

FM 7-22

HOLISTIC HEALTH AND FITNESS



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HEADQUARTERS, DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

Chapter 10

+Spiritual Readiness

This chapter discusses spiritual readiness, the fourth domain in the H2F System. It provides tools and techniques for leaders and individuals exercising spiritual readiness development, sustainment, or repair. It discusses what spiritual readiness is, the purpose for spiritual readiness, who conducts or enables spiritual readiness, how spiritual readiness is developed, and the aspects of spiritual readiness. Lastly, this chapter lists resources available.

INTRODUCTION TO SPIRITUAL READINESS

10-1. Spiritual readiness develops the personal qualities a person needs in times of stress, hardship, and tragedy. These qualities come from religious, philosophical, or human values and form the basis for character, disposition, decision making, and integrity. People develop their spiritual readiness from diverse value systems that stem from their religious, philosophical, and human values. The spiritual readiness domain is inclusive and universally vital to all personnel no matter their background, philosophy, or religion. It applies to both religious and non-religious persons and concepts. Leaders play an active role in creating and fostering a climate that encourages individual spiritual readiness according to their respective worldviews, while at the same time communicating respect and dignity for diversity in a pluralistic setting. (See AR 600-63 for more on spirituality.)

10-2. Spirituality is often described as a sense of connection that gives meaning and purpose to a person's life. It is unique to each individual. The spiritual dimension applies to all people, whether religious and non-religious. Identifying one's purpose, core values, beliefs, identity, and life vision defines the spiritual dimension. These elements, which define the essence of a person, enable one to build inner strength, make meaning of experiences, behave ethically, persevere through challenges, and be resilient when faced with adversity. An individual's spirituality draws upon parts of personal, philosophical, psychological, and religious teachings or beliefs, and forms the basis of their character. (See AR 350-53 for more on spirituality.) Understanding the general spiritual readiness enables leaders to encourage personal spiritual readiness in a climate where mutual respect and dignity encourage dialogue, foster team cohesion, and enable healthy free exercise of religion or no religion by all personnel. This approach enables and supports collective and individual readiness as Soldiers endure challenging and stressful conditions in training or operational environments.

10-3. People enhance their spiritual readiness through reflection and practice of a lifestyle based on the personal qualities they need during times of stress, hardship, and tragedy. When their actions deviate from their stated values, then they may experience inner conflict. Those struggling for integrity and congruity often only find inner peace after overcoming the struggle. They develop spiritual readiness by studying, connecting with, and understanding the value systems that mold their personal qualities. As their spiritual readiness grows, they become a leader of character and build the resilience necessary to navigate crises.

FREE EXERCISE AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY CONCERNS

10-4. The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution begins "*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof....*" This clause is a constitutional bedrock providing grounding for religious support and spiritual readiness. The Army values Soldiers' rights to observe tenets of their respective religions, or to observe no religion at all. Free exercise of religion supports the Army mission of sustaining Soldiers' short- and long-term readiness, building ethical and moral strength, and motivating Soldiers to meet present and future challenges.

10-5. The word ‘accommodation’ describes whether the Army and its commanders will prohibit, or permit and accommodate, particular desired exercise or expression of religion that would otherwise be at odds with other military requirements, objectives, and policies. The Religious Freedom Restoration Act generally provides that a request for religious accommodation from a military policy, practice, or duty that hinders a Service member’s exercise of religion may be denied only when the military policy, practice, or duty furthers a compelling governmental interest, and is the least restrictive means of furthering that compelling governmental interest. Leaders grant or deny accommodations according to specific procedures and directives such as those laid out in DODI 1300.17 and AR 600-20. Accommodation policy provides further support for Army leaders making ample allowance for individual practice of religious exercise in the Army workplace to support spiritual readiness.

ESTABLISHMENT CLAUSE AND PLURALISTIC CONCERNS

10-6. The Establishment and Free Exercise Clauses of the First Amendment act as guideposts for developing spiritual readiness. The Establishment Clause prohibits unfair use of governmental authority, force, or influence to mandate or unduly promote any particular form of religion, religious belief, or practice.

10-7. Religion may be described as a set of beliefs concerning a divine or transcendent cause, nature, and purpose of the universe typically accompanied with devotional and ritual observances along with an accompanying moral code governing the conduct of human affairs. (See ATP 1-05.03 and ATP 1-05.04 for more on religion.) Most Army professionals identify with some form of religious belief underlying the spiritual dimension. Since religion is often the most important factor in individual moral outlook and motivation, leaders must respect religious and spiritual beliefs to develop spiritual readiness appropriately in Army organizations. Leaders accommodate diverse religious and spiritual practices but do not apply undue influence, coerce, or harass subordinates about religion.

