Assessment of Spirituality and Meaning in Research and Clinical Settings

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Leontiv (2007) devised a creative technique for identifying important meaning issues. The technique consists of writing down your answer to a question with the stem, “Why do people . . .” and then following up with more “why questions” to the answers. For example, “Why do people watch TV, smoke cigarettes, get married, buy a house etc.) Below is an example using the question, ”Why do people travel?"

Answer: “To see new things.”

Question: “Why see new things?”

Answer: “Because you can see different ways of doing things”

Question: “Why see other ways of doing things?”

Answer: “Because then you will be able to think of new ideas.”

Question, “Why think of new ideas?”

Answer: “So that you can create new products a work and get an edge on other people.”

This example is truncated but perhaps you can see that this person may value creativity, success at work and competing with others. Of course, you would need a longer series of questions and different topics to get a clearer insight. If you would like to try the Ultimate Meanings Technique for yourself, respond to the following question: “Why do people work?” Write down your answer. Then ask a series of “why questions” based on your responses. Try to put down 20 or so answers, then look through your answers and see if you can spot some key values and meanings for yourself.
### Selected Instruments for the Measurement of Meaning in Life

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Construct Measured</th>
<th>Brief Description of the Instrument</th>
<th>Citation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Views Survey (PVS)</td>
<td>Hardiness</td>
<td>50-item revised 3 subscales, Challenge, Commitment, Control</td>
<td>Hardiness Institute (1985).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sources of Meaning Profile (SMP)</td>
<td>Sources and strength of personal meaning in one’s life</td>
<td>16 item scale which has been used with older adults</td>
<td>Reker &amp; Wong (1988).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pargament’s Meaning Scale (PMS)</td>
<td>Meaning that spirituality provides in one’s life</td>
<td>20-item scale that does not measure spirituality but the degree that religion and spiritual practice add meaning.</td>
<td>Pargament (1999).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of Coherence Scale (SOC)</td>
<td>Sense of Coherence</td>
<td>13-items on three subscales; Comprehensibility, Manageability and Meaningfulness</td>
<td>Antonovsky &amp; Sagy (1986).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose In Life (PIL)</td>
<td>Overall meaning and purpose in life.</td>
<td>20 items. It is an attitude scale that measures the degree to which a person feels meaning and purpose in life includes existential elements.</td>
<td>Crumbaugh &amp; Maholick (1964).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Purpose Questionnaire (LPQ)</td>
<td>Overall meaning and purpose in life similar to the PIL.</td>
<td>A 20 item test. Agree/disagree format allowing geriatric and brain injured to respond.</td>
<td>Hablas &amp; Hutzell, 1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking of Noetic Goals (SONG)</td>
<td>Overall meaning and purpose in life</td>
<td>20 Likert items.</td>
<td>Crumbaugh, 1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaning in Suffering Test (MIST)</td>
<td>Multidimensional</td>
<td>A 29-item scale with three subscales and one overall score.</td>
<td>Starck, 1985</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Assessment of Spirituality & Meaning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Life Attitude Profile- Revised (LAP-R)</th>
<th>Multidimensional 48 items, six subscales and two composite scores.</th>
<th>Reker, 1992</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**The Brief Spiritual Assessment**
from Hodge (2005) *Spiritual Assessment in Marital and Family Therapy*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*Initial Brief Spiritual Assessment*

1. I was wondering if you consider spirituality or religion to be a personal strength?
2. In what ways does your spirituality help you cope with the difficulties you encounter?
3. Are there certain spiritual beliefs and practices that you find particularly helpful in dealing with problems?
4. I was also wondering if you attend a church or some other type of spiritual community?
5. Do resources exist in your faith community that might be helpful to you?

Adapted from (Hodge, 2004b)

Young, Roach, & Hagedorn (ACA, 2009)
### The Spiritual History
from Hodge (2005) *Spiritual Assessment in Marital and Family Therapy*

#### Table 2
*Framework for Verbally-Based Spiritual History*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial Narrative Framework</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Describe the religious/spiritual tradition in which you grew up. How did your family express its spiritual beliefs? How important was spirituality to your family? Extended family?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What sort of personal experiences (practices) stand out to you during your years at home? What made these experiences noteworthy? How have they informed your later life?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How have you changed or matured from those experiences? How would you describe your current spiritual or religious orientation? Is spirituality currently a personal strength? If so, how?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Interpretive Anthropological Framework**

| 1. Affect: What aspects of your spiritual life give you pleasure? What role does your spirituality play in handling life’s sorrows? Enhancing life’s joys? Coping with life’s pain? How does your spirituality give you hope for the future? What do you wish to accomplish in the future? |
| 2. Behavior: Are there particular spiritual rituals or practices that help you deal with life’s obstacles? What is your level of involvement in church, small groups, etc.? How are they supportive? Are there spiritually encouraging individuals that you maintain contact with? |
| 3. Cognition: What are your current religious/spiritual beliefs? What are they based upon? What beliefs do you find particularly meaningful? What does your faith say about personal trials? How does this belief help you overcome obstacles? How do your beliefs affect your health practices? |
| 4. Communion: Describe your relationship with God (or the Transcendent). What has been your experience of God? How does God communicate with you? How have these experiences encouraged you? Have there been times of deep spiritual intimacy? How does your relationship help you face life challenges? How would God describe you? |
| 5. Conscience: How do you determine right and wrong? What are your key values? How does your spirituality help you deal with guilt (sin)? What role does forgiveness play in your life? |
| 6. Intuition: To what extent do you experience intuitive hunches (flashes of creative insight, premonitions, spiritual insights)? Have these insights been a strength in your life? If so, how? |

