

Living with Serious Illness – Spiritual and Emotional Care

Matters of Spiritual Import

Matters of spiritual import when one is ill or approaching death may include:

- Encouraging an exploration of hope, faith, courage and gratitude
- Remaining open to the possibility of the sacred and even transformation, even in times of distress
- Exploring meaning-making and legacy in one's life, which may include the creation of an ethical will
- Examining issues of reconciliation or forgiveness
- Deciphering accomplishments and meaning of one's life and legacy
- Understanding oneself in the context of community
- Weighing and discerning issues of length-of-life versus quality-of-life
- Responding to theological concerns about the nature of suffering, God, or the afterlife
- Reconciling with self, others, or God
- Creating an opportunity before death that brings together significant friends and family members for a ritual good-bye or opportunity for blessing
- Delving into existential issues of fear and loss
- Employing meditation techniques and/or prayer as means of expression and relaxation
- Exploring Psalms or other sacred texts as a mirror for one's sorrows
- Discussing medical interventions in the context of one's spiritual and religious values
- Addressing funeral and burial choices
- Addressing concerns about the disbursement of belongings and assets
- Creating an opportunity for last rites or final confessional

Provided by Pamela Wax, Rabbi, Westchester Jewish Community Services