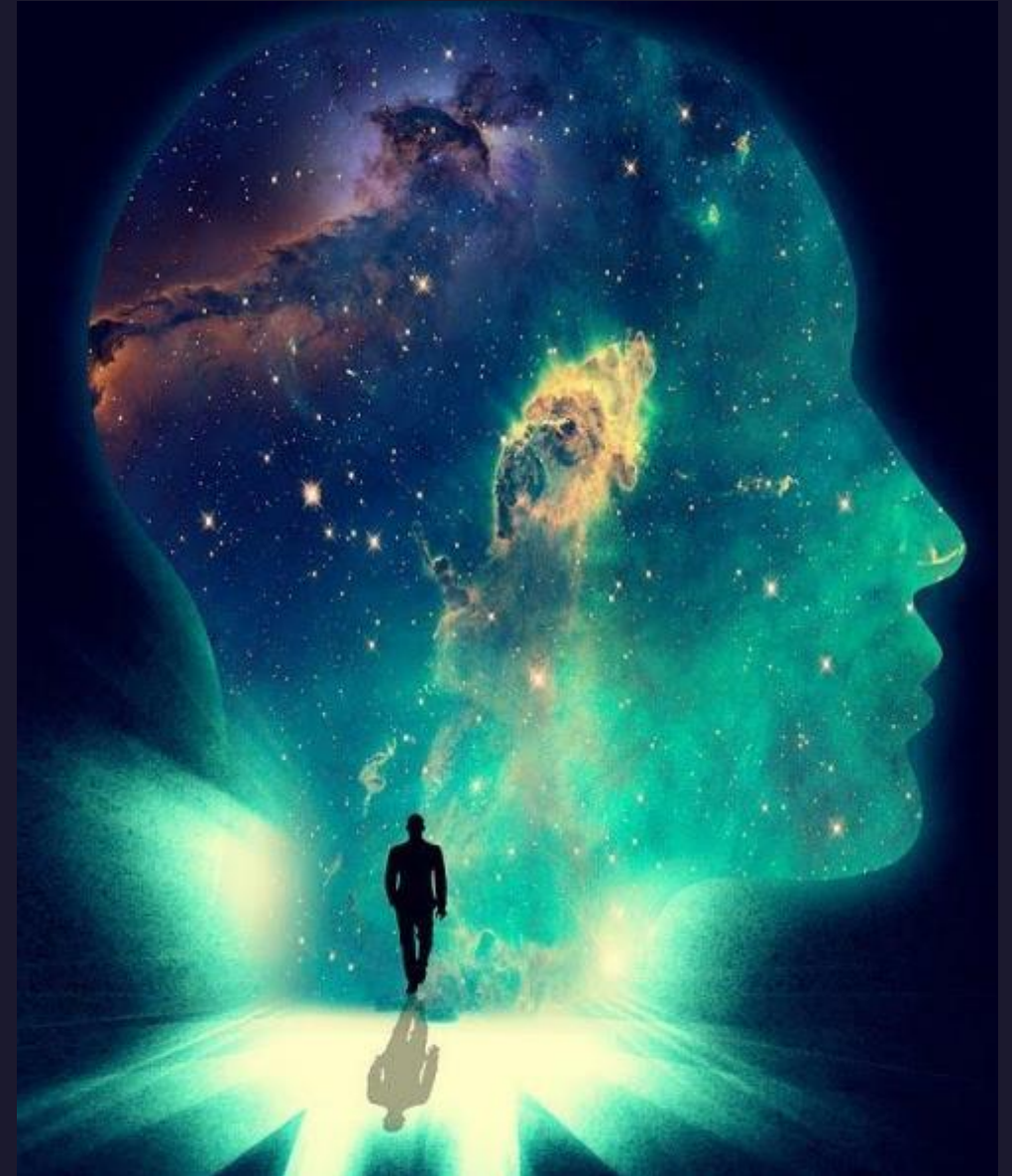


Spiritual Injuries and Suicide

Chaplain Dr. Troy Parson

Supervisory Chaplain
Southern Arizona VA Health Care System



Life can be a heavy and lonely journey



Spirituality

Spirituality can't truly be defined, but here is a worthy description:

“Spirituality is recognizing and celebrating that we are all inextricably connected to each other by a power greater than all of us and that our connection to that power and to one another is grounded in love and compassion. Practicing spirituality brings a sense of perspective, meaning and purpose to our lives.”