Adapted from (Hodge, 2001a)
### Selective Instruments for the Quantitative Measure of Spirituality and Religion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Construct Measured</th>
<th>Brief Description of the Instrument</th>
<th>Citation</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human Spirituality Scale (HSS)</td>
<td>Global measure of spirituality</td>
<td>20 item scale rated from 1 (never, almost never) to 5 (constantly, almost constantly)</td>
<td>Wheat (1991)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Assessment Inventory (SAI)</td>
<td>Spiritual maturity from a Judeo-Christian perspective</td>
<td>43 item inventory scored on a 5-point scale of 1 (not true of me) through 5 (true of me)</td>
<td>Hall &amp; Edwards (1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index of Core Spiritual Experiences (INSPIRIT)</td>
<td>Two core elements of spirituality; experience(s) that convince an individual God exists, and a perception that God dwells in the individual</td>
<td>On-line, 7 item instrument (item 7 has 13 parts)</td>
<td>Kass, Friedman, Lesserman, Zuttermeister, &amp; Benson (1991)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWBS)</td>
<td>Religious Well-Being (RWB) as it relates to concepts of God, and Existential Well-Being (EWB) as it relates to a sense of purpose and satisfaction in life</td>
<td>20-item scale with 6 responses ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree</td>
<td>Ellison (1983)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems of Belief Inventory (SBI-15R)</td>
<td>Quality of life, stress, and coping with life-threatening illness by examining 2 factors: beliefs and practices; and social support</td>
<td>15-item measure scored on a 4-point likert scale ranging from 0 (strongly disagree) to 3 (strongly agree)</td>
<td>Holland, Kash, Passik, Gronert, Sison, Lederberg, Russak, Baider, &amp; Fox (1998)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Functional Assessment of Chronic Illness Therapy-Spiritual Well-Being Scale (FACIT-Sp)</td>
<td>Two subscales: sense of meaning and peace; and role of faith in illness. Produces a total score for spiritual well-being.</td>
<td>12-item measure scored on a 5-point likert scale ranging from 0 (not at all) to 4 (very much)</td>
<td>Peterman, Fitchett, Brady, Pharm, &amp; Cella (2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Health Inventory (SHI)</td>
<td>Personal Spiritual Experience, Spiritual Well-being, Sense of Harmony, and Personal Helplessness</td>
<td>18 item scale with 6 responses ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree</td>
<td>Veach &amp; Chappel (1992)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirituality Assessment Scale (SAS)</td>
<td>Unifying Interconnectedness, Purpose and Meaning in Life, Innerness or Inner Resources, and Transcendence</td>
<td>28 statements rated from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree)</td>
<td>Howden (1992)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Support Scale</td>
<td>Emotional, intimacy, and faith aspects of spiritual support</td>
<td>3-items rated on a 5-point scale.</td>
<td>Maton (1989)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment of Spirituality &amp; Meaning 8</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **Religious Orientation Inventory (ROI)** | Orientation toward religion on both an intrinsic and extrinsic dimension | 20-item measure | Allport & Ross (1967)  
| **Age Universal I-E** | Adapted from Allport and Ross’s Religious Orientation Scale that can be used with children and adolescents |  
| **Quest (Interactional) Scale** | Adds 3rd dimension to religious orientation: quest (degree to which one’s religion involves open-ended, responsive dialogue to existential questions raised by contradictions and tragedies in life) | 9- item scale version | Batson (1976)  
| **Christian Religious Internalization Scale (CRIS)** | Degree of self-determination for Christian beliefs and practices (could be adapted for other religions) | 12-item measure rated on a 4-point scale from not at all true to very true | Ryan, Rigby & King (1993)  
| **Religious Coping Scale (RCOPE)** | Methods of coping with life situations based on a Judeo-Christian perspective | 105 item scale consists of 21 subscales with 5 items each, that asks respondents to rate the degree to which various types of religious coping were involved in dealing with a negative life event on a 4-point likert scale from not at all to a great deal | Pargament, Koenig, and Perez (2000)  
| **Religious Support Measure** | Relationships between perceived religious support and life satisfaction and religious attendance | Assesses three factors: God support, congregational support, and church leader support | Fiala, Bjorck, and Gorsuch (2002)  
| **Spiritual History Scale (SHS-4)** | Spiritual and religious practices and attributions over the lifespan | 23 item, four dimensional retrospective summary | Hays, Meador, Branch & George, (2001)  
| **Spirituality Scale (SS)** | Spirituality from an Afro-cultural perspective | 20 item measure rated on a 6 point scale ranging from 1 (completely false) to 6 (completely true) | Jagers & Smith (1996)  

