

Spiritual Care Bulletin

Finding a Peaceful Moment

Mark Burleigh, Head of Chaplaincy and Bereavement Services reflects:



“Our spirituality is very personal to each one of us. It is often considered to be linked with how we make sense of our lives (our meaning in life) and how we relate to nature, others and, for many, the Divine.

“This time has wreaked havoc with many of our relationships. We have not been able to get out and about so much, we have not been able to spend time with family and religious worship has been closed. Online substitutes have not always been as satisfying.

“Difficult times can often lead us to re-evaluate what is important in life. Perhaps you can take some quality time to find a peaceful moment to focus on those things (and people) that are really important to you.

You could create your own sacred space (perhaps on your bedside or kitchen cabinet) with symbols of what is important to you, maybe photos of family or friends, souvenirs from holidays or religious symbols from your faith. Take time in this space to focus on what makes life worth living, and dream of the days that will come, when we can focus fully on them again.”

One thing leads to another!

Sarah Wright describes a morning's chaplaincy in the Bradgate Mental Health Unit

“Today started with an email request to visit a patient on Heather Ward. The patient wasn't sure if she did want to speak to me, but chatted anyway. As I was walking through the ward, I met another patient who did want a chat. Then one of the staff called me over she needed a deep personal chat.

“I headed off to Aston Ward (I just had a feeling I needed to visit). As I walked in one of the staff shouted, ‘Ooh it's the Chaplain!’ and waved me over. A patient I had last seen a few weeks ago, being discharged from another ward, was so happy to see me. We chatted and prayed. She referred me to another patient and we had a long chat and prayer. I also chatted to other patients on the ward before I left.

“Then a chance to speak at the Matrons' team meeting - and finally...

“Back to the office to phone an outpatient (which brought me up to lunchtime's chats with staff).”

Chaplaincy - here for you...

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Celebrating together when we are apart

Four major religious festivals are coming up: **Passover** (which commemorates God freeing the Israelites from slavery in Egypt) will begin in the evening of 27th March and end in the evening of 4th April. At **Easter** (4th April) Christians celebrate new life and hope beyond death. For Muslims **Ramadhan** (predicted to begin on 12th/13th April) is a time of shared devotion, self-discipline and prayer. **Vaisakhi** (14th April) celebrates the birth of the Sikh community. **Eid** (beginning May 12th/13th) is a time of rejoicing together at the fulfilment of the Ramadhan fast.

Last year gatherings were prohibited or restricted during lockdown, some happening on line, others not happening at all. Events and places of pilgrimage around the world fell strangely silent.



“I missed the services, the drama, the gathering together”, says Revd Sarah Wright (Christian Chaplain BMHU and UHL) A question: “How do we get the blessed oil for anointing the sick ,without the service at the cathedral?” Important: “taking Holy Communion to Christian patients during Holy Week.”

“People struggled last year with mosques closed”, says Fazlur Diwan (Muslim Chaplain, BMHU). “Ramadhan became very personal for you and your family. Celebrating Eid was tough too when the community couldn’t gather together. For the first time the wider community were feeling some of the isolation patients in hospital may experience. But at times like this we can see the best in people, looking out for neighbours and showing kindness.

“Last Ramadhan, for instance, the Muslim community donated Quran cubes (MP3 players that play the Quran in the background or via earphones to encourage Muslim patients). These are just one of the resources chaplaincy has used to show care during times and seasons and in difficult times.

“On the other hand, during Ramadhan some patients may feel an obligation to fast when they are actually permitted to take nourishment for their health and recovery. Muslim chaplains may be able to advise if encouragement by staff doesn’t manage to reassure.”

“Last year was personally very challenging,” says Kartar Singh Bring, (Sikh Chaplain UHL). “Festivals like Vaisakhi are an important part of our community life. Thousands of people may gather together. Many of our patients couldn’t even have visits from their loved ones. The connection to Chaplaincy was a way they could feel connected to the wider world (even via an iPad).

“Social isolation meant people have had to look inwards,” says Kartar. “Reading Gurbani scriptures or singing Kirtan hymns has been deeply sustaining for individuals. We hope restrictions will begin to ease and eventually we can share festivals with our friends of different faith communities.”

How can staff support patients during this year’s festivals? If you know somebody has a particular faith you could wish them a “Happy Easter”, “Ramadhan Mubarak” or “Happy Vaisakhi”! As we approach Eid or other festivals, might some patients be enabled to visit home or even be discharged?

“There are ways we can all celebrate as best we can as one hospital community.”

Kartar Singh Bring, Sikh Chaplain

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