




“God is Able”: The Significance of a Belief in Miracles for African American Patients with Serious Illnesses

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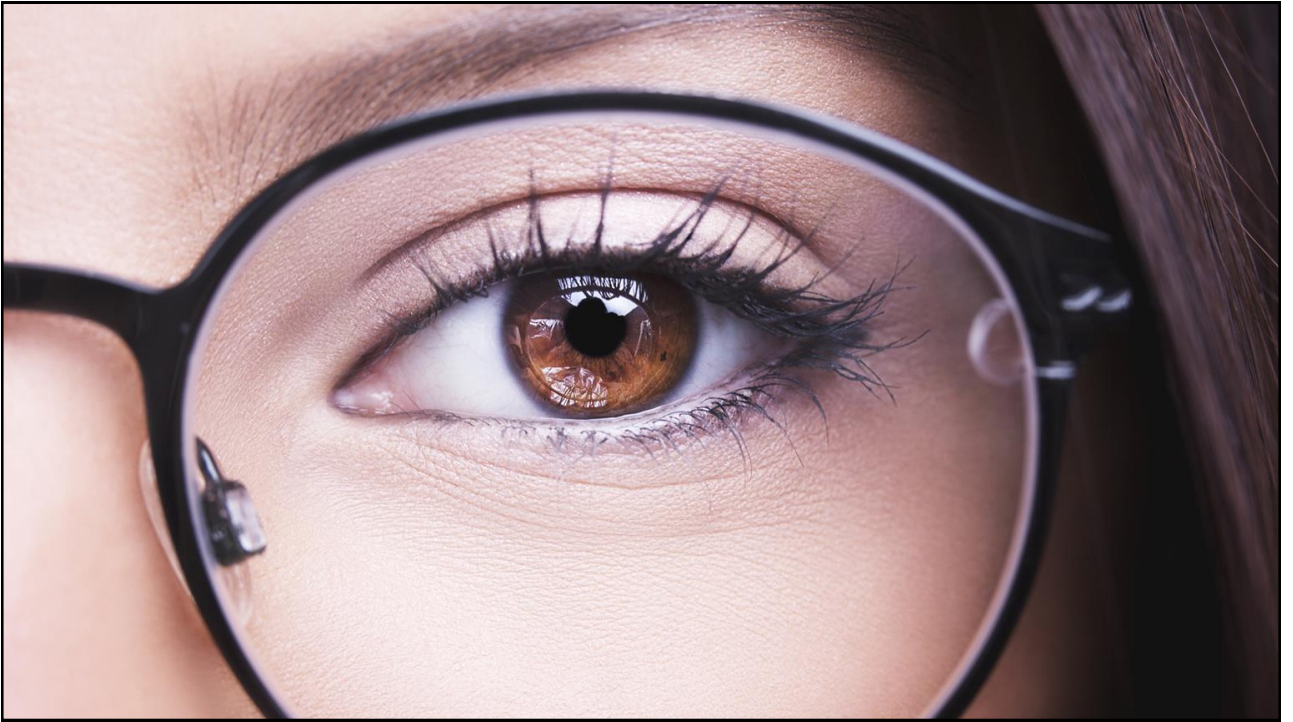
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Learning objectives

- To describe the theological, historical and cultural contexts for a belief in miracles among African American patients
- To identify tools to ascertain a patient’s and family’s religious and spiritual beliefs
- To develop strategies for more open and effective communication with patients and families who believe in miracles
- To consider the principle of "ubuntu" as a basis for improved cross-cultural interaction with seriously ill patients and families.

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“I am here.”

I matter.

I matter “equally.”

Not “if only”, not “as long as.”

I matter. Full stop.

Chimamanda Adichie
Dear Ijeawele, or A Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions

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Project Implicit
<https://implicit.harvard.edu>



Why is this important? The Interaction of Spirituality and EOL Care

- Greater Religious Coping
- Greater Support From Religious Communities

- Lower Rates of Hospice Use
- Higher Rates of Aggressive Medical Care at EOL

More common among African Americans

Balboni et al. JAMA Intern Med 2013;173:1109-1117

Slide courtesy of Kimberly S. Johnson, MD, MHS
Duke University School of Medicine

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Why is this important? The Interaction of Race, Spirituality, and EOL Care

African Americans **with**

- Greater Religious Coping
- Greater Support From Religious Communities

EVEN....

