



Pastoral Care for People with AIDS Dementia Complex (ADC)

This fact sheet explains the role of the Pastoral Carer.

Pastoral Carers offer emotional, social and spiritual support to a person in whatever way this is needed or requested. We offer supportive listening, helping people to be in touch with their inner self, with their spirituality, with feelings they are often afraid to acknowledge to themselves, with the solutions that each one has deep within. We

enable people to put into words their responses to life and to their present circumstances. Perhaps then, they can be more at ease with what is happening to them. We cannot change what is happening, but we can help people to find some degree of acceptance and hopefulness, and some degree of peace.

Spirituality can be described as a way of living out our relationship to God (by whatever name we call our higher power), our relationship to ourselves, to others and to our world. Spirituality refers to the realm of meaning. Many people today are suffering from alienation or loss of meaning, a loss of

the sense of being “a part of”, and experience being “apart from”. This loss conveys a sense of “longing” rather than “belonging”. This alienation is a spiritual problem, the problem of discovering one’s relationship within a larger context.

For some people, spirituality includes church affiliation and practice, but for many this has never been important, or is now of no interest. Respect for the wishes of the person is paramount, especially in this delicate area of trust and openness. Acceptance of

ourselves as we are, as a person worthy of respect, and with an inherent dignity, is the basis for an on-going and mutual journeying together in our search for the truth and in the understanding of ourselves.

People with ADC often experience short-term memory loss. However, they sometimes find recall of past events and circumstances easier. While a person’s attention span may be reduced, brief visits may help a

relationship with the pastoral carer to develop, enabling the person to respond appropriately. This helps allay some of the disconnectedness that leads to anxiety and distress.

We hear great stories of peoples’ courage; faithfulness; their love and hopefulness; honesty; anger and fear; resentment; rejection and regret. All these are part of life, but are flavoured very often with a humour that brings balance and humanity to the forefront. Telling our story is the way we find

what is important to us, what relationships mean to us, how we are connected to ourselves and to our world. Our service and support is available to family and carers as well as to those who are sick. Phone counselling is available if distance creates a problem.

For Further Information:

Contact The Tree of Hope, Corner of Devonshire and Riley Streets, SURRY HILLS, NSW 2010.
Telephone: (02) 9698 3161

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