

Chaplaincy Questions

Opening questions:

How are your spirits?

Is there anything you would like to discuss with a chaplain?

Initial Assessment questions:

What sources of strength or meaning do you have during this time?

In the past, what have you relied on to get through personal challenges?

What has helped you in the past?

What sustains you?

Is religion or God important for you?

When do you feel closest to God?

(Or if religion and God are not important:)

What is most meaningful for you?

Have you had any meaningful experiences that can help you now?

When have you felt most in touch with your spiritual life? What was that like?

What is your deepest intention?

What helps you connect with your spiritual or religious life?

Useful information to have:

Do you participate in a religious community? Are you a member? Do you go regularly?

Does anyone from your religious community know you are here?

Is there anyone in your religious community that you can call or invite here?

How is your religious community helpful for you?

Is it ok if I ask you a little about your religious life?

Is prayer important for you? How often do you pray?

Do you have any regular religious practices or observances?

Are there particular practices/rituals you want us to know about, or you want help with?

Is there any religious literature, prayers, or music that you would like? Do you know anyone who you can ask to bring these?

Deeper assessment questions:

What would be helpful at this time?

Do you have any spiritual challenge now?

Do you have any questions? Is there anything you are questioning in spiritual life?

At this time, is there anything you feel you need to do in regard to your spiritual life or your relationships with others?

Has being ill made a difference in how you think about God or about our spiritual life?

What brings you joy?

Reframing questions:

If someone is engaging in maladaptive behavior, ask,

“What benefit are you receiving from this behavior?”

If someone asks ultimate questions like “Where is God?” or “What happens after death?” respond by asking,

“Why are you asking?”

If someone has a poor self-image,

“I see lots of people have sent you flowers and cards. How did you manage to have so many people care for you?”

If someone seems stuck in some difficult emotion or suffering, it can be useful to ask,

“What is the opposite what you are struggling with?” “Do you have any feelings or places in your body associated with this opposite?” “Can you access it now, even if just a tiny bit?”

Or:

“Can you remember a time before you felt this way?” “What was that time like for you?”

If someone complains about somebody else, ask,

“Is the person wasn’t so difficult, is there anything supportive you would like to do or say to the person?”

If someone is significantly out of touch with what they are feeling,

“You seem sad. Is there something you are sad about?”

“What is troubling you?” “Are you annoyed about something?”

“How is this for your family?”