10-8. Pluralistic concerns represented by the Establishment Clause are reinforced in other mandates of law and policy. Civil rights and equal opportunity law and policy undergird an Army commitment to provide equal opportunity and fair treatment for military personnel and Families without regard to race, color, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or national origin. Army commanders seek to provide environments free of unlawful discrimination and offensive behavior to those categories (addressed in AR 600-20). Similarly, DODD 5500.07-R requires all Army leaders and Soldiers to “adhere strictly to (this) policy of equal opportunity.”

THE CHAPLAIN CORPS ROLE IN SPIRITUAL READINESS

10-9. UMTs and chaplain sections support and advise on spiritual readiness development for both religious and non-religious personnel. Chaplains represent particular faith traditions as religious leaders while serving the spiritual needs of their assigned units’ Soldiers. Chaplains unable to perform specific religious support needs due to their own religious commitments provide supplemental religious or spiritual leaders and resources to meet those needs.

SPIRITUAL READINESS DEVELOPMENT

10-10. Spiritual readiness development involves improving one’s spiritual posture to sustaining one’s self through all aspects of life. The improvement process is generally self-directed and informed by religious, philosophical, or human values forming the basis for character, disposition, decision-making and integrity. While individuals approach spiritual readiness from both non-religious and religious perspectives, both categories creates similar comparative practices.

GENERAL SPIRITUAL READINESS PRACTICES

10-11. Informed leaders understand the requirements for time, space, materiel, and other conditions required to support spiritual readiness practices within particular organizations. Individual spiritual readiness obligations can vary widely. Paragraphs 10-12 through 10-21 provide examples of spiritual readiness disciplines non-religious and religious personnel both follow. Leaders consult with a chaplain or UMT to regarding these practices.

CORPORATE AND INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS

10-12. A central practice of spiritual readiness is regular meetings to receive instruction, observe tenets of belief, and gather with people of similar values. Meetings often occur weekly and can last thirty minutes to several hours. Some groups require dedicated sacred space in garrison settings, while other groups require dedicated space free of external distractions. Army chapels are designated as dedicated space for this purpose in both garrison and operational environments. Leaders help subordinates de-conflict operational requirements and spiritual practices within constraints of operational tempo and mission requirements.

SERVICE AND CHARITY

10-13. Most spiritual traditions emphasize service to others for the sake of both charity and understanding one's relationship to other human beings and the transcendent. This might involve serving in a homeless shelter, conducting work projects in the local community, visiting the hospital, donating funds or material goods, or helping people in the unit in need.

HOSPITALITY

10-14. Hospitality refers to generously receiving and providing a sustaining environment for family, neighbors and strangers. It is a spiritual readiness practice in many traditions. In practicing hospitality, a guest receives anything from water and shade to lodging, clothing, and food. Closely related to service and charity, this spiritual readiness practice is more intimate in nature since providing hospitality is in person and generally involves engaged social interaction between the host and guest. Many traditions view the practice as a mark of heightened spiritual maturity as it involves vulnerability of the host and investment in another's well-being and basic sustenance. The practice of hospitality towards those considered the most vulnerable in society includes the orphaned, widowed, homeless, injured, physically handicapped, and prisoners.

JOURNALING

10-15. Many people use journaling as a spiritual readiness practice. Journaling often involves an individual maintaining a written record of thoughts, prayers, feelings, beliefs, and reflection on life, philosophy, or other matters. The journal is either handwritten or digitally recorded. Usually the journal is a private document not intended for disclosure. Journals might also have recorded thoughts and words with no particular association or logic, often referred to as free journaling. Free journaling releases one's mind to enable focused reflection. Journaling is a means of incorporating cognitive, spiritual, and physical activities as part of an integrated approach to spiritual readiness. Authors might review their journals to gain perspective on life.

MEDITATION

10-16. Meditation is the practice of contemplation and reflection by an individual or group. It generally requires few external distractions. For this reason, ensuring a dedicated space away from ongoing training or operations is preferable to facilitate individuals' ability to practice this spiritual readiness activity.

PRAYER AND CHANTING

10-17. Religious people tend to practice prayer and chanting to address one or more god, deity, divine being, or spirit. Prayer might follow a set form of words and rhythm or a free-form pattern. Chanting is often a modified form of prayer or song uttered in a rhythmic manner with or without repetition. Some traditions prescribe prayer according to the time of day, a pattern of prayers using beads, or a specific physical posture assumed during prayer. Some prayer is designed for individuals while other prayers are for groups ranging from a few to a large gathering.

10-18. Leaders ask subordinates what space, time, and materials they require to facilitate individual prayer practices. Some prayers require preparation in the form of ceremonial washing or fasting. For example, leaders may be asked to provide a dedicated space with ceremonial washing (ablution) capabilities and limited distractions. Some individuals pray during routine daily activities while others pray only at a dedicated time in a space free from distractions.

