

The Chinese University of Hong Kong
The Nethersole School of Nursing
CADENZA Training Programme

CTP002 – Psychosocial and Spiritual Care

Chapter 7

Spirituality and religion: basic principles and working definitions

Copyright © 2012 CADENZA Training Programme. All rights reserved.



香港賽馬會慈善信託基金
The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust

Chapter 7

Spirituality and religion: basic principles and working definitions



Course Outline

- Importance of spirituality and religion in later life
- Concepts of spirituality and religion
- Concepts of hope and faith
- Theoretical perspectives in spiritual development
- Effects of spirituality and religion in later life

Pervasive influence of religiosity and spirituality

- Gallup polls indicate that:
 1. In 2011, 92% of adults professed a belief in God
 2. In 2009, 79% considered religion to be at least a fairly important part of their lives
 3. In 1999, more 70% of older adults rated religion as the top priority in life
- Numerous studies have shown age to be associated with an increase in religiousness

(Gallup Poll, 2007; Emery&Pargament, 2004)

How about religiosity/spirituality in older adults?

Religiosity/spirituality in older adults

- From a Gallup Poll taken in 1993: 52% of those age 65 or above attended church or synagogue in a typical week as compared with 32% of those age under 30” (as cited in Schultz-Hipp, 2001).
- A study indicated that Christian women (n=784) aged sixty-five or above were more likely to:
 - (1) attend worship more than once a week (35.21% vs 19.79%)
 - (2) pray privately several times each day (59.15% vs 37.5%)
 - (3) rate religious belief as extremely important (85.92% vs 76.29%)as compared with women aged under 35 years old
(Schultz-Hipp, 2001).

Importance of spirituality and religion in later life

The importance of religion / spirituality

- Seems to play an important part throughout human history
- “Humans are fundamentally meaning-makers; their cognitive structures do not easily adapt to ultimate meaninglessness” (Dowd & Nielsen, 2006, p.291)
- Find meaning if in a state of confusion

The role of religion/spirituality for older adults

- Experience a great deal of change during their later years:
 - Positive aspects: enjoy life, time for travel and hobbies, more flexible schedule...
 - Negative aspects: declining health and strength, loss of occupational role and friends (due to death or moving); diminishing income; scattering of children and other family members...

The role of religion/spirituality for older adults

- On the other hand, ageing has been regarded as a "a spiritual journey" (Bianchi, 1984) and "a spiritualising process" (Jones, 1984)
- Roles the spiritual domains play in older adults:
 1. spiritual tasks of facing mortality
 2. define the shape and limits of love and fidelity
 3. struggling with the meaning of evil and suffering
 4. seeking forgiveness and reconciliation
 5. giving plus receiving a spiritual legacy (Fischer, 1992)

Spiritual needs of older adults (Moberg, 2001)

- **Meaning and purpose:**
 - desire to maintain one's personal dignity and self-esteem
- **Love and relatedness:**
 - experiences feelings of : self-worth, joy, security, belonging, hope, and courage.
- **Forgiveness:**
 - resolves guilt or wrong doing, even broken promises, regret or other losses.
- **Spiritual integration:**
 - the need to feel ourselves spiritually beyond our existence.

(Moberg, 2001)

Spiritual needs in older adults (Moberg, 2001)

- **Cope with losses:**
 - if we view losses positively, it can enriches our lives and facilitate growth and development.
- **Freedom to raise questions:**
 - doubts in illness, disability, bereavement, and any negative event can be solved through openly sharing and active listening.
- **Flexibility:**
 - adjust and adapt to the changing world around them and their own new situations.
- **Prepare for dying and death:**
 - assists them in finding peace and overcomes the delusion of immortality.

(Moberg, 2001)

Spiritual needs in older adults (Moberg, 2001)

- **To be useful:**
 - assists them in finding their usefulness - even frail, ill and disabled persons can still be helpful.
- **To be thankful:**
 - assists them in finding gratefulness over their entire life, such as happy experiences, personal achievements and good circumstances.