- **Lower** Rates of Hospice Use
- **Higher** Rates of Aggressive Medical Care at EOL

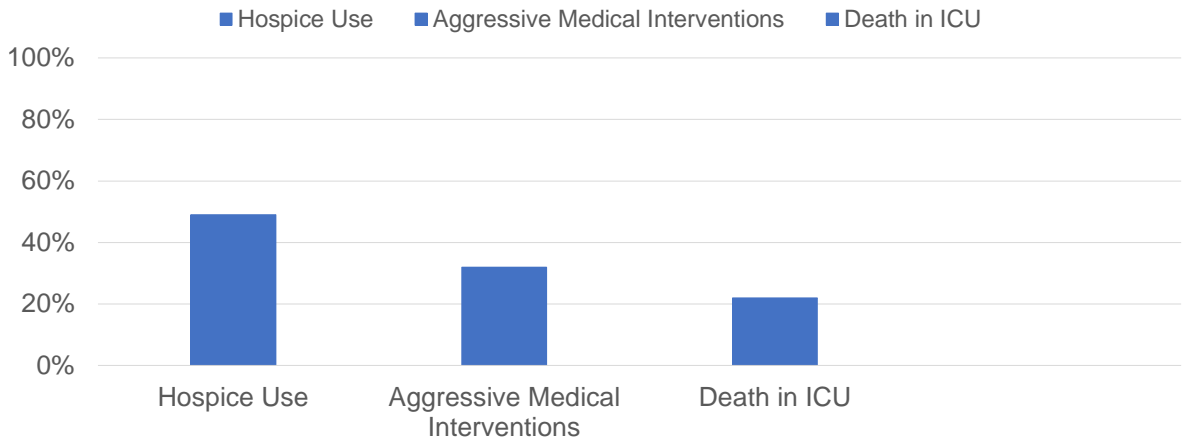
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Why is this important?

Patients Receiving High Spiritual Support from Religious Communities

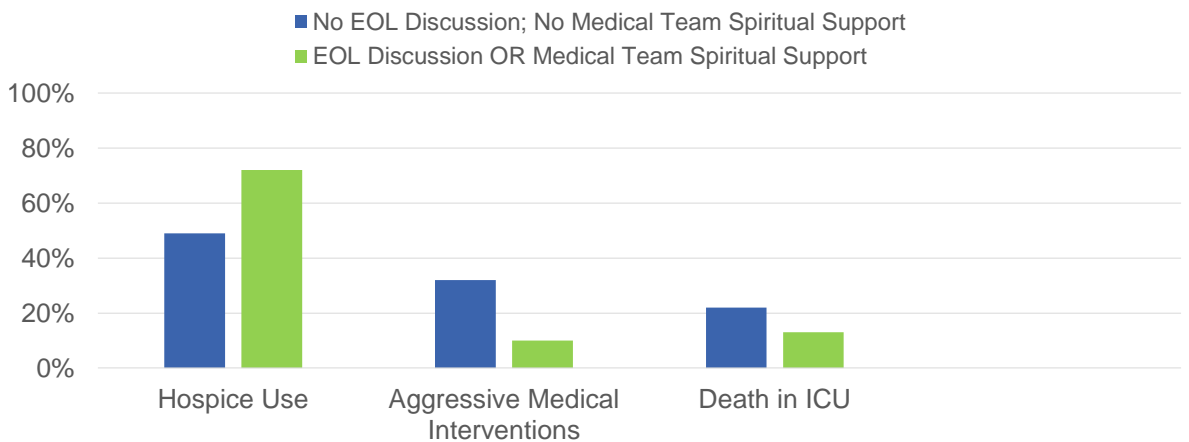


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What can we do?