BELIEF (VALUES)-BASED EDUCATION (RELIGIOUS EDUCATION)

10-19. Belief-based education occurs for non-religious and religious groups. The education often occurs during group gatherings, but it also occurs as part of an individual's study habit. Groups provide times that allow belief-based education to young and more mature adherents. Trained leaders or lay volunteers provide instruction on topics and information related to core beliefs and the practice of those beliefs. Belief-based education varies from formal instruction with published curricula and examination to informal tutoring and mentoring. Training may happen throughout the week or as part of a formal education program with group meetings.

BELIEF-BASED READING AND REFLECTION

10-20. Non-religious and religious traditions usually reflect on a text, a group of texts, an author, or authors. These traditions often consider these texts or authors authoritative. Members use them for teaching, learning, personal reflection, spiritual growth, and normative practices in personal and public life.

10-21. Some religious traditions consider the texts sacred. Such texts require reverent and dignified handling ranging from careful handling, to physical touch only by trained clergy reading the document for adherents. Texts vary in ease of purchase and cost. Texts regarded as sacred often require special storage and handling considerations. Reading and reflection of spiritual or religious texts varies from one group to another, with some groups reading these texts on special holy days or in collective gatherings, while other groups carry paper or digital copies of their texts for daily reading, reflection, or prayer. Some religious groups require a dedicated space for reading and reflection; other groups might read or listen to their respective spiritual texts while conducting other activities.

RELIGIOUS SPIRITUAL READINESS PRACTICES

10-22. Individuals who practice certain spiritual resiliency disciplines tend to identify with a specific religious group. Paragraphs 10-23 and 1-24 cover the more common disciplines.

SACRAMENTS, RITES, AND ORDINANCES

10-23. Some religious traditions practice a sacramental understanding that imparts common objects with divine significance. Often, these traditions follow a rite or ordered pattern when observing sacraments. Those people with a sacramental understanding often view the objects as sacred or consecrated. Leaders and Soldiers treat those items according to the rites, rituals, or laws of the respective religious tradition. Alongside sacraments and rites are practices by some religious traditions of ordinances. While similar in manner, believers do not treat the ordinances as sacred or consecrated. Even so, all people treat those items with appropriate dignity and respect. The practice of sacraments, rites, and ordinances requires specific materials to satisfy that group's religious requirements. Successful free exercise might require leaders to use appropriated funds to facilitate these spiritual readiness practices.

HOLY OR SPECIAL DAY OBSERVANCES

10-24. Most religious groups have key dates celebrating significant events by members of that group in individual, familial, or collective observances. Holy day observances range from a simple group meeting to an elaborate event over several days with specific dietary, travel, and preparation requirements. Each tradition has a calendar identifying holy day observances. Each calendar varies in whether it is lunar, solar, or Gregorian based. Some calendars are set with numerical specificity whereas others are based on conditions interpreted and defined by religious leaders within that tradition. Some traditions have holy day obligations that require certain activities for their members as part of the holy day observance. Similar traditions might observe the same holy day but on a different date. Effective leaders facilitate dialogue and flexibility regarding free exercise of spiritual readiness practices. While special day observances are typically associated with religious observance, other non-religious spiritual traditions may also have certain special days. Soldiers desiring to observe special spiritual days plan with leaders in advance.

DIETARY PRACTICES

10-25. Dietary practices vary widely across religious traditions. Some follow no specific dietary practices while other groups might follow stringent dietary regimens synchronized with a religious calendar. The Army places a high priority on individual Soldiers' rights to exercise their religion, to include following religious-based dietary practices. Each person in a religious group has unique dietary practices. Accordingly, effective leaders engage in open and continued dialogue with subordinates regarding dietary practices so to accommodate the free exercise of religion in this area.

CLOTHING AND APPAREL

10-26. Spiritual readiness practices can include the wear of religious apparel. Religious accoutrements include but are not limited to headgear, tassels, special garments, or rules regarding modest dress. The Army places a strong emphasis on facilitating free exercise in the least restrictive manner as possible. See AR 670-1 and AR 600-20 for further information on religious accommodation of clothing and apparel.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

10-27. Similar to clothing and apparel, some religious groups require specific practices in regards to hair. The Army uses an established process for requesting waivers to accommodate free exercise of religion with regard to physical appearance. See AR 670-1 and AR 600-20 for religious accommodations to grooming standards.

SPIRITUAL READINESS ASSESSMENT

10-28. Unlike a physical readiness test that assesses established form and repetition of tasks in a set time, a spiritual readiness assessment is subjective and based on self-selection and self-assessment. Paragraph 10-29 describes sample methods of self-assessment that are not exhaustive in nature, nor intended as authoritative or definitive. Soldiers may freely choose to use assessment tools regarding spiritual readiness without repercussion or the perception of negative consequences.