(Moberg, 2001)

Gerontological functions of religion

1. To help face impending death
2. To help find and maintain a sense of meaningfulness and significance to life
3. To help accept the inevitable loss of old age and discover compensation values
4. To meet secular social needs

(Roger, 1976, p.406-411)

Concepts of spirituality and religion

Defining religion and spirituality

- The meaning is still evolving
- Used interchangeably by lay public
- Traditionally, religion and spirituality were not distinguishable from each other
- No consensus in the definitions

Definitions of spirituality

- More broadly defined
- The human awareness of a relationship or connection that goes beyond sensory perceptions (Schulz-Hipp, 2001)
- Draws on a person's life experiences for shape and substance
- Goes beyond any specific religion
- A person develops his/her spirituality based on the historic setting of that person in a geographic location and a network of employment, political commitments, family, and other social relationships (Schulz-Hipp, 2001)

Definitions of spirituality

- Embraces one's religious beliefs and non-religious beliefs (or psychological component)
- Definition of spirituality:

"There are at least three components to this spiritual dimension. First, spirituality is an expression of how a person relates to a larger whole, be it God, a higher power, or the human family. Second, personal spirituality provides a source of meaning and understanding about the significance of being human. Third, personal spirituality often contains habits, rituals, gestures, and symbols that provide ways in which the person can interpret and manage existence" (Sheehan, 1997, p.1)

Definitions of spirituality

- It helps individuals in two ways :1. finding meaning in life 2. understanding their behaviour and the choices they make. (Angeli, 2001)
- Spirituality continues to develop and grow with age. (Angeli, 2001)
- It plays an important role in facing death. (Angeli, 2001)
- Often thought **MORE** personal, individual, and subjective than religiosity. (Fields, 2007)

Definitions of religion

- Roots in religion
- Reflects one's affiliation with an organised set of beliefs, doctrines, values, traditions, and rituals
- Primary function: to know God (Hill & Pargament, 2003; Sulmasy, 2002)
- Two traditional approaches of understanding religion: substantive and functional perspectives (Zinnbauer, & Pargament, 2005)

Definitions of religion

- Substantive perspective defines religion by its substance: the sacred.
 - Looks into those emotions, thoughts, behaviours, and relationships associated with transcendent or imminent power (Pargament & Mahoney, 2002; Emmons, 1999)
 - Is defined as "a system of beliefs in a divine or superhuman power, and practices of worship or other rituals directed towards such a power" (Argyle & Beit-Hallahmi, 1975, p.1)

Definitions of religion

- Functional perspective examines the purpose religiousness serves in an individual's life.
 - Involves beliefs, emotions, practices, and experience
 - One definition: “Whatever we as individuals do to come to grips personally with the questions that confront us because we are aware that we and others like us are alive and that we will die” (Batson et al., 1993, p.8)

Concepts of hope and faith

Definitions of hope

- Thought of as wishful thinking or desire (Stoner, 2004)
- Described as something very definite and positive
- An interior sense that needs a response from the outside and has meaning only as it relates to others, that is , as an act of collaboration or mutuality (Lynch, 1965)
- Perceived probability of success in obtaining a goal (Stotland, 1969)

The importance of hope

- Promoting a "hope-centered" approach to positive psychological functioning (Snyder, 1991, 2004)
- Hope as a spiritual nature is essential for "ageing well" (Vaillant, 2002)
- Important in dealing with stress and adversity (Scioli, 2007)

Definitions of faith

- Means "accepting beliefs as true without proof and being willing to act on them" (Atchley, & Barusch, 2004, p.303)
- Defines faith as "the dynamic pattern by which we find life meaning" (Fowler, 1981, p.3)
- Does not prove the existence of God in a scientific way
- Mature faith is a consequence of spiritual development that takes time and life experience
- Several theories are proposed in spiritual development

Theoretical perspectives in spiritual development

Propensity to seek divine

1. Innate, genetic basis for spirituality (Bouchard et al., 1990)

- genetic factors are more prominent in determining how religious a person is during transition from adolescent to adult
- more true for internal religiousness (e.g. importance of faith, using prayer) than external religiousness (e.g. attending church activities, observing religious holidays)

(L.B. Koenig et al., 2005)

- ## 2. Concepts of God are rooted in a child's intrapsychic capacity to symbolise, fantasise and create superhuman beings (Rizzuto, 1979)
- ## 3. Grows out of critical life events and challenges that reveal human limitations (Pargament, 1997)
- ## 4. Importance of social context in shaping the child's understanding of God (Kaufman, 1981)

