Overview

Spirituality is an important element in the six dimensions of health. In this chapter, students begin to understand what spirituality is, discover how it is similar to and different from religion, and learn that spirituality has three interconnected facets. Students will also begin to understand how spirituality contributes to physical health, psychosocial health, and stress reduction. In this chapter, students will learn how to attend to their spiritual health by training their bodies, expanding their minds, being in tune with themselves and their surroundings, and reaching out to others.

Lecture Outline

I. Cultivating Your Spiritual Health
   A. The desire to find a sense of purpose, meaning, and harmony in life is shared by a majority of American college students.
   B. More than half of all students surveyed have the following goals:
      1. Attaining inner harmony
      2. Developing a meaningful philosophy of life
      3. Seeking beauty in life
      4. Becoming a more loving person
   C. Researchers found that compared to freshmen, college juniors and seniors:
      1. have more desire to reduce pain and suffering in the world.
      2. are more thankful for all that had happened to them.
      3. express higher levels of tolerance and respect for other religions and philosophies.
      4. are committed to understanding other countries and cultures.
   D. Spiritual health is one of the six key dimensions of health.

   Additional Instructor Resources: PPT slides: 1–3

II. What Is Spirituality?
   A. At some point many people realize that material possessions do not make them happy or improve their self-worth.
   B. The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) defines spirituality as an individual’s sense of purpose and meaning in life, beyond material values.
C. Religion and Spirituality Are Distinct Concepts

1. Spirituality may or may not lead to participation in organized religion.
   a. Religion is a system of beliefs, practices, rituals, and symbols designed to facilitate closeness to the sacred or transcendent.

2. Even though spirituality and religion share some common elements, they are not the same thing.

3. Most Americans consider spirituality important in their lives but not necessarily in the form of religion.

4. It seems that a majority of Americans recognize and respect the underlying unity of spiritual ideas expressed in different religious and spiritual practices.

D. Spirituality Integrates Three Facets

1. Professor and author Brian Luke Seaward identifies three facets of human existence that together constitute the core of human spirituality:
   a. Relationships—Healthy relationships are a sign of spiritual well-being when we treat ourselves and others with respect, honesty, integrity, and love.
   b. Values—Our values are the principles that influence our thoughts and emotions and guide the choices we make in our lives.
   c. Meaningful purpose in life—Healthy people are able to articulate their purpose and to make choices that manifest that purpose.

E. Spiritual Intelligence Is an Inner Wisdom

1. Our relationships, values, and sense of purpose together contribute to our overall spiritual intelligence (SI).
   a. Physicist and philosopher Danah Zohar defines SI as the intelligence of the deep self— including qualities such as self-awareness, spontaneity, and compassion.

Key Terms: spirituality, religion, values, spiritual intelligence (SI)

Figures and Tables:

Table 1
Characteristics Distinguishing Religion and Spirituality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Spirituality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Centrally focused</td>
<td>Intuitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasonable, measurable, logical</td>
<td>Intuitive, less measurable, more subjective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balances internal, external, practical</td>
<td>Openly oriented, inwardly directed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focuses on self, human, society</td>
<td>Modifications oriented, outwardly directed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always oriented, can be oblivious</td>
<td>Transforming, not domain oriented</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional Instructor Resources: PPT slides: 4–8; Digital Transparency Masters: Table 1, Figure 1
III. How Is It Beneficial to Focus on Your Spiritual Health?

A. Spiritual Health Contributes to Physical Health
   1. The emerging science of mind–body medicine is a research focus of NCCAM and evidence supports a positive influence of spirituality on health.
   2. Some researchers believe that a key to understanding the improved health and longer life in spiritually healthy people is their greater self-control.
   3. When we get sick, the National Cancer Institute (NCI) contends that spiritual or religious well-being may help restore health and restore quality of life in the following ways:
      a. By decreasing anxiety, depression, anger, discomfort, and feelings of isolation
      b. By decreasing alcohol and drug abuse
      c. By decreasing blood pressure and the risk of heart disease
      d. By increasing a person’s ability to cope with the effects of illness and with medical treatments
      e. By increasing feelings of hope and optimism, freedom from regret, satisfaction with life, and inner peace

B. Spiritual Health Contributes to Psychosocial Health
   1. The NCI and independent studies have found a benefit of spirituality in reducing levels of anxiety and depression.
   2. People who have found a spiritual community also benefit from increased social support among members.

