

PSYCHOSOCIAL AND SPIRITUAL ISSUES

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

1. Describe psychosocial assessment, supportive techniques, and your role as an interdisciplinary/interprofessional team member in using them.
2. Describe emotional distress and strategies for assessing it.
3. List the developmental tasks involved in life completion and life closure.
4. Define despair, hope, and meaning in the context of chronic and life-limiting illness.
5. Describe a spiritual/existential assessment and your role as an interdisciplinary/interprofessional team member in conducting one.
6. Describe common experiences of distress around spiritual/existential issues for patients and families facing chronic and life-limiting conditions.

Key Terms: despair, emotional distress, hope, life completion and life closure, meaning, psychosocial assessment, spiritual/existential assessment, spiritual/existential distress, supportive techniques

Assessing and addressing psychosocial and spiritual issues is as important to the delivery of quality care as assessing and addressing pain and other physical symptoms. This chapter explains the developmental tasks of life completion and life closure as well as the roles that despair, hope, and meaning play in the context of advanced illness. The chapter describes LGBTQ-inclusive assessment skills and supportive techniques for addressing psychosocial and spiritual issues, and explains how a spiritual/existential history and a spiritual/existential assessment differ. Finally, the chapter examines the ways in which the members of the interdisciplinary/interprofessional team collaborate to support the patient and family in achieving their goals for care in the psychosocial and spiritual/existential domains.