Patients Receiving High Spiritual Support from Religious Communities

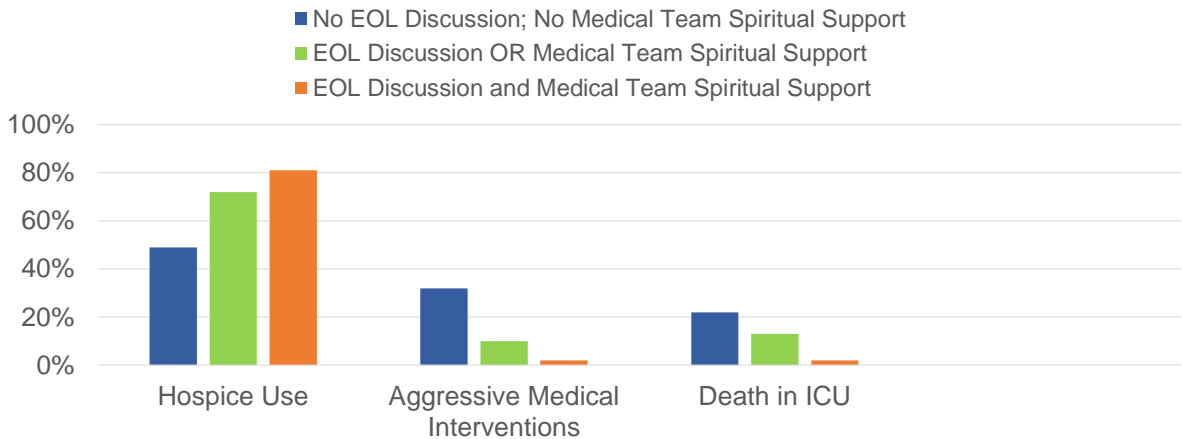


Balboni et al. JAMA Intern Med 2013;173:1109-1117

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What can we do?

Patients Receiving High Spiritual Support from Religious Communities



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Religious groups in the U.S. by tradition, family and denomination

Christian	70.6%	Non-Christian Faiths	5.9%
Evangelical Protestant	25.4%	Jewish	1.9%
Mainline Protestant	14.7%	Muslim	0.9%
Historically Black Protestant	6.5%	Buddhist	0.7%
Catholic	20.8%	Hindu	0.7%
Mormon	1.6%	Other World Religions	0.3%
Orthodox Christian	0.5%	Other Faiths	1.5%
Jehovah's Witness	0.8%	Unaffiliated (religious "nones")	22.8%
Other Christian	0.4%		

•"U.S. Religious Landscape Study." Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C. (2014) pewforum.org

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Religious composition of blacks

Christian	79%	Non-Christian Faiths	3%
Evangelical Protestant	14%	Jewish	<1%
Mainline Protestant	4%	Muslim	2%
Historically Black Protestant	53%	Buddhist	<1%
Catholic	5%	Hindu	<1%
Mormon	<1%	Other World Religions	<1%
Orthodox Christian	<1%	Other Faiths	1%
Jehovah's Witness	2%	Unaffiliated (religious "nones")	18%
Other Christian	1%		

•["U.S. Religious Landscape Study."](#) Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C. (2014) pewforum.org

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Belief in God by race/ethnicity *% of adults who say they...*

Racial and ethnic composition	Believe in God; absolutely certain	Believe in God; fairly certain
White	61%	20%
Black	83%	11%
Asian	44%	23%
Latino	59%	26%
Other/Mixed	66%	18%

•["U.S. Religious Landscape Study."](#) Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C. (2014) pewforum.org