C. Spiritual Health Contributes to Reduced Stress
   1. Both the NCCAM and the NCI cite stress reduction as one probable mechanism among spiritually healthy people for improved health and longevity and for better coping with illness.

Additional Instructor Resources:
- Lecture Launcher Video: The Study of Happy Brains
- PPT slides: 9–14

IV. What Can You Do to Focus on Your Spiritual Health?

A. Enhancing your spiritual side takes just as much work as becoming physically fit or improving your diet.

B. Train Your Body
   1. Traditional forms of yoga include controlled breathing and physical postures as well as meditation, chanting, and other practices that are believed to cultivate unity with the Atman, or Absolute.
   2. Training your body to improve your spiritual health does not necessarily require you to engage in a formal practice such as yoga.
      a. Any exercise you do every day can contribute to your spiritual health.
   3. You can cultivate spirituality through fully engaging your body’s senses.
      a. Vision, hearing, taste, smell, and touch are five portals to spiritual health.
      b. The flip side of cultivating your senses is depriving them. Closing your eyes and sitting in silence removes the distraction of visual and auditory stimuli, helping you to focus within.
C. Expand Your Mind

1. For many people, psychological counseling is a first step toward improving their spiritual health.

2. Another way to expand your mind is to study the sacred texts of the world’s major religions and spiritual practices.

3. You can expand your awareness of different spiritual practices by exploring on-campus meditation groups, attending meetings of student religious organizations, going to different churches, attending public lectures, and exploring official websites of various spiritual and religious organizations on the Internet.

D. Tune in to Yourself and Your Surroundings

1. Inner wisdom is perpetually available to us, but if we fail to tune our “receiver,” we will not be able to hear it for all the “static” of our daily lives.

2. Four ancient practices can help you to tune into yourself and your surroundings.
   a. **Contemplation** is the practice of concentrating the mind on a spiritual or ethical question or subject, a view of the natural world, or an icon or other image representative of divinity.
   b. **Mindfulness** is a practice of purposeful, nonjudgmental observation in which we are fully present in the moment.
   c. **Meditation** is the practice of emptying the mind and cultivating stillness.
      i. Experienced mediators show increased levels of **empathy**, the ability to understand and share another person’s experience.
      ii. Meditation improves the brain’s ability to process information, reduces stress, improves sleep, and relieves chronic pain.
      iii. Different schools of meditation include mantra meditation, breath meditation, color meditation, and object meditation.
   d. **Prayer** is defined as communication with a transcendent Presence.

E. Reach Out to Others

1. **Altruism** is the giving on oneself out of genuine concern for others.
   a. Volunteering to help others, choosing to work for a nonprofit organization, or donating money or other resources are ways to serve others and simultaneously enhance spiritual health.
   b. Community service can also take the form of **environmental stewardship**, which the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines as the responsibility for environmental quality shared by all those whose actions affect the environment.
   c. To learn more about developing environmental mindfulness, please see page 67, *Be Health, Be Green* box.

**Key Terms:** yoga, contemplation, mindfulness, meditation, prayer, altruism, environmental stewardship
Figures and Tables:

![Image of qualities of mindfulness](image_url)

**Figure 2**
Qualities of Mindfulness

**Additional Instructor Resources:** PPT slides: 15–21;
Digital Transparency Masters: Figure 2

### Additional Chapter Activities

#### Discussion Questions

1. What are the differences between spirituality and religion? How important are these distinctions to you and your health?

2. What is environmental mindfulness? What are the benefits for becoming environmentally mindful? Who benefits from becoming environmentally mindful?

3. What are the differences between the various forms of meditation, such as mantra meditation, breath meditation, color meditation, and object meditation? Which of the various forms are most appealing to you and why?