Young, Roach, & Hagedorn (ACA, 2009)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment of Spirituality &amp; Meaning 9</th>
<th>Daily Spiritual Experience Scale</th>
<th>Ordinary experiences of spirituality; awe, joy that lifts one up, deep inner peace, gratitude, and love</th>
<th>16 item measure with 6 responses ranging from never or almost never to many times a day</th>
<th>Underwood &amp; Teresi (2002)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brown-Peterson Recovery Index (B-PRPI)</td>
<td>Spirituality in members of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)</td>
<td>53 item instrument rated on a 5 point scale from 0 (no or never) to 4 (yes, daily, or always)</td>
<td>Brown &amp; Peterson (1991)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Competency Scale (SCS)</td>
<td>Competency to counsel on spiritual and religious issues</td>
<td>28 item, six factor instrument with seven response format.</td>
<td>Robertson (2008).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Selected Instruments for the Qualitative Measure of Spirituality and Religion

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<tr>
<td>Spiritual Narrative</td>
<td>Awareness of the Holy, providence, faith, grace or gratefulness, repentance, communion, and sense of vocation</td>
<td>Provides an understanding of the client’s spiritual narrative in relation to 7 Christian themes</td>
<td>Pruysers (1976)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Histories</td>
<td>Explore spiritual &amp; religious themes, significant life events, spiritual journeys, intergenerational patterns, spiritual strengths &amp; relationships</td>
<td>Utilize existing frameworks of systemic assessments with a focus on spirituality</td>
<td>Hodge (2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Life Maps</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Spiritual Genograms</td>
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<td>Spiritual Ecomaps</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spiritual Ecograms</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Spiritual Dimensions</td>
<td>Beliefs and meaning; vocation and consequences; experiences and emotions; courage and growth; ritual and practice; community; and authority and guidance</td>
<td>Offers guidelines for assessing 7 spiritual dimensions in two subdivisions; holistically and explicitly spiritual; and can be utilized with a wide variety of faith traditions.</td>
<td>Fitchett (1993)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Quest Form (SQF)</td>
<td>Seeks to understand the client’s process toward spiritual growth and development</td>
<td>10-item sentence completion task followed by an in-depth dialog that produces a narrative</td>
<td>Nino (1997)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience Based Spiritual Development Scale (EBSDS)</td>
<td>Scourge, Emerge, Purge, Diverge, Resurge, Converge, and Merge</td>
<td>Identifies seven stages of spiritual realization</td>
<td>Sandhu and Asrabadi (2003)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Spiritual Lifemap
from Hodge (2005) Spiritual Assessment in Marital and Family Therapy

Figure 1. Adapted from Hodge (2005a)
The Spiritual Lifemap

Spiritual lifemaps are a graphic representation of a verbal spiritual history – they note the client’s spiritual journey with pictures along a lifeline. “Much like roadmaps, spiritual lifemaps tell us where we have come from, where we are now, and where we are going” (Hodge, 2005, p. 344).

Uses:
A spiritual lifemap can be used with individuals, couples, and families. If it is used with couples or families, each individual can construct his/her own lifemap or the couple/family can jointly construct a single lifemap representing their shared spiritual story.

Materials:
1. Drawing implements – crayons, markers, colored pencils, chalk, paints (oil, watercolor, acrylic, tempura), paint brushes, etc.
2. Paper – large pieces of paper (e.g., 11” x 18” or 24” x 36”) work best
3. Other – stickers, stencils, construction paper, rulers, magazines, scissors, glue sticks, etc.

Directions:
1. In this exercise, you will depict those spiritually significant events that represent your spiritual journey on a path, a roadway, or a single line.
2. Using hand-drawn symbols, cut-out pictures, stickers, and so on, mark the key events along your journey (e.g., birth, death, loss of a job, spiritual crisis, spiritual encounter, etc.).
3. Indicate on your lifemap the various trials you have faced along with the spiritual resources you have used to overcome those trials. You may want to depict hills, bumps and potholes, rain, clouds, lightning, and so on, to portray difficult life situations. Feel free to use words that you write or cut out of magazines to highlight these events.
4. Indicate your age at the various spiritual milestones along your journey, both those that were difficult and those that were positive.
5. Somewhere on the lifemap, indicate three spiritual strengths that you have developed while on your journey.

Processing:
1. Present your spiritual lifemap to the group (or to the counselor) – share the symbols you used, why you chose what you did to represent various events, and what your journey has been like for you.
2. What patterns do you notice?
3. Who have been the significant figures along your spiritual journey (both human and transcendent)?
4. What strengths emerged from your lifemap?
5. What are some successful strategies that you have used in the past that can suggest options for overcoming some of your present struggles?
6. What was this process like for you?
Bibliography


### Meaning


Young, Roach, & Hagedorn (ACA, 2009)


