

# "Give light and people will find the way"

## Spiritual support for dialysis patients

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### INTRODUCTION

Dialysis patients cope with a life-threatening disease which harbors losses that impact physical, mental, social and spiritual resources. Spiritual support is part of the palliative care that focuses on the spiritual dimension that helps coping with difficulties. Spiritual support was launched in 1925 by the priest B. Anton who wanted to combine religion and medicine, realizing that sick people tend to think more about life, death and meaning of life. It gradually expanded to clinical practice. However, it hasn't been part of the integral care in hemodialysis units in our country.

We started to combine spiritual support 4 years ago in our unit which includes 43 patients of diverse age, sex, religion or cultural background. The major aim was to recruit the internal spiritual resources, maintain identity and meaning of life. Activities were organized according to the individuals' needs, using various treatment tools such as: listening, containing and supportive discourse by using text and music, various treatment cards, guided imagination and more.

Herein, two cases are presented:

### CASE STUDIES

78y/d, suffered from physical deconditioning, loneliness and loss of meaning of life. She reported about the absence of motherly love in her childhood. The process included: identifying the meaning of life and inner strength, improving her emotional balance, satisfying the need for love and attention, improving sense of self-esteem, strengthening aspects of optimism and social capabilities.



85 y/d confronted with loss of vision and independence. In addition, she had difficulties in talking about her inevitable death. The process included: understanding her limitations, acceptance of her need for help, old age and preparing for departure from her relatives and friends. During the supportive process, a "spiritual will" was prepared, which helped in accompanying her family after her death.

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

- ▶ The patients expressed their satisfaction from the supportive process which helped to cope with difficulties, discuss about fears and accepting their altered state of health.
- ▶ Spiritual support is a human encounter that strengthens communication and therapeutic environment.
- ▶ Spiritual support helps the staff understand the patient's spiritual needs and improves effective support for patients and staff.
- ▶ We recommend adopting spiritual support as an essential therapeutic tool.

" Give light and people will find the way " (*Ella Baker*)

" It isn't terrified when the body is afraid, nor is it breaking when the body betrays.

Human spirit can withstand the body on its way, human spirit can fly far away" (*Ehud Manor*)