

**A Therapeutic Community  
Model that  
Helps Veterans  
Recover from Homelessness**

**Working OUTSIDE the Box  
INSIDE the Box**

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**PEACE AND FAITH: STRENGTHENING  
SPIRITUAL WELLNESS AND FEELINGS OF  
WELLBEING AMONG VETERANS WHO  
ARE HOMELESS**

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## Spirituality

- Spirituality is increasingly recognized as a significant client strength that is often instrumental to wellbeing (Hodge, 2011).
- Higher levels of spirituality are typically related to better health and mental health (Ano & Vasconcelles, 2005; Hackney & Sanders, 2003; B. R. Johnson, 2002; Koenig, McCullough, & Larson, 2001; Mahoney, Pargament, Tarakeshwar, & Swank, 2001; Musick, Traphagan, Koenig, & Larson, 2000; Pargament, 1997; Shreve-Niger & Edelstein, 2004).
- Spiritual interventions can be defined as "therapeutic strategies that incorporate a spiritual or religious dimension as a central component of the intervention" (Hodge, 2006a, p. 157).

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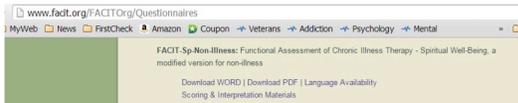
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## Spirituality Measurement

We choose the following instrument to assess the spirituality level of our clients because of its credibility and original purpose of for chronic ill patients. We used a version that is not disease specified.



For more information about this instrument you can start with this article:

Peterman, A. H., Fitchett, G., Brady, M. J., Hernandez, L., & Cella, D. (2002). Measuring spiritual well-being in people with cancer: the functional assessment of chronic illness therapy--Spiritual Well-being Scale (FACIT-Sp). *Annals of Behavioral Medicine: A Publication of the Society of Behavioral Medicine*, 24(1), 49-58.

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## The FACIT-Sp

	Not at all	A little bit	Some-what	Quite a bit	Very much
151 I feel peaceful.....	0	1	2	3	4
152 I have a reason for living.....	0	1	2	3	4
153 My life has been productive.....	0	1	2	3	4
154 I have trouble feeling peace of mind.....	0	1	2	3	4
155 I feel a sense of purpose in my life.....	0	1	2	3	4
156 I am able to reach down deep into myself for comfort.....	0	1	2	3	4
157 I feel a sense of harmony within myself.....	0	1	2	3	4
158 My life lacks meaning and purpose.....	0	1	2	3	4
159 I find comfort in my faith or spiritual beliefs.....	0	1	2	3	4
160 I find strength in my faith or spiritual beliefs.....	0	1	2	3	4
161 Difficult times have strengthened my faith or spiritual beliefs.....	0	1	2	3	4
162 Even during difficult times, I know that things will be okay.....	0	1	2	3	4

The 12 questions measure Faith and Peace/Meaning of Life two construct of spirituality

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### Data Collection

- Before leaving for Redbird Center (pre-test)
- After the completion of all activities and before leaving (post test);
- Open-ended questions added to the post test only;
- Note, data were collected when a retreat event happened. Cumulative cases were aggregated for this presentation.

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### The Spirituality Score Finding

	Pre-Post Timing					
	Pretest			Post test		
	n	Mean	SD	n	Mean Score	SD
Faith (8 questions)	83	3.73	1.18	80	4.10	1.13
Peace (4 questions)	83	3.40	.60	80	3.60	.57
Overall	83	7.13	1.66	80	7.70	1.58

Note: only responses from veterans are presented here.

- Changes in mean scores indicate an enhanced faith/meaning, and peace in mind after the retreat.
- Repeated Measures of ANOVA with mixed model test found the difference in means scores pre- and post the retreat was significant ( $p < 0.05$ ).

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### Satisfaction/Value of the Retreat

(n=80)	Mean	Std Deviation
Overall satisfaction about the retreat	4.66	0.62
See the value of retreat in general	4.62	0.74
Have learned something new and useful	4.65	0.70
The retreat should be part of veteran program	4.71	0.79

Note: only responses from veterans are presented here.

- We asked to rate the satisfaction or value level on a 1-5 point scale so 5 will be the highest rate.
- The average scores shown in the above table reflect a high level of satisfaction/value perception about the retreat.

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## Open-ended Comments

- "Perhaps the most important guideline to consider regarding the use of spiritual interventions is client preference" (Hodge, 2011)

Four open-ended questions were asked for open thoughts and comments. Here are some typical reflections about what was enjoyed the most:

"Everything!"  
 "The healing tent. It reached me and I let go of somethings."  
 "I enjoyed the circles the most. That is where I let go a lot of my pain."

What will be the three words that best describe your experience or have learned:

Peaceful, Stress free, brotherhood, harmony, inspiration, blessed, a better man, Let it go, healing, unplugged, mindfulness, chill, connectedness, sweet, universe, Self-awareness, pride, love, spiritual...

Mentally, physically, and spiritually refreshing.

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## Open-ended Comments (cont.)

- When asked what you have learned from the retreat:

Open mind, understanding, participation, to listen, love, compassion, self-purpose, inner spirit, mindfulness, patience, spiritual awareness, inner believe in my worth, meditation, slow down, excited, joy, optimistic, etc.

- When asked about issues, most who left a message had only positive things to say, such as to stay longer, coming back again soon, etc.
- When asked about overall comments, many thanked the sponsor and the organizer of the retreat.

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## Discussion

- The retreat did make a difference in many aspects and levels. Spirituality and mental and physical wellbeing are the areas being influenced.
- Majority participants felt positive about the retreat.
- The overall feeling by reading all those verbal comments and feedbacks is that all the hearts and souls of those participants' were touched, moved, and more or less awaken, mostly in a positive or spiritual way. They had a good time, for sure. They felt peace and love and being related to each other. Overall, they had a good experience.

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**Thank you for your attendance!**

Questions/Comments?

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