

**MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL
Clinical Pastoral Education Center**

The Schwartz Fellowship in Spiritual Care

Background Serious illness frequently induces reflection on the great spiritual and existential questions of human existence. What is the meaning of my life? Why is this happening to me? What do I want to accomplish in the time I have left? What do I really believe? How can I accept and be accepted? For what do I hope? Caregivers of any discipline can benefit from education enhancing the development of the ability to relate empathically to the ultimate concerns of patients and families. Sensitivity to existential, spiritual, and religious issues leads to compassionate care of the whole person.

The Schwartz Center for Compassionate Healthcare supports an outstanding learning opportunity to caregivers - The Schwartz Fellowship in Spiritual Care. This Fellowship focuses on the development of skill, and competence in addressing patients' and families' existential, spiritual, and religious concerns.

Religion is the participation in or endorsement of practices, beliefs, attitudes, or sentiments that are associated with an organized community of faith.

Spirituality is the aspect of humanity that refers to the way individuals seek and express meaning and purpose and the way they experience their connectedness to the moment, to self, to others, to nature and to the significant or sacred.

Spiritual care giving involves helping patients and families explore their deepest concerns and draw on the resources that hold meaning for them. For some, the language and issues will be religious: Is God teaching me a lesson? Has God abandoned me? Where is God in my illness? For others, the concerns will be expressed in existential ways: How do I want to be remembered? What is my legacy? Why did I never realize how precious each day is!

Goal The program's goal is to help participants to integrate existential, spiritual, and religious issues into their professional practice. Upon completion of the program, fellows remain in the practice of their own disciplines, sharing their new knowledge about spiritual care giving with their unit/team colleagues.

Interdisciplinary and Interfaith Schwartz Fellows in Spiritual Care may be doctors, nurses, social workers, psychologists or other professionals who interact directly with patients and families. They may be employed by any healthcare institution practicing either within or outside of the Partners HealthCare System. In the Clinical Pastoral Care (CPE) program at the Massachusetts General Hospital, the Schwartz Fellows in Spiritual Care form an interdisciplinary and interfaith training group. The Schwartz Center awards up to three Fellowships in Spiritual Care per session. The CPE peer group also includes up to Chaplain Interns. This peer group provides a supportive context for adult learning based on an action – reflection - integration model. The Schwartz Fellows in Spiritual Care work under the clinical supervision of a nationally certified CPE Supervisor.

Content Patients want their spiritual needs met during time of illness. Spiritual care is valued alongside traditional physical, psychological, and social care and Joint Commission mandates the availability of spiritual care to hospitalized patients. While healthcare chaplains are experts in spiritual care giving, healthcare providers can be spiritual care providers as well.

Optimal relationships between caregivers and patients are central to quality care. The caregiver's task is to connect and to foster comfort and strength, as well as positive spiritual and religious coping. Sensitivity to a variety of religious traditions, awareness of spiritual or existential frameworks of meaning, as well as cultural humility, are crucial. In CPE healthcare providers learn

- to be comfortable with patients' spiritual and existential concerns
- to skillfully engage spiritual and religious issues relevant for clinical care
- to deepen and to end relationships meaningfully
- to follow patients' lead in conversations pertaining to spiritual and existential issues
- to learn to pick up patients' non-verbal and verbal cues
- to perform individualized spiritual assessments and spiritual care plans
- to become more versatile in moving between a clinical and a relational stance
- to balance professional boundaries with human connection.

Through didactic presentations, peer group learning, clinical seminars, experience of faith seminars, and individual supervision, CPE participants gain tools to reflect on and deepen their relational work with patients and families. Each Schwartz Fellow in Spiritual Care will be able to use work in his or her discipline and setting as the clinical component of the CPE experience, and/or may opt for a Chaplain Intern assignment at the MGH.

Through exposure to participants from other disciplines within the CPE group (other healthcare disciplines as well as spiritual care), Schwartz Fellows in Spiritual Care will enhance their working knowledge of the interdisciplinary collaboration appropriate to the spiritual component of holistic health care. Experienced participants have the additional option of designing and carrying out research related to spiritual care. Some Schwartz Fellows use the CPE context to explore the nature and outcomes of empathic relationships between caregivers and patients/families.

Admissions The admission interviewing process will involve input from the MGH CPE Supervisor, members of the MGH CPE Professional Advisory Group, the Schwartz Center Board, as well as representation from the discipline(s) of the candidates if so desired by this board. Interested clinicians can now apply to the Fall 2014 program.

The 2014 fall unit starts on September 2 and will run through December 15, with graduation on December 18. Application deadline is April 18, 2014.

The CPE Supervisor will review the application materials and invite promising candidates for a personal interview. The names of finalists will be forwarded to the Schwartz Center board. At its discretion the board may include input from representatives from the disciplines represented among the finalists as it interviews each finalist. The Schwartz Center board makes the final awards decisions.

Awards Each of the six annual awards will cover the \$975.00 tuition for the CPE unit, plus up to 20% of the Schwartz Fellow's full-time salary for the training period, not to exceed a total of \$10,000.00 to cover any staff work time missed due to time spent in required CPE Monday seminars. Candidates must negotiate with their work supervisors as part of the application process whether their time in CPE seminars will be considered work-time, accommodated by flexing a schedule, or taken as time without pay.

Credit Upon successfully completing the requirements of the CPE program, each Schwartz Fellow in Spiritual Care will receive credit from the ACPE for one-half or one unit of CPE. Two hundred sixty-six (266) clinical hours merit a full unit of credit. One hundred four (104) clinical hours lead to one-half unit of credit.

Evaluation Process The evaluation process will assess short- and long-term changes in each Schwartz Fellow's professional practice as well as the ongoing impact of the Fellow's new expertise on the practice of her/his peers on the unit/team. Agreement to take part in this evaluation is one of the terms of the Fellowship. Evaluation data will be shared with the MGH CPE supervisor, the MGH CPE Professional Advisory Group and the Schwartz Center's board. Each participant's final evaluation from the CPE unit, however, will be shared only between the participant and CPE Supervisor.

Renewal of Fellowship Fellows may apply for a subsequent Fellowship, though preference will be given to candidates with no previous CPE training. Those Schwartz Fellows who elect to serve as Chaplain Interns may participate in the Chaplaincy Department's on-call ministry. They will be required to do four-five periods of on-call coverage. If you choose to do on-call you will need to be in the hospital during those periods.

Fall 2014 Calendar The program will extend over 16 weeks. Participants commit to 8.5 hours/week in group sessions. These group sessions will be held each Monday from 8:00 a.m. –5:00 p.m., excluding Columbus Day on October 13th. Participants who choose the full unit of credit provide spiritual care to patients/families an additional 19 hours each week beyond the Monday commitment, either in their own work context and or as a Chaplain Intern on an MGH patient unit assigned by the supervisor. This may be day or evening, weekday or weekend time. Participants opting for the half unit of credit spend at least 9 hours/week beyond the Monday commitment in the direct practice of spiritual care giving. Each participant also meets for one supervisory hour every other week with the CPE Supervisor.

Applications Fellowship applicants fill out the designated CPE Fellowship applications. **Please note that acceptance into the program is provisional pending a successful CORI check, and required health screening.** Completed applications need to be sent in by April 18, 2014 for the Fall 2014 program.

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