



Information Sheet 5

Spiritual, Pastoral and Religious Care

CROSS-BELIEF ETHOS

The Bradford Model advocates a cross-belief approach to working in SPaRC. The rationale for this is that cross-belief involves working to understand and integrate different beliefs and their traditions within the team and the service, playing to strengths, and matching knowledge and skills to needs. It recognises that social diversity as a positive, and that individuals have a range of beliefs and practices, including those rooted in religion, cultural and family traditions, in the context of a secular society. Each individual member of the team will have a unique set of beliefs and the task is to work within *their* construct with respect and empathy.

This approach differs from a multi-faith or multi-cultural approach which tends to settle into an 'each seeing their own' way of working. This means that some people can miss out if their person is not around and, at times, some jostling for position between beliefs. In working across the different beliefs, rather than in separate zones of activity and influence, there is more likelihood of equality in the SPaRC service and greater scope for development and advancement of SPaRC Practitioners. It means being collaborative rather than territorial and embracing the differences on the team as assets rather than deficits.

Cross-belief practice certainly does not mean an abandonment of own beliefs to a generic approach but does enable SPaRC Practitioners to build confidence in offering an inclusive approach, using referrals to mobilise specific support from within the team or through community contacts.

Examples of our cross-belief working:

- Mentoring and supervision of bank staff and volunteers is not designated by belief; the dialogue that comes about is seen as enlightening and developmental for both sides
- Paired visiting is promoted when the SPaRC team is attending events or meetings (e.g. to attend to a ward that has had a staff bereavement) to demonstrate our collaborative approach or as one colleague said 'We need to show the love between us'.
- Practice sharing encourages comparisons about approaches and beliefs to develop consistent and complementary practice and mutual understandings (not toleration) of difference
- Patients choose to have different conversations with different members of the team, giving them and us alternative insights and opportunities to explore their concerns

- Responsibility for promoting and delivering belief-specific events such as Ramadan and Christmas are shared between the team to lesson the load, but show the commitment to valuing all beliefs
- At stalls and events such as Interfaith Week, members of the team can speak confidently about other beliefs and promote their colleagues' beliefs alongside their own
- Referrals made to each other in the team may relate to the different beliefs, but may also relate to different personal qualities.

Unless a team can work confidently and skilfully across their different beliefs, all feeling equally valued and respected, how can they claim to offer an inclusive service to others they meet? Equality begins at home.

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