

# SPIRITUAL LIFE AND CANCER POCKET GUIDE

Patient Pocket Guides

higher power.<sup>1</sup>

- In one study, more than 7 of 10 hospitalized adults wanted to discuss spiritual issues, and nearly half wanted health-care team members to pray with them.<sup>2</sup>

## WHAT IS SPIRITUAL LIFE?

pain management and recovery.<sup>3</sup>

### How does spiritual care help in cancer treatment?

Cancer and its management can open new spiritual support—addressing needs you may have never been aware of before. Raymond Wadlow, MD, is a medical oncologist at the Inova Schar Cancer Care Center in Fairfax, Virginia. In Dr. Wadlow's experience, common questions include:

- Why me?
- Is cancer my fault?
- Is God or the universe punishing or testing me?

- Did this happen because I smoked, drank alcohol, ate certain foods, or did something bad in the past?
- Will I die soon?
- What will happen to my spirit after I die?
- Has my life mattered?

Worrying about these questions can have a negative effect on one's physical, social, and emotional quality of life. On the other hand, spiritual care has been found to positively<sup>4</sup> impact quality of life and be especially helpful at the end of life.<sup>5</sup> Honoring and accommodating each person's belief system and spiritual practices is important.<sup>6</sup>



## How chaplains can help

A chaplain is a trained spiritual leader who works at a hospital or for another organization such as a branch of the military service. Most service members are familiar with chaplains, who may come from any faith and are generally trained to help people of all faiths or none.

Your hospital or cancer center may have a chaplain who can

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