

## *Spirituality*

Spirituality and the expression of that spirituality bring meaning to many people's lives. Belonging to a faith-based community is one of the most common ways to engage in spirituality with others. Organizations can support people to find and maintain such communities.

### Quality in Practice

- Actively ask people about their spirituality and how they would like to express it. Go beyond the simple question of “what religion are you” to try to understand not only the denomination, but also the ways in which people might like to practice their religion.
- Support a person who expresses an interest in spirituality, but who does not already have a religious affiliation, to explore different options within the community. There are many, many different types of religious communities, and many people who have been segregated from the community for much of their lives may not be aware of all the possibilities.
- Spirituality and its practices are very personal and individual experiences – assure that people have the opportunity to explore and express their spirituality individually. Avoid taking a group of people with disability to the same church at the same time.
- Assure that people become members of their church/synagogue/mosque and have their names and pictures added to the member's directory.
- Assist people to participate in the life of the congregation — taking a role in the regular service or volunteering for special events.
- Assist people to make financial contributions to their religious community in whatever amount makes sense for the person.
- Expect the congregation and its leader to accept people with disability into the congregation as a matter of course, not expecting any different or charitable acts.
- Support people to learn the rituals and routines and expectations for members of the specific congregation so that the person will know what to do in different circumstances.
- If the first congregation does not work out, try another. Congregations are like any other association – some are warm and welcoming and open and others are more closed and restrictive.
- Honor the need and/or desire to practice spiritual rituals or follow religious rules within the person's home.
- If a person chooses not to practice any religion, respect and honor that decision.
- Support staff members to respect and honor the spiritual needs and expressions of the people they support. Religion is often a topic of debate and people must feel free to follow whatever spiritual course they want.