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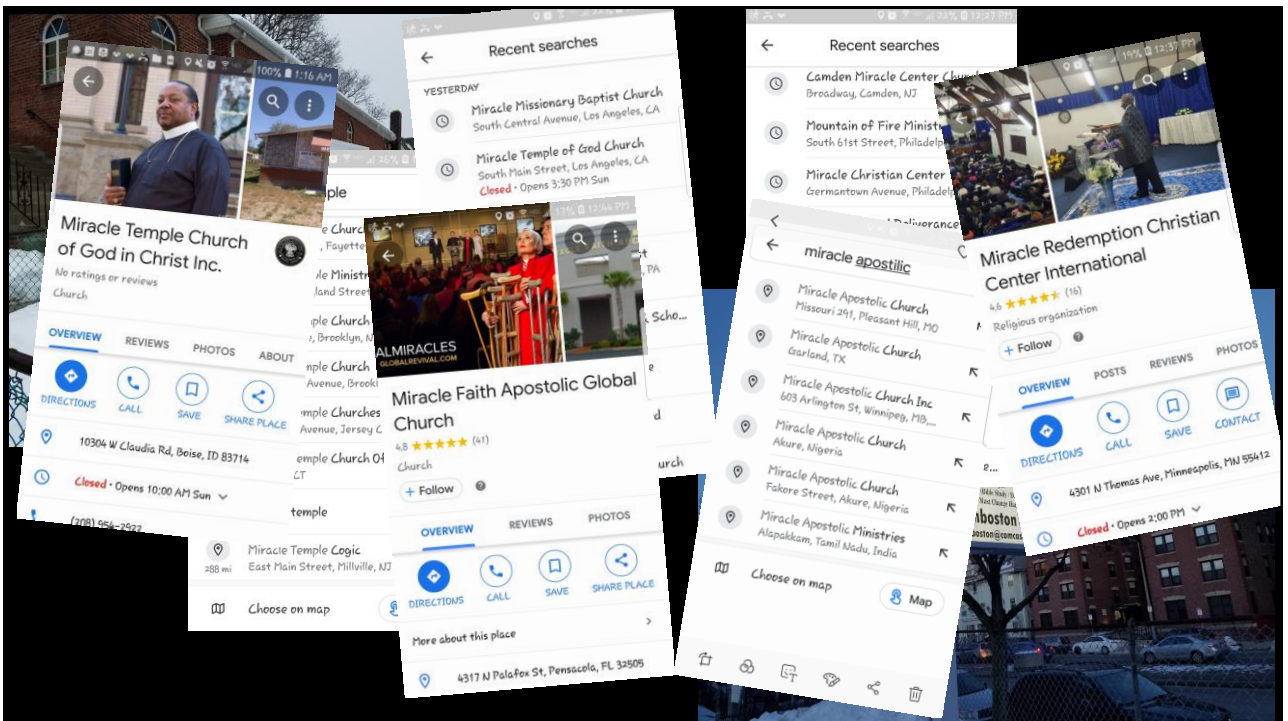
Church engagement

- Attendance at religious services
 - 47% at least once a week
 - 36% at least once or twice a month/a few times a year
- Participation in prayer, study or religious education groups
 - 39% once a week
 - 14% once or twice a month
- 84% believe in miracles (2007)

