

Spirituality

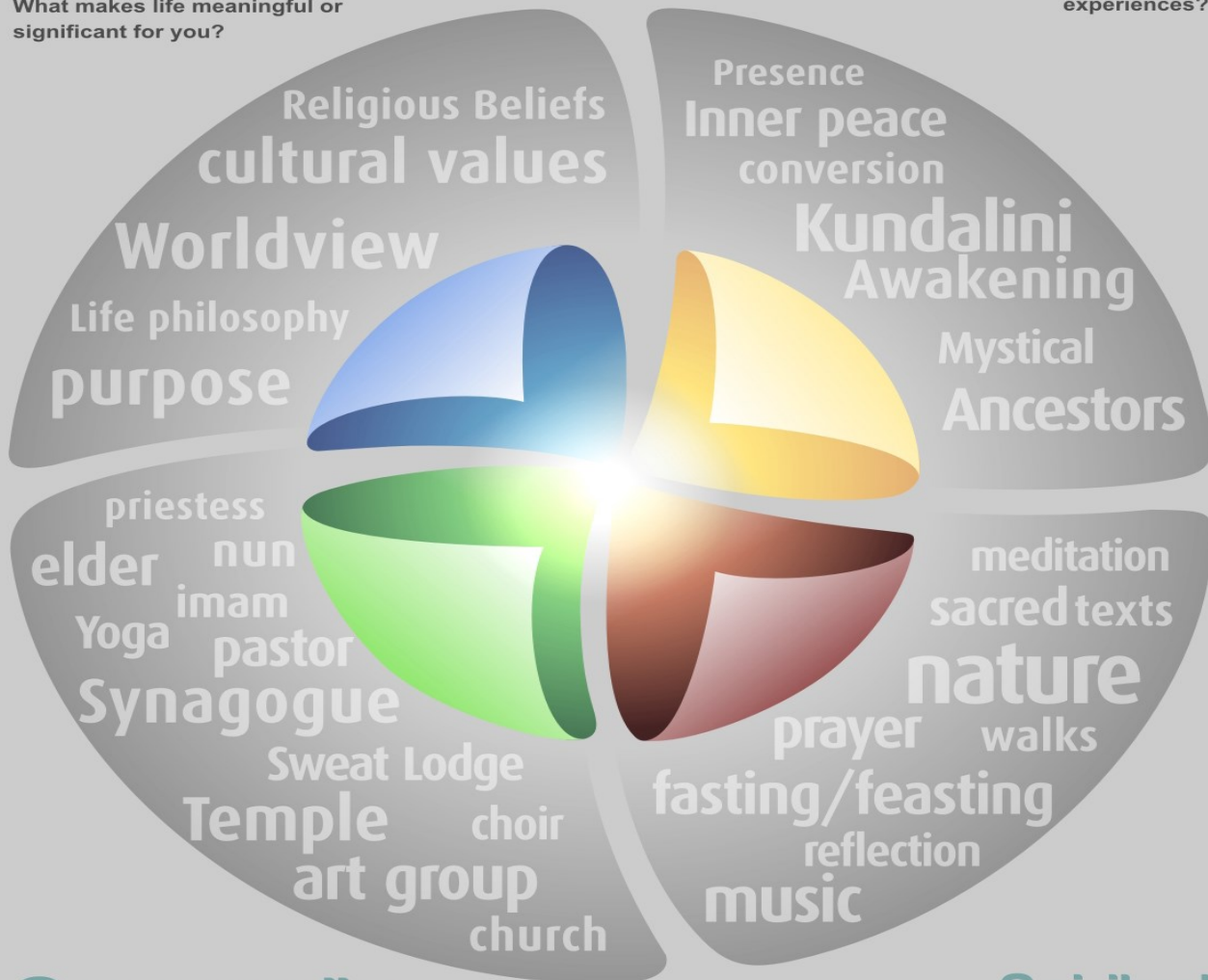
for wellness and recovery

Meaning Making

How do you connect to the bigger picture?
 What ideas help you find hope?
 What makes life meaningful or significant for you?

Spiritual Experience

How do you understand that experience?
 How do you make sense of unusual experiences?



Community Engagement

Do you share activities with others that provide comfort for you?
 Where do you draw your support from?
 Do the communities you engage with support mental health recovery?

Spiritual Activities

What brings you joy?
 How do you connect to your source of strength?
 What helps you cope when things are difficult?
 Do these activities support your mental health recovery?

Exploring spirituality: Keep it safe... have an open mind... create listening space

Spirituality is something that we can all use

When mental health clinicians are assessing clients at Vancouver Coastal Health, they use something called the **"bio-psycho-social-spiritual"** model as a guide.

