

It Takes a Village:
Spiritual Care for Family Caregivers across the Continuum of Care
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Responding to Caregivers across the Spectrum

	Caregiver Experience	Spiritual Care Themes
Trauma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexpected event/shock and disorientation • Anomie • Despair, hopelessness • Primary focus on the patient, not themselves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building trust • Validation of family's pain • Assessment of family dynamic and roles within it • Reassurance • Connecting to hope
Acute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexpected/shock and need for immediate response • Ethical dilemmas re: treatment, care decisions • Seeking meaning amidst suffering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus and center on ground of their being • Help discern values, beliefs to draw on for decision-making • Help them to see their experience in a larger context • Help them to see beyond the present crisis
Chronic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhaustion, depletion • Ethical dilemmas re: treatment, care, caregiving • Seeking meaning amidst suffering • Disconnection from networks of support • Invisibility • Conflict among family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help in defining their personal experience in the arc of the illness • Assessment of family dynamic and roles within it • Discern their own needs • Be able to understand and respect the needs, desires of the patient • Articulate hopes for this stage • Help discern values, beliefs to draw on for decision-making
End of Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guilt, remorse • Fear • Sadness • Anger • Helplessness • Abandonment • Affirmation • Depletion • Ethical dilemmas re: life-sustaining treatment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support in working toward forgiveness, repentance • Discuss possibilities of future – how you go on in the face of life • Support in seeking meaning • Help create memory, legacy • Help discern values, beliefs to draw on for decision-making

General guidance in Accompanying Family Caregivers

1. Assess family's needs and strengths
2. Listen/meet where they are
3. Be open to intuition

Ten Tools for Spiritual Care with Family Caregivers

1. Presence
2. Sacred listening, discernment
3. Sacrament
4. Ritual
5. Prayer
6. Mobilize resources in their community
7. Sacred study
8. Music
9. Life review
10. Blessing

Accessing Family Caregivers' Spiritual Resources

1. Acquire cultural competence about their faith tradition.
2. Utilize local resources within the faith community.
3. Ask the family member
 - a. What helps you get through the day?
 - b. Who is there for you?

- c. What do you do to center yourself and find spiritual peace?
- d. What things can I provide for you (objects, places, contact with people)?
- e. What is it you need to help you at this time?