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Spiritual reflections and occupations on the path to recovery from an eating disorder.

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Introduction: For adolescents and adults with eating disorders who recognize that illness has been a focal point of their occupational and personal identity, answering the question "what do you do" can be a difficult. Even more challenging could be how to answer the question "who are you?" The process of recovery requires the awareness and development of an occupational identity beyond the reaches of illness, into a broader understanding of wellbeing that includes the spiritual realm.

Objectives: To begin facilitating a conversation that questions whether occupations associated with an eating disorder are consistent with the personal and fundamental beliefs and values that the individual with the illness may wish to live by. Recovery involves an awareness of engagement in life beyond merely what is done. It includes the recognition of how something is done, identifying the intention associated with occupation. **Description:** Aspects of spirituality - hope, connection, and meaning - are incorporated into the treatment process through direct conversations and experiential opportunities.

Using a spiritual self assessment tool clients are invited to reflect on their own exploration of personal values and the role of spiritual occupations in their life. Experiential activities create opportunities to explore the awareness and practice of spirituality in daily life. **Discussion:** Spiritual discussions promote personal reflection on life and its current meaning. This may be an uncomfortable experience for a person with an eating disorder. There may not be language or tolerance to explore this often neglected aspect of themselves. Activities promoting spiritual connection broaden the potential repertoire of self care and leisure pursuits, and challenge the value typically derived from solely productive occupations. **Conclusion:** Expanding the perspective of personal identity is a difficult process for individuals with eating disorders, requiring patience, practice, and a mindfulness approach to occupational engagement. Attending to spiritual health requires reassessing values associated with illness and exploring new opportunities for meaningful connection.

Contribution to practice: Introducing spiritual occupations into treatment for adolescents and adults with eating disorders broadens the view of balanced living, ensuring focus on the enhancement of being, not just doing, in life.