The bio-psycho-social-spiritual model assumes that mental health and substance use problems are hardly ever limited to just one domain of human experience (say, just a "mental" problem). Instead, it is a general consensus that most mental health problems are influenced by multiple domains of human experience, and have biological (medical), psychological (mental) and social/spiritual impacts. For example, someone who is depressed, might have become that way because of a medical condition (such as a heart attack), a social condition (such as losing a loved one), or a psychological condition (such as an overly self-critical nature).

Regardless of the cause of the condition, that person's depression could likely show physical symptoms (such as slowed speech and lessened appetite), psychological symptoms (such as suicidal thoughts) and social symptoms (such as social withdrawal). Perhaps most importantly, it is possible to treat depression through physical means (anti-depressant medicine, physical exercise), psychological means (cognitive therapy) and also social/spiritual means (urging the person to get out and interact with other people).

Regardless of how that depression got started. All of these methods are likely to prove helpful in lifting depressed mood. What is more, they can all be used at once despite their different origins; you aren't limited to trying one intervention at a time.

This way of looking at situations is not only reserved for professionals and clients, the idea of being broad in your assessment of the nature of your problems is applicable to family and loved ones as well. It is always a good idea to keep in mind that your problems will sometimes be more complicated than you initially thought and require you to try a variety of solutions before you are able to make any headway with them. It is also a good idea to keep in mind that you might benefit from using more than one self-help method at a time, and that such methods might address seemingly very different aspects of your experience and still be effective.

Spirituality is a broad concept with room for many perspectives, for some, the lack of a concrete definition can prevent them from looking into what it means to them. But as we have just discussed, spirituality plays a role in our loved ones recovery whether we acknowledge it or not. In general, spirituality includes a sense of connection to something bigger than ourselves, and typically involves a search for meaning in life. As such, it is something that touches us all. People may describe a spiritual experience as sacred or transcendent or simply a deep sense of aliveness and interconnectedness.

Some may find that their spiritual life is intricately linked to their association with a church, temple, mosque, or synagogue. Others may pray or find comfort in a personal relationship with God or a higher power. Still others seek meaning through their connections to nature or art. Your personal definition of spirituality may change throughout your life, adapting to your own experiences and relationships.

If you are feeling that you may require some more support in this area, VCH has the Exploring Spirituality A Personal Journey of Discovery workbook that you can access [HERE](#) (http://spiritofrecovery.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Exploring-Spirituality-Workbook_final-1.pdf)



A letter from a faithful friend

This is an imaginary letter written by Sanctuary Mental Health Ministries (www.sanctuary-ministries.com), a non-profit charitable organisation that prepares people of faith to support mental health recovery in the community. Many communities – faith communities among them – have immediate reactions when confronted with mental illness. They may want to fix things right away, or declare that only professionals can interact with people with mental illness. They may turn away because they don't know what to do or because of stigma. What is needed, though, and what faith communities are so well equipped to do, is to simply, humbly and compassionately – just BE there. S.'s letter shows such a commitment. And while this letter is indeed only imaginary, there are more and more people in faith communities who find ways to offer themselves to their friends in the way expressed in this letter.

Dear T,

I am so incredibly saddened by your circumstances. Your sons health challenges are beyond my comprehension. My heart longs to take away the pain. I cannot. But I can remain near you. And that is what I promise to do. Please lean on me when you need to. I promise to stay.

And I promise to pray. I will pray that you know you are not alone. I will pray that when the chaos is overwhelming you will feel held by something bigger. I will pray that your son senses in each moment that the possibilities of life are opening up for him. I will pray that you find space for your own nurture in the midst of his struggle. And I will pray for deep rest.

I have not had significant struggles with my own mental health, however I do recognize the fragility of life at any given moment. I am not a professional, but I can offer my friendship. I am here to be a companion and offer my presence to accompany you on this journey wherever it may lead.

Because of our common belonging in community, you are my family.
I am near, I am here, I am family for you.

Peace to you in the midst,
S.



Perry Omeasoo. email: perry.omeasoo@vch.ca. Telephone: 604-253-4401

First Nations Mental Health Liaison

Vancouver Community Mental Health Services

Vancouver Coastal Health


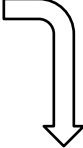
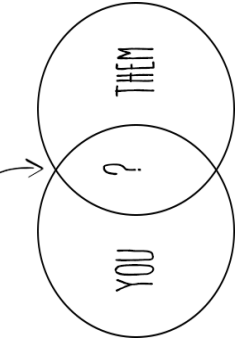
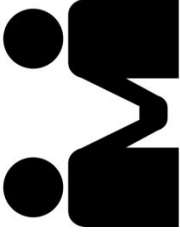
Perry Omeasoo was born in Maskwacis, (formerly Hobbema), Alberta, and is a member of the Samson Cree Nation. Working within the Aboriginal community in Vancouver for the past 22 years, Perry's work has spanned many health related areas including alcohol and drug counseling, HIV/AIDS education, child and family advocacy, and mental health. For 19 years Perry has worked as the First Nations Mental Health Liaison for Vancouver Community Mental Health Services (Vancouver Coastal Health). The four aspects of his position include consultation, education, service brokerage and co-therapy. As part of his education mandate, Perry coordinates an annual First Nations Mental Health Conference. His expertise providing co-therapy to First Nations people with severe mental illnesses is complemented by Perry's certification in substance abuse counseling and has extensive training in crisis management and critical incident stress management.

