Stress and Spirituality
What is stress?

- A feeling of emotional or physical tension.
- Your body's reaction to a challenge or demand.
- It can come from any event or thought that makes you feel frustrated, angry, or nervous.
- In short bursts, stress can be positive, such as when it helps you avoid danger or meet a deadline.
Stress and Chronic Illness

- Chronic stress can weaken an immune system
- As Sjogren’s patients many of us experience feelings of emotional or physical tension.
  - Finding the right physician
  - Getting symptoms under control
  - Finding balance
And now….it’s not just your illness, the world is stressed!
But there’s good news....spirituality matters
What is Spirituality?

- An individual’s relationship with a higher power like God or a connection to a metaphysical reality greater than oneself
- A universal human experience—something that touches us all.
Spirituality is linked to

- Better health
- Less hypertension
- More positive feelings
- Less depression and anxiety
- Greater psychological well being
- Superior ability to handle stress
- Less stress even in difficult times
Spirituality decreases stress by allowing the person to

- Create a sense of stillness and peace
  - Prayer and Meditation
    - Breath prayer, fixed hour
  - Practice Yoga
  - Practice Mindfulness
  - Reading Sacred Texts
Spirituality decreases stress by allowing the person to

- Give up control
  - Believing in high power helps us to realize we are not responsible for everything
  - Good and bad things happen despite our best efforts
  - Recognizing there is no need to blame ourselves
I CANNOT CONTROL
(So, I can LET GO of these things.)

IF OTHERS FOLLOW THE RULES OF SOCIAL DISTANCING

THE AMOUNT OF TOILET PAPER AT THE STORE

ICAN CONTROL
(So, I will focus on these things.)

THE ACTIONS OF OTHERS

PREDICTING WHAT WILL HAPPEN

OTHER PEOPLE'S MOTIVES

MY POSITIVE ATTITUDE

HOW I FOLLOW CDC RECOMMENDATIONS

MY OWN SOCIAL DISTANCING

LIMITING MY SOCIAL MEDIA

MY KINDNESS & GRACE

TURNING OFF THE NEWS

FINDING FUN THINGS TO DO AT HOME

HOW LONG THIS WILL LAST

HOW OTHERS REACT

Clipart: Carrie Stephens Art
TheCounselingTeacher.com
Spirituality decreases stress by allowing the person to

- Increase meaning of life experiences
  - Examen
  - Journaling
  - Personal reflection
    - What can I learn?
    - How can I grow?
    - What can I be grateful for?
- Gratitude practice
Spirituality decreases stress by allowing the person to

- Enhance sense of connectedness
  - Spiritual communities offer acceptance, solace, strength, even solutions
- Helps us not feel alone and isolated
  - Send cards, make phone calls
  - Meet with small group or even family
- Most stressors seem smaller and easier when we know there is support
Spirituality decreases stress by allowing the person to

- Maintain a sense of purpose
  - I am here for a reason!
  - Look beyond self
    - Love your neighbor as self
    - Steward of the earth
  - Take responsibility for wider community and world
Spirituality decreases stress by allowing the person to

- Gain perspective
  - Shrink obstacles that seem insurmountable to a manageable size
    - Stories of those who have gone before and how they managed
  - Help us focus on other people versus our own desires
    - Food to local families
    - Supporting local businesses
Spirituality decreases stress by allowing the person to

- Create a sense of stillness and peace
- Give up control
- Increase meaning of life experiences
- Enhance sense of connectedness
- Maintain a sense of purpose
- Gain perspective
Some ways to increase your spirituality

- Begin a practice of prayer and meditation
- Take up journaling
- Take long walks (without technology)
- Read sacred texts or inspirational stories
- Start a discussion group
- Help someone out during pandemic
- Strive to see the good in others (AND the good in yourself)
Breath Prayers (World Relief)

- **Inhale**: Peace of Christ, **Exhale**: Fill my heart
- **Inhale**: Please remember, **Exhale**: Those in need
- **Inhale**: Holy Spirit, **Exhale**: Bring me rest (comfort, joy, etc.)
A COVID-19 HAND-WASHING LITURGY

As I wash my hands, wash & heal Jesus. All who are affected by this virus.

Holy Spirit, pour over us like the water over my hands.

Father, give hope to the despairing, give peace to the anxious, give courage to the fearful.

Help me to be as attentive to my neighbor as I am to my own cleanliness, trust in you, even now.

In Jesus’ name, amen.
One final thought....

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
the courage to change the things I can,
and the wisdom to know the difference.