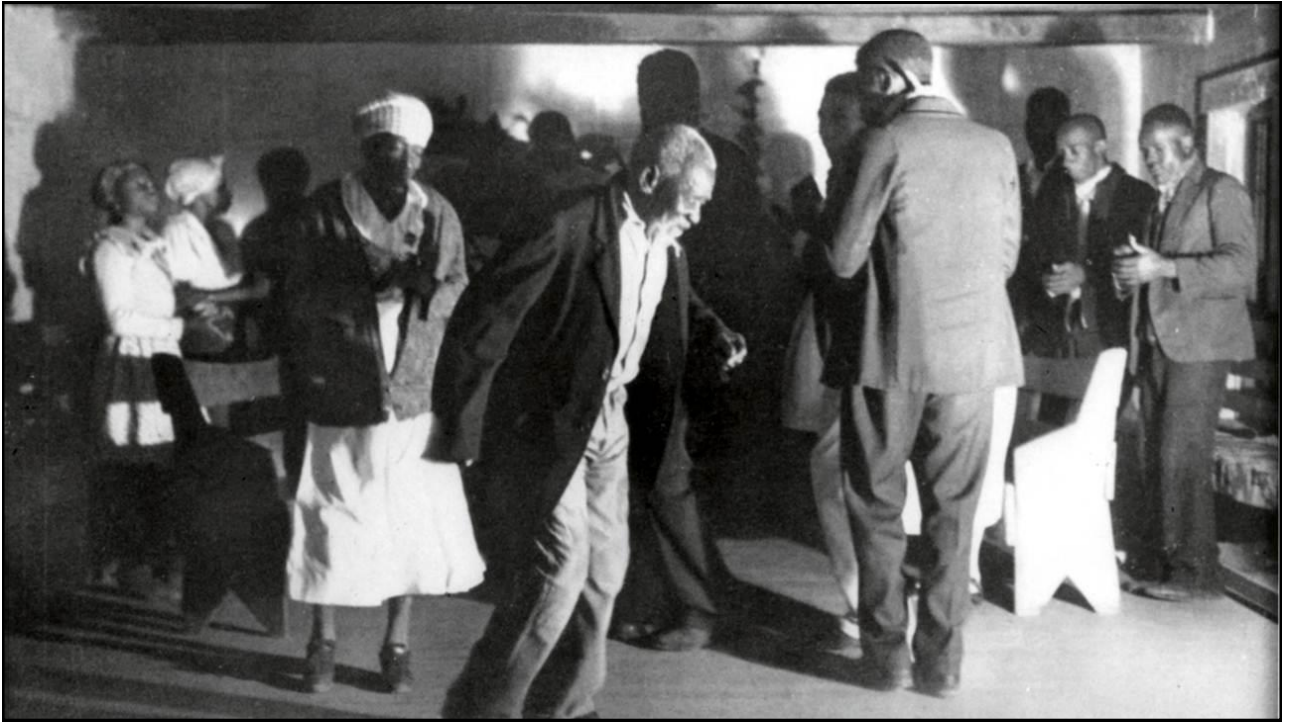
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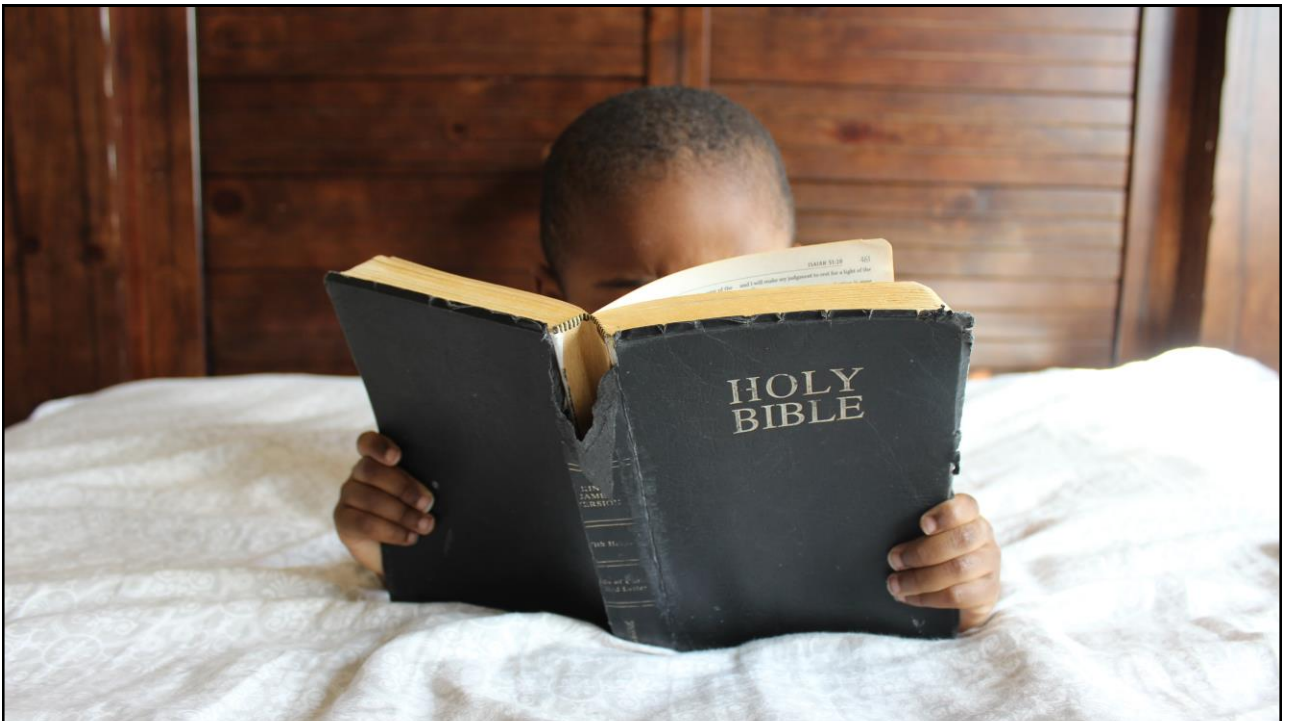
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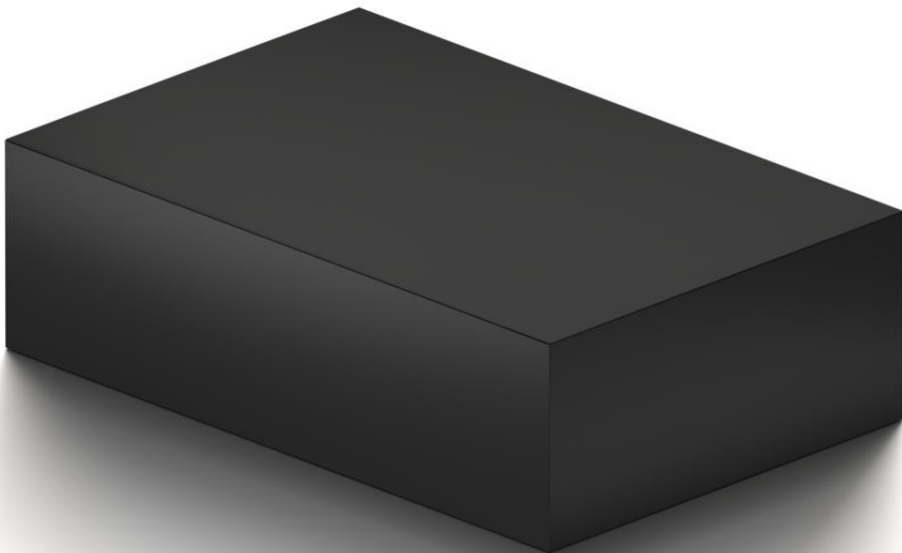