– Brené Brown, *The Gifts of Imperfection*

Seven Core Spiritual Needs

- ★ **DIGNITY** – Self-worth and self-acceptance
- ★ **POWER** – Self-agency and courage
- ★ **AUTONOMY** – Boundaries (relationships, roles)
- ★ **MEANING** – Purpose, beliefs and values
- ★ **LOVE** – Intimacy (safe and deep connections) and community relationships
- ★ **REST** – Awareness and surrender (acceptance)
- ★ **CELEBRATION** – Gratitude, experiencing beauty, art, music, creativity, and worship.



Understanding Moral (Soul) Injury

“Moral injury is a response to trauma when a person’s existing core moral foundations are unable to justify, process, and integrate trauma into a reliable identity and meaning system that sustains relationships and human flourishing.”

- Dr. Rita Nakashima Brock



Trauma can poison our foundation of spirituality

- ~~DIGNITY – Self-worth and self-acceptance~~
- ~~POWER – Self-agency and courage~~
- ~~AUTONOMY – Relationship boundaries~~
- ~~MEANING – Purpose and Values~~
- ~~LOVE – Intimacy (safe and deep connections)
and community relationships~~
- ~~REST – Awareness and surrender (acceptance)~~
- ~~CELEBRATION – Gratitude, experiencing
beauty, art, music, and practicing worship.~~



Chaplain Interventions

BOLSTERING FAITH TRADITION PRACTICES AND BELIEFS

- Religious rites and faith community events
- Connecting with a community that offers compassionate acceptance
- Exploring prayer/Intention methods (Contemplation, Guided Imagery, Lectio Divina, Gratitude, Prayer Beads, etc.)
- Mindfulness practices with awareness of Higher Power or the “Other.”
- Use of Evidence-Based Approaches such as ACT and Motivational Interviewing.
- Rituals of Passage (Cleansing/purging/purification, release, community belonging, rebirth)
- Encourages acts of service
- Facilitates redefining one’s spirituality and beliefs (i.e., shifting from a rigid view to one that operates with increased flexibility)
- Encouraging commitment to living out patient’s meaningful values.

Chaplain Interventions

THE POWER OF RITUALS



Arizona VA Chaplain Resources

Southern Arizona VA Health Care System

Chaplain Service

Tucson, AZ

520-629-1843

Chaplain Dr. Troy Parson - Supervisory Chaplain

520-629-1843 or troy.parson@va.gov

Phoenix VA Health Care System

Chaplain Service

Phoenix, AZ

602-222-6422



Building Spiritual Strength



Building Spiritual Strength is an eight (8) week integrated group process led by trained facilitators designed to support individuals as they explore their spirituality in a safe, non-judgmental manner, while honoring the participant's faith tradition and practices.

Building Spiritual Strength is an empirically supported program developed by Dr. Irene Harris and Rev. Tim Usset at the Minneapolis VA Health Care System.

Beginning this Fall, in partnership with the Phoenix and Southern Arizona VA Healthcare Systems, this program will be open for any Veteran and any VA Healthcare worker to participate. This recognizes their close relationship with our veteran population, as well as help them to move through any spiritual distress or moral injury that have faced in their acts of service to our Veterans.

<https://beconnectedaz.org/events/building-spiritual-strength-fall-2022>

For more information or to register, please contact Graciela Marroquin, MSW, at msgquinn2@gmail.com.





Questions

May light shine upon us,
nurturing us, penetrating our
inner darkness and thus,
illuminating our whole being so
that we may find our way in an
often-shadowy world. May all
creatures who are plagued with
suffering be freed. May you
experience beauty in the
moments and be thankful.