Theories of spiritual development

- ‘Stages of Faith’ by Fowler (1981, 1991)
- ‘Religious Faith Development’ by Koenig (1994)
- ‘Continuity Theory’ by Atchley (1977, 1989, 1999)
- ‘Spiritual Dimension of Ageing’ by MacKinlay (2001)

Fowler's stage of faith

- Developed a Fowler's stages of faith and contains a sequence of six stages (Fowler, 1981, 1991)

1.	Intuitive-projective faith (aged 2-7)	Begins to aware of self and God
2.	Mythic-literal faith (aged 7 to 12)	Internalized meaning of morals and God
3.	Synthetic-conventional faith (adolescence onward)	Accepts faith without critical examination

Fowler's stage of faith

4.	Individuative-reflective faith (early to mid-twenties or beyond)	Critically reexamines the ideological faith and reconstructs one's belief system
5.	Conjunctive faith (midlife and beyond)	Involving acceptance of paradox and ambiguity, and deeper sense of understanding, disillusionment with over-reliance on rational thought
6.	Universalizing faith (late life)	A rare willingness to give up one-self and one's life to make spiritual values a reality on this earth

Fowler's Stages of Faith

- Older people seem more likely to be at stages 3 to 6. Most adults cannot go beyond the individuative-reflective faith, even in very old age.
- Exemplars of people in the latter stage include Mahatma Gandhi, Thomas Merton, and Mother Teresa.
- Criticised for placing more emphasis on cognitive concepts of spirituality. (Koenig, 1994)

Religious faith development by Koenig (1994)

- Another theory of faith development by Koenig (1994) emphasised the triune nature of humanity with interacting parts of body (physical), mind (psychosocial), and spirit (soul).
- "Religious faith development is a process during which a persons' relationship with God (or Jesus, for Christians) becomes their ultimate concern and primary motivation in life." (Koenig, 1994, p.113)

Religious faith development by Koenig (1994)

- Emphasises individuality in faith development, for example:
 1. each person follows a unique path of faith development throughout their life span
 2. the manifestations of mature faith in children, young and old adults, and even persons with disabilities are different
- Mature faith "may act as a source of strength, peace, and hope for persons in later life as they face the trials of ageing.... Even with advanced cognitive impairment, the ability to participate in a relationship with God is one of the last human capacities to be lost before consciousness itself ceases." (Koenig, 1994, p.133-134)

Continuity theory by Atchley (1989, 1999)

- It assumes that habits, preferences, commitment and other dispositions that a person develops become a part of their personality.

Continuity theory by Atchley (1989, 1999)

- The theory "presumes that adults have goals for developmental direction that guide the evolution of their inner structure of ideas, including their religious belief system, and that shape their lifestyles." (Atchley & Barusch, 2004, p.306)
- If a person aims to develop a mature faith as his/her prime goal, continuity theory points to internal mechanisms through which faith can be expected to evolve toward maturity.

