

- [Home](#)
- [SF STAT!](#)
- [Current Articles](#)
- [CURRENT ISSUE](#)
- [Online Newspapers](#)
- [WEEKLY NEWSLETTERS](#)
- [Media Kit](#)
- [Calendar](#)
- [Business Directory](#)
- [Video Interviews](#)
- [Contact](#)

Select Page

Spiritual Care at Broward Health Imperial Point: Nursing the Spirit as the Spirit of Nursing

✖ Over the past two decades healthcare literature suggests that trying to define and describe spirituality is like trying to “lasso the wind.” Although the wind can be felt and its effect seen, it cannot be easily conceptualized. Spirituality is derived from the Latin word spiritus meaning breath, and relates to the Greek word pneuma, which means breath or wind. Breath is an apt metaphor as it connects the body with our

spirit or soul. The American Holistic Nursing Association (AHNA) defines spirituality as “the unifying force that permeates life, shapes our life journey, and is vital to the process of discovering purpose, meaning and inner strength.”

In the past, spiritual care in nursing has often been perceived as taboo because it is out of nursing’s scope-of-practice. While the physicians are experts at understanding diseases from the perspective of bodily functions and systems, spirituality focuses on disease from the perspective of “... the anxiety, the fear and even the dread” that it can engender in patients. Today’s nurses should be able to bridge the gap between the physical and spiritual/emotional aspects of illness. This means, at least, the ability to connect with patients and families as they search for meaning during times of sickness and suffering. Broward Health Imperial Point (BHIP), under the leadership of its CEO Alice Taylor and its COO/CNO Thomas Kester, strives to integrate a spiritual thread into the tapestry of Holistic Nursing Care. Some efforts include:

Creating a Hospital-wide Holistic Care Council to:

1. Promote the values of kindness, respect, care and compassion for ourselves, patients and peers;
2. Promote and implement self-care practices such as creating opportunities for meditation and quiet time;
3. Address the spiritual, emotional and physical concerns of nurses, their patients and peers.

Embracing the Caring Caritas Model popularized in Jean Watson’s Human Caring Theory, BHIP recently embraced Caring Caritas 9 “I am sensitive to the unique physical, emotional and spiritual needs of others and with intention, meet these identified needs.”

The dire need for spiritual care in nursing is a centerpiece of Gallison’s (2013) article on spirituality in the *Journal of Holistic Nursing*. There he emphasized:

1. Patients are social, biological, psychological, emotional and spiritual beings.
2. Patients place a high value on their emotional and

spiritual needs being met, while hospitalized.

3. Although nurses perceive spiritual care, we often missed the golden opportunities to provide spiritual interventions, because we do not probe deeper into the patient's belief system.

Self-Care: Employees are offered access to scheduled pastoral care services in the BHIP chapel and as needed. Reverend Dr. Richard Hasselbach, Pastor and BHIP Chaplain, reflected when he first walked through the doors of BHIP, his intention was not only to support the patients and their families but also to foster the spirituality in the employees. He explained that a healthy spirituality, nourished by sound spiritual disciplines, encourages employees to connect with the deepest aspects of their own selves. This enables them to better connect with the patients. As Pastor Hasselbach put it, "the whole person radiates wholeness to others."

Call for Community Action in Spiritual Care: James Depelisi, President of Broward County Crime Commission, volunteers every Thursday for well-attended prayer and Bible studies with behavioral health patients.

As an indication of the importance placed on spiritual care at BHIP, contributions are being made to the 2017 Employee Giving Campaign which is earmarked to renovate the chapel by improving its prominence, accessibility and spiritual engagement.

As BHIP continues to interweave the spiritual thread in the tapestry of Holistic healthcare, it is undeniable the final masterpiece will always be displayed in its "gallery of hearts."

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