The role of the First Nations Mental Health Liaison (FNMHL) is to bridge the gap between mainstream services and the native community. Raised by his grandparents in Maskwacis, Perry received the education he needed to be able to fulfill this role. His grandfather, a respected Elder of his community, taught Perry the spiritual traditions and culture of his people. Today, Perry is a pipe carrier and sun dancer. After clients are stabilized with adequate care and medications by the mental health team, the FNMHL works with clients throughout their journey in the mental health system. The FNMHL works as part of the Mental Health team to provide support in the areas of native cultural and spirituality. This may include educating a client about his native spirituality. Clients are also invited to participate in a First Nations talking circle, a form of group therapy where participants share on their lives. An eagle feather is passed around, and whoever holds it can speak for as long they need. Smudging, a form of spiritual cleansing, is also used. Culturally appropriate spiritual interventions such as these increase clients' comfort within the mainstream system, improving outcomes.

Perry also volunteers extensively within his community. He was President of Vancouver Native Health Society for 12 years, and now sits on their executive council. In the past year Perry was also nominated to sit on the board of directors for Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services.

To learn more about Perry's work and the resources available through Vancouver Coastal Health please visit our Aboriginal Health Strategic Initiatives website [HERE](http://aboriginalhealth.vch.ca/)

(<http://aboriginalhealth.vch.ca/>)

Listen	Empathize	Agree	Partner
 <p><i>“To do it right, you have to drop your own agenda. Your only goals are to understand what your loved one is saying and to convey that understanding”</i></p> <p><i>The Seven Guidelines for Reflective Listening:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make it safe Know your fears Stop pushing your agenda Let it be Respect what you’ve heard Find Workable Problems Write the Headlines <p><i>The Delay Tool</i></p> <p>Delay giving your opinion about controversial topics to preserve alliance.</p> <p>Honour the question, promise to answer, ask if it can wait until you better understand their point of view.</p> <p><i>The 3 A’s to Giving Your Opinion</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apologize (for hurt feelings) Acknowledge you could be wrong Agree to disagree 	<p>empathy - identification with and understanding of another’s situation, feelings, and motives.</p> <p>Convey empathy for any feelings your loved one is willing to reveal whether they are rational or irrational!! Feelings that are particularly important:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frustrations (pressure from others, personal goals not met) Fears (medication, stigma, failure) Discomfort (attributed to meds, gaining weight, feeling groggy, slowed down, less creative) Desires (to work; get married, have children, return to school) <p>Focus on better understanding the perspective and feelings of your loved one and building alliance.</p> <p>Only give your opinion when it has been asked for AND...</p> <p>Delay or avoid the “do you agree with me?” question.</p> 	 <p>Look for opportunities for agreement AND when trust is established and your loved one is open to hearing your point of view...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Normalize their experience Discuss only perceived problems/symptoms, using their language Review perceived advantages and disadvantages of treatment (whether rational or irrational) and WRITE THEM DOWN Correct misconceptions (but not delusions) Reflect back and highlight the perceived benefits Agree to disagree wherever areas of disagreement are brought to the surface (using the 3 A’s) <p><i>Remember: always ask questions when you want to make a point</i></p> <p><i>Encourage the “Scientist” approach (keeping an open mind and observing) to exploring advantages/disadvantages to treatment</i></p>	 <p>What does your loved one <i>want</i>? What can you both agree on?</p> <p>Try to agree on goals that are obviously reachable, but don’t limit yourself to those.</p> <p>Once a treatment plan is agreed upon, watch out for non/partial follow through and discuss!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen Empathize Agree Partner <p>Encourage the “Scientist” approach</p> <p><i>Remember: coming to terms with one’s need for treatment is a process that takes time and involves learning and transformation</i></p>

Spiritual Wellness Inventory Checklist

There is nothing new in the idea that health involves our spirit and mind as well as our body, although different traditions and religions emphasize this in different ways. Spiritual wellness enhances the connection between your mind, body and spirit.