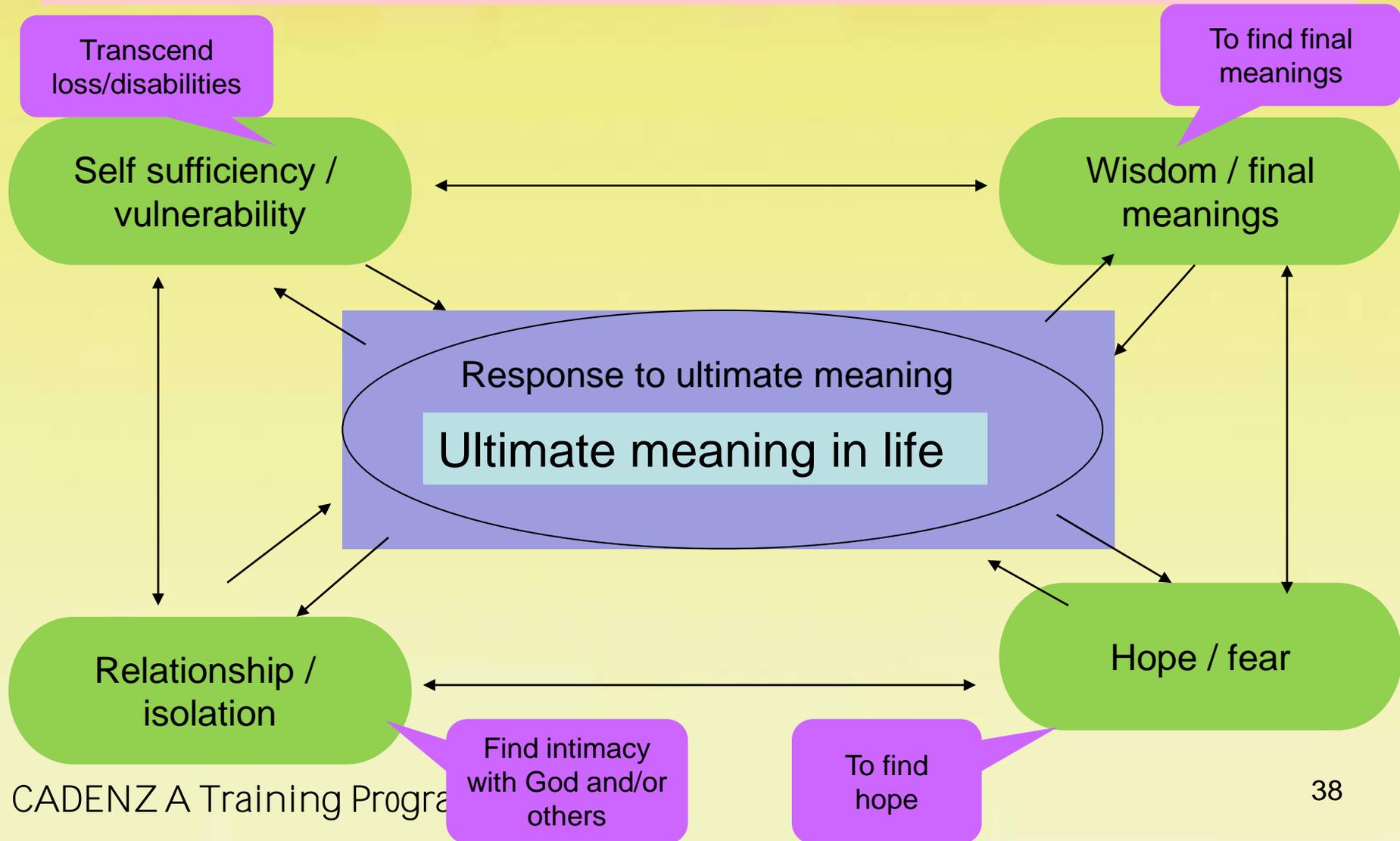
Spirituality in ageing

by MacKinlay (2001)

- Constructed from data from older people
- As a dynamic model to facilitate understanding of the process of spiritual development in later life
- Acknowledges that individual variations exist (even among members of the same religious faith, and of the same religious denomination)
- Shows how the process of becoming is facilitated across the life journey, influenced by the meeting of both developmental and situational crises
- It is illustrated in a model by MacKinlay
- The model consists of six major themes on spirituality in ageing:
 - ultimate meaning for each person, human response to ultimate meaning, self sufficiency/vulnerability, wisdom/final meanings, relationship/isolation, and hope/fear

Spirituality in ageing – themes and tasks

(MacKinlay, 2001)



Spirituality in ageing

by MacKinlay (2001)

- **Ultimate meaning:** defines that which lies at the core of one's being, in other words what the individual attached most meaning to in their lives. It includes relationship with God, sense of other, or absence of religious belief or other centres of ultimate meaning. (p.42)
- **Response to the ultimate:** closely related to the ultimate meaning is the individual's response to what is ultimate in their lives, including worship, prayer, reading scripture, symbols of meaning, meditation, experience of 'otherness' and response to music, the arts, and environment.
- **Vulnerability/self-sufficiency:** includes disabilities and effects of physical ageing; perceived and/or actual vulnerability.
- **Wisdom/final meaning:** wisdom includes discernment, the move from provisional towards final meanings, an increased ability to tolerate ambiguity and increased sense of inferiority.
- **Relationship/isolation:** relationship with other, whether this is satisfied or not satisfied and the possibility of social and/or spiritual isolation.
- **Hope/fear/despair:** includes spiritual integrity, contentment, peace, joy, searching,

MacKinlay (2001)

Spirituality in ageing

by MacKinlay (2001)

- The central core of ultimate meaning and response to ultimate meaning will influence how the other four themes interact.
- “The degree to which they develop wisdom as part of the ageing process, their satisfaction in relationships and their sense of self-sufficiency or vulnerability are also derived from the sense of ultimacy in their lives and their response to that.” (MacKinlay, 2001, p.94)
- Spiritual wholeness can be achieved through accomplishing tasks in each theme.

