for you to invite a VA chaplain to share what chaplains do, how to contact them, and some of the activities or tools that they might use with the Veterans in their care
Make One Small Change Work with B Spirit & Soul Growing & Connecting Explore Forgiveness Reaning and Purpose Consider if Spiritual Practices are for you	 And finally, we come to the last circle. Anything is fair game here – options we have discussed so far, or others we haven't
<text><section-header><section-header><section-header><section-header><text><text><list-item><list-item><list-item><list-item><text></text></list-item></list-item></list-item></list-item></text></text></section-header></section-header></section-header></section-header></text>	 As the instructor, you can read all the items on this list, or just let them read them silently (remember, not everyone can read well), or highlight a few of your favorites Ask them if they have other thoughts, beyond those we have discussed

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 Spirit & Soul – Summing Up Start by asking: What gives me a sense of meaning and purpose (What really matters?) Remember, this area is closely tied to health in many ways There are many options. Pick one and take it at a pace that works for you Working with Spirit & Soul takes courage. You've got this! What is one way you can do some good today? 	 Feel free to modify this based on which points you chose to emphasize

<image/> <image/> <image/> <image/> <section-header><section-header><section-header></section-header></section-header></section-header>	 Read the caption of this slide aloud, since the font is small As you finish, be sure to leave time for questions and comments There is a general evaluation form you can pass out that is included in the course materials
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