

Being a Healing Presence: Contemplative Practice as Spiritual Care

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The purpose of contemplative practice is to move us into a way of being and seeing that allows us to be more present and helpful to those who need us. This course will explore some ways that may be helpful in the development of that presence. In the view of the instructor, there are three general states of being or seeing that influence who we are when we encounter another person or situation:

1. We may encounter the person or see the situation as a stereotype.
2. We may see the person or the situation as our personal experience.
3. We may see the person or the situation as a manifestation of the divine.

If our goal is to be present as fully as we can be which calls for an awareness and many levels of experience, there is no end to exploring the depths within ourselves – physically, intellectually, emotionally and spiritually. The more adept we become at this exploration of ourselves, the more helpful we can be to others who may need to do the same in order to heal.

In this workshop we will look at the ways in which each of our traditions teaches this process and the language, imagery, symbols and rites used to affect this deepening.

Participants will share with each other how they understand and experience this in their own tradition.

As this may be foreign territory to people without a religious tradition, it may become incumbent on the chaplain to impart some of this understanding to patients and staff without an awareness of this depth of consciousness or its healing potential. Therefore, we will explore ways to talk about this with people of faith not our own or to those with none.

In the course of the workshop we will look at different situations and how contemplative practice is applied in those situations. We will consider trauma and the E.D.; psychiatric groups; bereavement groups; oncology patients and/or groups; patients that are not alert and oriented and any other situations that participants wish to look at in this context.

A PowerPoint meditation, “How To Be A Healing Presence,” will be shared and available to participants in training staff and volunteers in their own institutions.

As a result of this workshop, participants will:

1. Be able to articulate the origins and purpose of a contemplative practice using the language and imagery of their own faith tradition.
2. Be able to share their experience and practice with patients and staff regardless of faith traditions.
3. Apply their contemplative practice to enhance their spiritual care as a healing presence.

The workshop will be arranged in four sections. Each section will explore contemplative practices from the point of view of the Body, Mind, Emotions, and Self. No previous knowledge is necessary but participants will be invited to share their own practices with the group.