Conclusions in spiritual development

- Many theories on stages of religious development
- Differ in their points of departure and their philosophical and theological foundations
- Weak empirical evidence
- No united grand theory of religious development
- Considered spiritual growth is a lifelong developmental task and is possible even after all other forms of growth are past
- Confronting and resolving doubts or the evolution of a life philosophy can serve as important stimuli for spiritual development (Cole, 1992; Thomas, 1994)

Effects of spirituality and religion in later life

Effects of religion and spirituality in later life

- Association with physical and mental well-being and longevity
 - The greater the degrees of religiousness, the better the health. (Levin, 1994)
 - A positive relationship between religious involvement and life satisfaction even accounting for demographics. (Levin, 1994)
 - Religious involvement is associated with healthier lifestyles, greater availability of social support, lower feelings of stress, and greater self-confidence and self-efficacy. (Atchley, 1999)

Effects of religion and spirituality in later life

- Religious involvement is associated with lower prevalence of anxiety or depression, less fear of death, and better coping with grief. (Koenig, 1994)
 - Religious coping as way of coping with illness (Koenig, 1994)
- Negative effects:
 - interferes with interpersonal relationships
 - some religions believe that illness or disability is caused by sin
(Pargament et al., 1995)

References

- Angeli, E.A.G. (2001). Spiritual care in hospice settings. In D.O. Moberg (Ed.). *Aging and spirituality: Spiritual dimensions of aging theory, research, practice, and policy*. (pp.113-124). New York: The Haworth Pastoral Press.
- Atchley, R.C. (1989). A continuity theory of normal aging. *The Gerontologist*, 29, 183-190.
- Atchley, R.C. (1999). *Continuity and adaptation in aging: Creating positive experiences*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Atchley, R.C., & Barusch, A.S. (2004). *Social forces and aging. An introduction to social gerontology*. (10th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.
- Argyle, M., & Beit-Hallahmi, B. (1975). *The social psychology of religion*. London: Routledge.
- Batson, C.D., Schoenrade, P., & Ventis, W.L. (1993). *Religion and the individual: A social-psychological perspective*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bianchi, E.C. (1984). *Aging as a spiritual journey*. New York: Crossroad Publishing Co.
- Bouchard, R.J.Jr., Lykken, D.T., McGue, M., Segal, N.L., & Tellegen, A. (1990). Sources of human psychological differences: The Minnesota study of twins reared apart. *Science*, 250, 223-250.
- Cole, T.R. (1992). *The journey of life: A cultural history of aging in American*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Dowd, E.T. & Nielsen, S.L. (2006). Religion for psychotherapists: Summary and commentary. In E.T. Dowd & S.L. Nielsen (Eds.). *The Psychologies in religion. Working with the religious client*. (pp.287-305). New York: Springer Publishing Company.

References

- Emery, E.E. & Pargament K.I. (2004). The many faces of religious coping in later life: conceptualization, measurement, and links to well-being. *Ageing International*, 29 (1), 3-27
- Emmons, R.A. (1999). *The psychology of ultimate concerns: Motivation and spirituality in personality*. New York: Guildford Press.
- Field, L. (2007). Religiosity and spirituality at the end of life. Challenges and opportunities. In R.A. Pruchno & M.A. Smyer (Eds.). *Challenges of an aging society. Ethnical dilemmas, political issues*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Fischer, K.R. (1992). Spirituality and the aging family: A systems perspective. *Journal of Religious Gerontology*, 8(4), 1-15.
- Fowler, J.W. (1981). *Stages of faith*. San Francisco: Harper & Row.
- Fowler, J.W. (1991). *Weaving the New Creation: Stages of faith and the public church*. San Francisco: Harper & Row.
- Gallup Poll. (2007). *Religion*. Retrieved from www.pollingreport.com/religion.htm
- Hill & Pargament (2003). Primary function of religion (as cited in Field, 2007) In R.A. Pruchno & M.A. Smyer (Eds.). *Challenges of an aging society. Ethnical dilemmas, political issues*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Jones, P.W. (1984). Aging as a spiritualizing process. *Journal of Religion and Aging*, 1(1), 3-16.
- Kaufman, G.D. (1981). *The theological imagination: Constructing the concept of God*. Philadelphia: Westminster.

