

THE GW INSTITUTE FOR  
SPIRITUALITY & HEALTH



# Recommended Standards for Interprofessional Spiritual Care



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## About this document:

As a result of international GWish-sponsored consensus conferences attended by experts in palliative care, chaplains, clergy, spiritual directors—all from diverse backgrounds and clinical settings—consensus-based recommendations were developed to guide clinicians on how to incorporate spiritual care into a healthcare practice.

Through the rigor of a two-stage Delphi process, conference participants achieved consensus on recommended proposed standards for interprofessional spiritual care and strategies for research, education, clinical care, policy, and community engagement.

What follows is a summary of the proposed recommended standards.

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## Recommended Standards for Spiritual Care

1. Spiritual care is integral to compassionate, person-centered health care and is a standard for all health settings.
2. Spiritual care is a part of routine care and integrated into policies for intake and ongoing assessment of spiritual
3. distress and spiritual well-being.
4. All health care providers are knowledgeable about the options for addressing patients' spiritual distress and needs,
5. including spiritual resources and information.
6. Development of spiritual care is supported by evidence-based research.
7. Spirituality in health care is developed in partnership with faith traditions and belief groups.



## Recommended Standards for Spiritual Care (Cont'd)

8. Throughout their training, health care providers are educated on the spiritual aspects of health and how this relates to themselves, to others, and to the delivery of compassionate care.
9. Health care professionals are trained in conducting spiritual screening or spiritual history as part of routine patient assessment.
10. All health care providers are trained in compassionate presence, active listening, and cultural sensitivity, and practice these competencies as part of an interprofessional team.
11. All health care providers are trained in spiritual care commensurate with their scope of practice, with reference to
12. a spiritual care model, and tailored to different contexts and settings.
13. Health care systems and settings provide opportunities to develop and sustain a sense of connectedness with the community they serve; healthcare providers work to create healing environments in their workplace and community.
14. Health care systems and settings support and encourage health care providers' attention to self-care, reflective practice, retreat, and attention to stress management.
15. Health care systems and settings focus on health and wellness and not just on disease



## About The George Washington Institute for Spirituality & Health (GWish)

Established in 2001, GWish quickly adopted a leadership role in the field of spirituality and health. Conducting research, educating practitioners, and impacting healthcare policy worldwide, GWish frequently collaborates with religious, spiritual, and health organizations to create more compassionate healthcare systems around the globe.

Under the direction of Founder and Executive Director Christina M. Puchalski, MD, FACP, FAAHPM, GWish has created widespread awareness about the profound impact of introducing spiritual care into provider/patient relationships. Patients and their families experience significant relief from spiritual and emotional distress in times of acute illness or end-of-life, and providers discover renewed meaning and purpose in their work.

To learn more about GWish, visit our [website](#) or contact Cherron Gardner-Thomas at [cgthomas2@email.gwu.edu](mailto:cgthomas2@email.gwu.edu).