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What strategies can be employed to engage in more open and effective communication with patients and families who believe in miracles?

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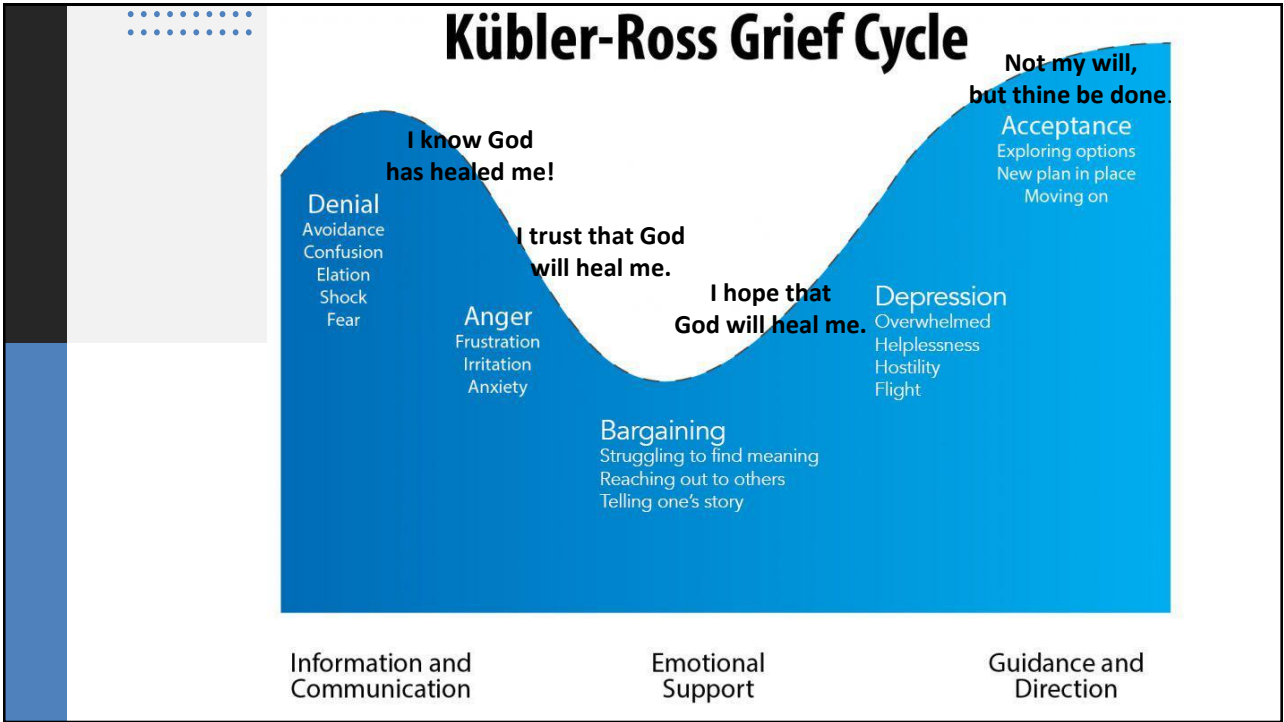


