Spirituality with Patients who have Serious Mental Illness

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Abstract
People with schizophrenia and other mental illness often have religious delusions as part of their illness manifestation. This presentation discusses ways nurses and other health care providers can help individuals have the quality of life they desire while coping effectively with delusions and hallucinations. Other mental health illness such as Depression may also have psychotic episodes. Many people with a chronic illness often question why and seek to have understanding to the meaning of these experiences in their lives. People frequently question "God" to gain purpose to their pain and sufferings and struggles.

Health care providers and patients may define and describe spirituality and religiosity in different ways. This may be due to various factors including the cognitive deficits related to schizophrenia.
A review of the literature indicates that there is not one standard of recommended approaches in dealing with this particular aspect of working with religious delusions and hallucinations. Many individual therapists, psychiatrists, and nurses develop their personal attitudes and often ignore the aspect of spirituality with the individual patient.

Religious and spiritual beliefs can be a support to the individual patient. It is an area often overlooked by the health care providers and interdisciplinary treatment teams. This presentation will provide an opportunity to explore ways to work with patients who have a serious mental illness.