

- The expert panel identified that home care nurses must know the supports available within the community in order to connect persons and families to appropriate resources.
- The expert panel emphasizes that the physical and psychosocial domains of health are interrelated. Thus, when physical incapacity is an issue, the person may experience emotional distress related to their loss of independence and functional ability. Similarly, while pain control represents a central aspect of palliative care and end-of-life care, pain is a multidimensional concept: the “total pain” a person experiences is influenced by physical, psychological, social and spiritual factors (77). All of these factors are interrelated and must be considered in unison to gain an accurate understanding of the person (77).
- Refer to **Appendix G** for a list of assessment tools that explore different domains of health and illness as part of a holistic approach to care.

Table 6: Strategies Identified within the Research Literature to Assess the Spiritual, Emotional and Existential Needs of the Person and Their Family

<p>Strategies to assess spiritual, emotional and existential needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Being genuine and present, listening, and spending quality time with persons and families (72). ■ Once trust and rapport are established, utilizing non-intrusive ways to explore the spiritual or existential beliefs of persons in their care (73). ■ Recognizing the importance of reading body language and non-verbal cues as part of the assessment, and the importance of being mindful of their own non-verbal behaviour during the process (69). ■ Assessments also involve the needs of the family, including coping, communication and family dynamics (73). ■ An assessment of a person’s spiritual, emotional and existential preferences needs to be initiated early in a person’s illness trajectory. This provides the interprofessional health team with the means to ensure that the person’s preferences are honoured at the time of death (78).
<p>Areas explored through assessment questions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Feelings of peace. ■ The impact of illness on family. ■ Whether the person is part of a spiritual or religious community. ■ The meaning behind feelings of sadness, guilt or defeat. ■ Problems, concerns, hopes, dreams and wishes (69).
<p>Signs of spiritual distress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Some signs of spiritual distress for a person at the end of life, as identified within the research, include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ questioning the meaning of life; □ changes in behaviour, such as withdrawing or distancing oneself from others; and □ physical symptoms, such as pain (72).