

Family Voice Bulletin – Issue 24 (November 2nd) Exploring Religion and Spiritually

Summarized by KJ (Krystal-Jyl) Thomas, MSW, RSW

In this week's session, facilitators KJ Thomas, MSW, RSW and Jillian Crabbe, MSW, RSW were joined by guest speaker; Alex Philippi, BEd, MDip, MA, Chaplain, The Royal presenting: Returning to or exploring your spiritual community for the first time.

Another aspect of wellbeing can include spiritual health. Religious and spiritual communities can help connect a person to a number of health benefits. They can be found together, but also can be looked at separately. Religion, is a structured form of beliefs, usually connected to a group of people who share those beliefs. Religion can provide teachings to help a person choose how to live their life. It can encourage social connection with like-minded people creating a sense of belonging; aims to offer safe and social engagements, and can include designated times together, as well as holidays. Amongst connection to a community of people, religion can also offer meaning to difficult situations, and lessons to learn in hard times. Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, and Christianity are all forms of religion. Spirituality could be described as a connection to something larger than the self; a looking inwards for connection to the larger life around us. It can help a person find empowerment through their choice to focus on areas of connection that help shape what they believe and how they grow. This can be done through things like meditation, self reflection, philosophy, and expression through art, poetry, writing, and other creative outputs. Spirituality can help renew a sense of belonging and interaction with the world's physical environment.

Tips for Exploring Religious and Spiritual Communities

- If uncomfortable to go in person, many places have online/virtual spaces to begin exploration.
- Attend with a friend or family member, or, if you call ahead, some places have people who will greet and accompany you.
- Remember that feeling nervous or anxious is normal for new experiences. Try and remember other times you felt the same, and positive outcomes that came from trying none the less.
- Religious and spiritual communities are not filled with perfect people, but rather people who are looking for similar connections.
- Getting to know the community you are exploring can take time, it can also take time for them to get to know you.
- It's okay to try different places on your journey to finding what helps you feel connected.

Resources

- Spirituality Groups in Ottawa <https://www.meetup.com/topics/spirituality/ca/on/ottawa/>
- Indigenous Services Canada <https://www.canada.ca/en/indigenous-services-canada.html>
- Islam Care Center in Ottawa <https://islamcare.ca/>
- Jewish Family and Child Service of Greater Toronto <https://www.jfandcs.com/>
- Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Ottawa/Cornwall <https://en.archoc.ca/>
- Buddhism Paramita Centre <https://www.buddhistmeditationtoronto.org/>
- Ontario Churches <https://ontario.thegospelcoalition.org/ontario-churches>
- The Royal Spiritual & Cultural Health services include counselling, on-site chapel services, resources, grief & bereavement support, and assistance in connecting to a religious and spiritual community.
- The Royal Ottawa Chaplain Caitlin Sigg (613) 722-6521 ext. 6308
- The Royal Brockville Chaplain (613) 345-1461 ext. 2680