4. What evidence supports the statement that spirituality and religion are not the same thing?

5. How does self-control help a spiritual person to maintain or improve his or her health?

#### Critical Thinking Questions

1. Do you consider yourself a spiritual person? A religious person? How can a person be both spiritual and religious?

2. Which of the three facets of spirituality—relationships, values, and purpose in life—have you explored in your life? What prompted you to explore this aspect of your spirituality?

3. Have you ever used contemplation, mindfulness, meditation, or prayer in a situation from your life that was stressful or emotionally difficult? How did it help you deal with the situation? How might each of these differ in how they help you deal with a stressful or difficult situation?

4. Which of the qualities of mindfulness illustrated in Figure 2 do you possess? What can you do to improve your qualities of mindfulness?

5. What activities do you practice in your daily life to promote environmental stewardship?
Student Activities

Individual

1. Practice mindfulness while completing an everyday task or activity, such as peeling an orange as described on page 66. Record your feelings and observations in a journal. Consider asking a close friend to do the same and then discuss what you both notice and learn.

2. Use the Internet to explore one of the types of meditation discussed in the chapter. Practice that type of meditation for two weeks to a month, and keep a journal about the way the meditation made you feel. Did you feel more relaxed? More peaceful? More focused?

Community

1. What kind of spiritual and/or religious programs and/or services are offered on your campus? Have you ever taken advantage of these programs or services? Have you ever attended a service or program that you hadn’t attended in the past?

2. What types of yoga classes are available on your campus? Attend a yoga class to see if this form of spirituality is appropriate for you. Talk with the instructor and other class participants to find out the benefits they gain from doing yoga.

3. Find out what kind of spiritual retreat centers are offered in your community or in your area? What services—meditation, yoga, or other—are offered at the center? How do you register to attend the center?

Diverse Populations/Nontraditional

1. Use the Internet to research aspects of spirituality in a different culture or country? How does that concept of spirituality compare to that in the United States?

2. Find books and sacred texts for a religion that interest you. Take the time to read these books and understand their approach to spiritual fulfillment. What similarities do you find in these texts and those that guide your life? If you do not incorporate spiritual texts into your life currently, what might change if you did?

Lecture Launcher Video Questions

The Study of Happy Brains

1. Do you agree that life experiences account for only 10 percent of one’s total happiness? Why or why not?

2. What do you do to make yourself happy?

3. In what ways can you work to increase your happiness level every day?
Additional References


For Further Information

Beliefnet
www.beliefnet.com

Santa Barbara Institute For Consciousness Studies
*Cultivating Emotional Balance*
www.sbinstitute.com/research_CEB.html

University of Maryland Medical Center
*Spirituality*
www.um.m.edu/altmed/articles/spirituality-000360.htm

University of California at Riverside
*Spiritual Wellness*
http://wellness.ucr.edu/spiritual_wellness.html

UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center
http://marc.ucla.edu

Additional Media

*Amy Applebaum: Defining Spirituality*, 2 minutes
A video of PeopleJam. In the video, life coach Amy Applebaum shares her views on spirituality.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oi391YzH05o
Mindfulness, Stress Reduction and Healing, 1 hour and 14 minutes
A Google TechTalks presentation by Jon Kabat-Zinn, from the Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health care, and Society at the University of Massachusetts Medical School.
www.youtube.com/watch?v=rSU8ftmmhmw

Yoga Mediation Exercises: Guided Meditation for Yoga Exercises, 3 minutes
An ExpertVillage video in which Jennifer Kostel leads the viewer through guided meditation.
www.youtube.com/watch?v=k_G4o0EaR58

Yoga Meditation Exercises: Using Mantras for Yoga Meditation, 2 minutes
An ExpertVillage video in which Jennifer Kostel teaches the viewer about mantras.
www.youtube.com/watch?v=JU2e5n1FeMU

Yoga Meditation Exercises: Yoga Breathing for Meditation, 2 minutes
An ExpertVillage video in which Jennifer Kostel leads the viewer through yoga breathing for meditation.
www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ljVqV5IDTo