Spiritual wellness includes: a sense of purpose and meaning for life, learning how to experience love, joy and fulfillment, personal ethics, values and code of living

Assessing your Spiritual Wellness

This is the Spiritual Wellness Inventory Checklist from the Government of British Columbia's Spiritual Wellness Website. [HERE](http://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthtopics/content.asp?hwid=abq0372) (<http://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthtopics/content.asp?hwid=abq0372>)

I am willing to forgive myself and others.

Y N

I have a sense of belonging, meaning and purpose in my life.

Y N

I have a belief system (e.g. spiritual, atheist, religious).

Y N

I participate in regular spiritual activities with people who share my beliefs and am open to hearing about others' beliefs.

Y N

I accept my limitations without embarrassment or apology.

Y N

I keep the purpose of my life clearly in mind and let it guide my decision-making.

Y N

I freely give to others.

Y N

I am comfortable about knowing things without knowing precisely how I know them (intuition).

Y N

I allow others the freedom to believe what they want without pressuring them to accept my beliefs.

Y N

I look for and work toward balance.

Y N

I continually explore personal beliefs, values and priorities.

Y N

Principles, ethics and morals provide guides for my life.

Y N

Scoring your Spiritual Wellness Inventory

To find your score, give yourself one point for every "yes".

9 or more = excellent, your habits are enhancing your health

6-8 = average, you are obviously trying but there is room for improvement

5 or fewer = below average, there is room for improvement in your daily habits

Mood Disorders Association of BC (MDABC) – Mutual support groups for families of individuals living with a mood disorder. 2nd and 4th Tuesday each month, 7 - 9 p.m., Mount St. Joseph Hospital, 3080 Prince Edward St, Harvest Room A.
Contact Suemay Black @ 604-251-2179

Raven Song Family Support Group– Support group for families who have a loved one living with mental illness. 2nd Wednesday of each month 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. at Raven Song Community Health Centre, 2450 Ontario Street, Vancouver.
Contact Sally @ Tel: (604)270 7841 ext 2126

SPH Family Support Group- Support for families who have a loved one living with mental illness. Last Thursday of each month, 6-7:30pm. St Paul's Hospital, 1081 Burrard Street, Room 2B-169, 2nd floor, Burrard Building.
To register, call Kaye 604-682-2344 local 68964

VCH Eating Disorder Program (VCHED)– Family Support Group – for friends and family members of individuals living with an eating disorder. 1st Wednesday of each month, 6 – 7:30 p.m., 3rd Floor, 2750 East Hastings, Vancouver.
Contact Hella at 604-675-2531 ext 20689.

Parents Forever – Support group for families of adult children living with addiction. Group meets every 2nd Friday at St. Mary's Kerrisdale, 2490 W 37th Ave., Vancouver. Contact Frances Kenny, 604-524-4230 or fkenny@uniserve.com

Pathways Clubhouse Chinese Family Support Group – Education sessions for Chinese families who have a loved one living with mental illness. 2nd Saturday of each month. 1 – 4:00 p.m., Room 345/50, 7000 Minoru Blvd, Richmond.
Contact Bessie.wang@pathwaysclubhouse.com
or 604-276-8834, ext 12.

GRASP Support Group – GRASP offers peer-led mutual support groups for families or individuals who have had a loved one die as a result of substance abuse or addiction. 2nd Thursday of each month, 7-9 p.m. at Gilmore Community School 50 South Gilmore Ave, Rm 207. Please email graspvancouverarea@gmail.com to register.

SMART, Family and Friends - Support group for family and friends to learn and implement self care, boundary setting, and compassionate communication tools. Every Tuesday 6:30-8:00PM at Three Bridges Addictions 1290 Hornby Street, Rm 310.
Thursday 6:00-7:00PM at Raven Song 2450 Ontario Street, 1st floor.
Call Oona @ 604-714-3480.

Family Connections Support Group (FCSP)—Every first Thursday and third Monday of the month in the CIBC Center for Patients and Families at the Jim Pattison Pavilion, Vancouver General Hospital, 899 W. 12th Ave (behind the Information Center) For questions or more information please contact: isabella.mori@vch.ca, 604 290-3817 or becky.hynes@vch.ca , 604 313-1918

Family Support Groups



July 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5 SMART	6 VCHED	7 FCSP SMART	8 Parents Forever	9 Pathways
10	11	12 SMART MDABC	13 Raven Song	14 SMART GRASP	15	16
17	18 FCSP	19 SMART	20	21 SMART	22 Parents Forever	23
24	25	26 SMART MDABC	27	28 SPH SMART	29	30

The *Family Connections* newsletter is available electronically, direct to your email inbox each month. If you don't already receive *Family Connections* via email and would like to stay up-to-date about programs and services supporting families with a loved one with mental illness and/or addiction, sign up at www.spotlightonmentalhealth.com

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