Any well-known short sentences change an individual's life forever: “Will you marry me?” “It's a girl!” Among them, one of the most difficult to comprehend is, “You have cancer.” The diagnosis of cancer is laden with challenges regarding questions of what lies ahead. It forces people to recognize their own mortality and often brings up questions of what lies ahead. It forces people to recognize their own mortality and often brings up questions regarding questions of what lies ahead. It forces people to recognize their own mortality and often brings up questions of uniformity regarding the components of spirituality and religiosity has created a barrier for professional caregivers in identifying, assessing, and providing spiritual needs. The diagnosis of cancer often leads patients to contemplate their own mortality and frequently presents unique challenges to their belief system. Spirituality is a unique component of holistic care. When appropriately addressed, it may strongly influence positive patient outcomes during the cancer journey. Consequently, nurses should actively participate in and incorporate the provision of spiritual care into the treatment plan for each patient with cancer or at least be able to assess those needs and make sure they are being addressed.

Assessment and Implementation of Spirituality and Religiosity in Cancer Care: Effects on Patient Outcomes

Penny Richardson, RN, BSN, CMR

Spirituality and religiosity have been defined by several governing bodies to mean everything from purpose in life, beliefs, faith, and hope, to transcendence with a higher being. The absence of uniformity regarding the components of spirituality and religiosity has created a barrier for professional caregivers in identifying, assessing, and providing spiritual needs. The diagnosis of cancer often leads patients to contemplate their own mortality and frequently presents unique challenges to their belief system. Spirituality is a unique component of holistic care. When appropriately addressed, it may strongly influence positive patient outcomes during the cancer journey. Consequently, nurses should actively participate in and incorporate the provision of spiritual care into the treatment plan for each patient with cancer or at least be able to assess those needs and make sure they are being addressed.