



How Does A Peer Specialist Dialog About Spirituality, Faith & Religion?

ALTERNATIVES CONFERENCE | JULY 8, 2021 | AJ FRENCH, CRSS & CPRS



Today, the National Coalition on Mental Health Recovery was informed **Diane Engster** has passed away.

Diane was an activist in disability law and health/mental health care accountability.

She, and others who have gone before her, will be remembered at this Saturday's Alternative evening event.

July 10, 2021 | 7:00pm Eastern

Registration Link: <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJEvdu6hrjgjGdy9Lk1ZlbnMwbkIh4BDOaKG>

Learning Objectives

- ▶ We will learn the role spirituality, faith and/or religion can have in one's recovery.
- ▶ We will discuss how to apply recovery principles when interacting as a Peer Specialist.
- ▶ We will review a handout on designed for Peer Specialists with discussion questions about spirituality, faith and religion.

Spirituality is personal. It is what an individual values which brings meaning and purpose to one's life.

Faith is shared. It is what a community believes and understands to be true about Divine Power.

Religion is symbolic action. It is what people do within a governing system which reflects spirituality and faith.

**Why is the topic
of spirituality,
faith and religion
important?**



Definitions – Spirituality

- ▶ The Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) describes the spiritual dimension of wellness as **expanding our sense of meaning and purpose in life**. SAMHSA describes the following as practical ways to improve our spiritual wellness.
 - ▶ Make time for practices that enhance your sense of connection to self, nature, and others.
 - ▶ Take time to discover what values, principles, and beliefs are most important to you.
- ▶ The Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Mental Health (IDHS-DMH) recognizes spirituality as a Foundational Principle of Wellness. DMH defines spirituality as “**Finding meaning and purpose in one’s life. Gaining a sense of identity, based on one’s own values and beliefs, which may include one’s relationship with the divine or a power greater than oneself.**”

Definitions – Spirituality (personal)

- ▶ For purposes of today's conversation, Gift of Voice defines **spirituality as value, meaning, purpose and significance** which one discovers and develops in their own life.
 - ▶ **Value** is the degree of worth that we assign to ourselves and others. Value can be measured by what we give and do, or by what we sacrifice, to obtain what we desire.
 - ▶ **Meaning** is what you experience as special or unique. It is what resonates within you. Meaning is deeply personal and individual, often producing a gratifying emotion.
 - ▶ **Purpose** is the ultimate reason for which we exist. Sometimes referred to as a "calling" in life, purpose has the power to transcend our life circumstances.
 - ▶ **Significance** refers to the timeless importance of your life and your influence. Significance may be revealed by what you are known for and, after your death, how you will be remembered.

Which recovery principles apply when dialoging about spirituality, faith and religion?



Discussion Questions – Spirituality

- ▶ Why is it important to identify what brings meaning and purpose to one's life?
- ▶ What is your spirituality and how has your spiritual journey evolved?
- ▶ What are some spiritual values that persons in recovery may express?
- ▶ How can Peer Specialists support individuals who are exploring spirituality?
- ▶ How can spiritual values influence mental health and other kinds of recovery?

Spirituality is personal. It is what an individual values which brings meaning and purpose to one's life.

Module #1
Spirituality/Faith/Religion

Group Discussion
Questions

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Discussion Questions – Faith Communities

- ▶ What are the components of healthy faith communities which support mental health recovery?
- ▶ How do Peer Specialists demonstrate cultural competence about the role faith can play in mental health recovery?
- ▶ In what ways can mental health entities and faith communities partner to advance social justice for persons with mental health conditions?

Faith is shared. It is what
a community believes and
understands to be true
about Divine Power.

Discussion Questions – Religion

- ▶ What symbolic actions do we make that are not associated with religion?
- ▶ How can religious symbols and rituals contribute to one's recovery?
- ▶ Which cooperate religious acts reflect acceptance or rejection of persons with mental health conditions?
- ▶ How does a Peer Specialist have a trauma-informed conversation with a peer who reports ritual abuse?

Religion is symbolic action.
It is what people do within a governing system which reflects spirituality and faith.



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