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Category	Sample questions
H: sources of hope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are your sources of hope, strength, comfort and peace? • What do you hold on to during difficult times?
O: organized religion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you part of a religious or spiritual community? • Does it help you? How?
P: personal spirituality and practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have personal spiritual beliefs? • What aspects of your spirituality or spiritual practices do you find most helpful?
E: effects on medical care and end-of-life issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your current situation affect your ability to do the things that usually help you spiritually? • As a doctor, is there anything that I can do to help you access the resources that usually help you? • Are there any specific practices or restrictions I should know about in providing your medical care?

Saguil, Aaron, MD, MPH, & Phelps, Karen, MD. (2012). The Spiritual Assessment. *American Family Physician*, 86(6), 546-550.
 Anandarajah, G, & Hight, E. (2001). Spirituality and medical practice: Using the HOPE questions as a practical tool for spiritual assessment. *American Family Physician*, 63(1), 81.

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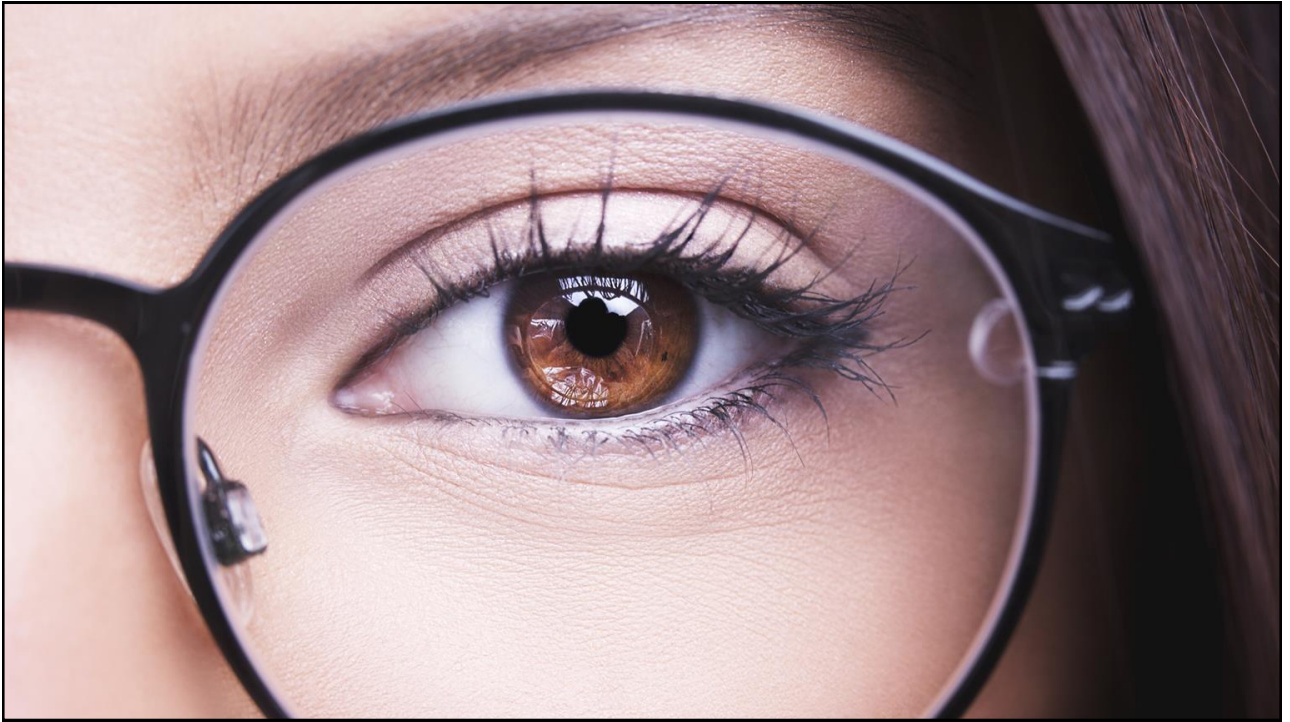