References

- Koenig H.G. (1994). *Aging and god: Spiritual pathways to mental health in midlife and later years*. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Pastoral Press.
- Koenig, L.B., McGue, M., Kruger, R.F., & Bouchard, T.J. (2005). Genetic and environmental influences on religiousness: Findings from retrospective and current religiousness ratings. *Journal of Personality, 73*, 471-488.
- Levin, J.S. (1994). Investigating the epidemiologic effects of religious experience: Findings, explanations and barriers. In J.S. Levin (Ed.), *Religion in aging and health* (pp.3-17). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lynch, W.F. (1965). *Images of hope*. Baltimore, MD: Heilcon.
- McKinlay, E.B. (2001). *The spiritual dimension of ageing*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- McSherry, W., & Cash, K. (2004). The language of spirituality: An emerging taxonomy. *International Journal of Nursing Studies, 41*, 151-161.
- Moberg, D.O. (2001). The spiritual life review. In D.O. Moberg (Ed.). *Aging and spirituality: Spiritual dimensions of aging theory, research, practice, and policy*. (pp.159-176). New York: The Haworth Pastoral Press.
- Pargament, K.I. (1997). *The psychology of religion and coping: Theory, research, practice*. New York: Guilford.

References

- Pargament, K.I., Kimberly, S.V.H., & David, S.E. (1995). Religion and coping. In A.K. Melvin et al. (Eds). *Aging, spirituality and religion: A handbook*. (pp.47-67). Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.
- Pargament, K.I., & Mahoney, A. (2002). Spirituality: Discovering and conserving the sacred. In C.R. Synder & S.J. Lopez (Eds). *Handbook of positive psychology* (pp.646-659). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Rizzuto, A.M. (1979). *The birth of the living God: A psychoanalytic study*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Rogers, T. (1976). Manifestations of religiosity: An empirical study of the growth and the aging process. *Religious Education*, 71(4), 405-415.
- Schultz-Hipp, P.L. (2001). Do spirituality and religiosity increase with age? In D.O. Moberg, (Ed.). *Aging and spirituality. Spiritual dimensions of aging theory, research, practice, and policy*. (pp. 85-98). New York: The Haworth Pastoral Press.
- Scioli, A. (2007). Hope and spirituality in the age of anxiety. In R.J. Estes (Ed.), *Advancing quality of life in a turbulent world*. (pp.135-142). Dordrecht, The Netherland, Springer.
- Sheehan, P. (1997). Definition of spirituality (as cited in Edith Anne Glascock Angeli, 2001) In D.O. Moberg, (Ed.). *Aging and spirituality. Spiritual dimensions of aging theory, research, practice, and policy*. (pp. 115). New York: The Haworth Pastoral Press.
- Snyder, C.R. (2004). Hope and the other strengths: Lessons from animal farm. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 23(5), 624-627.
- Snyder, C. R., Harris, C., Anderson, J.R., Holleran, S.A., Irving, L.M., Sigmon, S.T. et al., (1991). The will and ways: Development and validation of an individual-differences measure of hope. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 60(4), 570-585.

References

- Stoner, M.H. (). Measuring hope. In M. Frank-Stromborg & S.J, Olsen (Eds.). *Instruments for clinical health-care research*. (3rd ed.), (pp.218-228). Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett Publishers.
- Stotland, E. (1969). *The psychology of hope*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Sulmasy, D.P. (2002). A biopsychosocial-spiritual model for the care of patients at the end of life. *Gerontologist*, 42(Special issue 3), 24-33.
- Thomas, L.E. (1994). Values, psychosocial development, and the religious dimensions. In L.E. Thomas and S.A. Eisenhandler, (Eds). *Aging and the religious dimension* (pp. 3-12). Westport, CT: Auburn House.
- Vaillant, G.E. (2002). Review of ageing well. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 36(6), 832-833.
- Zinnbauer, B.J., & Pargament, K.I. (2005). Religiousness and spirituality. In R.F. Paloutzian & C.L. Park (Eds.). *Handbook of the psychology of religion and spirituality* (pp. 21-42). New York: The Guilford Press.

The End of Chapter 7

Copyright © 2012 CADENZA Training Programme. All rights reserved.