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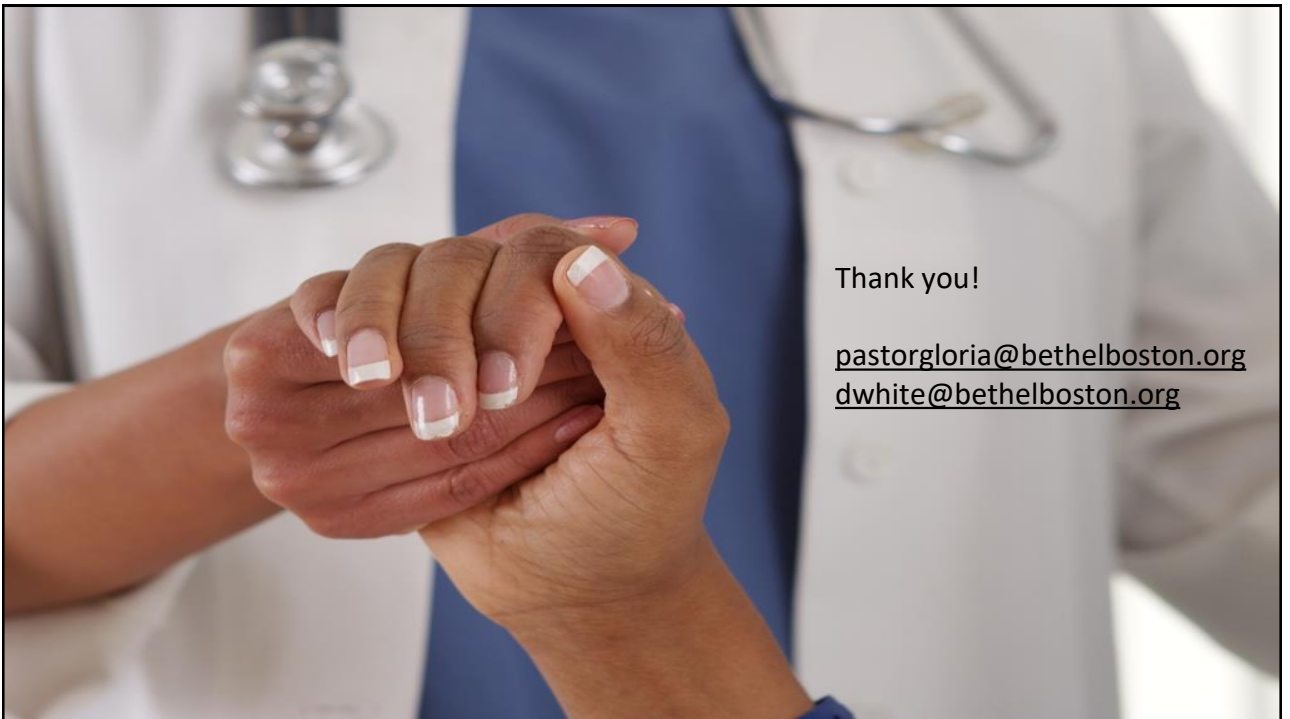
Pastor Gloria's prayer	Dr. Gloria's conversation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gratitude for God's grace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Express gratitude for the patient
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledge emotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledge emotions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affirm trust in God 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affirm the patient's faith
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask for healing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affirm the hope for healing, and I worry...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask for strength to endure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commit to support ALL the way
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pray for the wisdom of clinicians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage prayers for clinicians
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Express, however, the ultimate confidence in God 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affirm their faith
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gratitude for God's grace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Express gratitude for the patient

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Thank you!

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