10-29. Spiritual readiness assessments can come across as artificial, judgmental, rigid, and subjective. For this reason, each Soldier creates an assessment based on personal aspect and perception of spirituality. For example, Soldiers who find hope in their own personal achievements when experiencing hardship or adversity, base their assessment on the degree to which achievement is effective in bringing that hope and thereby reinforce their belief in personal achievement. Others who find hope in religious beliefs may base their assessments on connection to those beliefs or practices that reinforce those beliefs. Table 10-1 helps Soldiers assessing their own spiritual readiness to focus on relevant factors.

Table 10-1. Sample spiritual readiness assessment factors

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Questions</i>	
Personhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What perceptions do I have about myself that give me inherent value? • What gives my life meaning if anything? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do I believe that my life has purpose? If not why not? • If so, what purpose?
Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do my worldviews and associated beliefs say about who I am in relation to others? • How would I answer the question, "Who am I?" 	
Growth Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What mindset do I use to progress through life? • On what do I base this mindset? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what do I engage that shapes this mindset? • What am I reading to reinforce this mindset?
Personal Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over what do I have the ability to exercise control? • What aspects of my life are completely out of my control? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What can I do about adverse situations in my life over which I have no control? • How do I handle guilt and shame?

Table 10-1. Sample spiritual readiness assessment factors (continued)

Factor	Questions	
Coping Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do I typically respond when experiencing adversity? • What, if anything, has worked well? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What has not worked? • How can I improve my ability to cope with adversity?
Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what or whom do I feel most connected? • How am I reinforcing those connections? • What connections cause significant distress? • How can I healthfully disconnect from those? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If disconnection is impossible, how can I manage the connection to minimize the distress? • How can I re-establish damaged connections? • Who, if anyone, do I need to forgive to include myself?

RESOURCES

10-30. Several offices, agencies, and individuals have staffs and resources to support leaders and the H2F Performance Team in facilitating spiritual readiness. Generally, leaders are not expected to be experts on spiritual and religious practices, nor should they function as such. Assistance from qualified staff enables leaders and individuals to focus time and energy on primary Army functions while building and maintaining their personal spiritual readiness. The resources listed in paragraphs 10-31 through 10-37 is not exhaustive in nature.

COMMANDERS AND LEADERS

10-31. Unit leaders foster spiritual readiness by providing space in schedules, battle rhythms, and training plans for individual self-development to include the spiritual dimension. Unit and organizational leaders can encourage spiritual readiness by discussing the spiritual dimension or spiritual development goals in developmental counseling, individual development plans, or their leadership philosophies. Unit leaders may also direct spiritual or moral leadership training, often with support from the chaplain section or UMT, to ensure contextualized training respects the diversity and pluralistic needs in the unit. (See ATP 1-05.04 for fostering spiritual training.)

CHAPLAIN SECTION OR UNIT MINISTRY TEAM

10-32. Chaplains and religious affairs specialists are assigned to units down to the battalion level. Called a chaplain section above brigade and the UMT at the brigade and below, chaplains and religious affairs specialists have specific training and education. They support command requirements to facilitate free exercise of religion and to provide spiritual assistance for all assigned, attached, or authorized personnel. The chaplain section or UMT advises the commander on broad issues regarding religion, morals, ethics, and morale. A key aspect of this advisement is the ability to conduct research and provide advice and resources on spiritual and religious practices. (See FM 1-05 and ATP 1-05.04 for details on religious advisement.)

GARRISON CHAPLAIN'S OFFICE

10-33. Most installations have a garrison chaplain section assigned to support an installation-wide, senior commander's command master religious program. This office is responsible for planning, developing, executing, and assessing religious support for the entire installation. As such, this office generally maintains lists of broad spiritual and religious support programs on the installation, engages spiritual leaders to facilitate comprehensive religious support, and leverages Chaplain Corps assets to research and support spiritual readiness practice requests for all assigned, attached, or authorized personnel. Garrison chaplain sections typically include a director of religious education. That individual oversees all religious education requirements on the installation and supports the garrison chaplain's research and provision of appropriate support for spiritual readiness practices. See AR 165-1 for more information on the garrison chaplain's office.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY ADVISOR OR OFFICE

10-34. Religion is a category covered under the Equal Opportunity Program of the Army. As such, equal opportunity representatives and advisors can assist leaders and individuals with facilitating spiritual readiness without discrimination. The equal opportunity advisor or officer can advise on various religious or spiritual practices as well as indicators of a healthy climate in which leaders emphasize spiritual readiness without creating adversarial or unhealthy conditions within a unit.

ARMY FIT WEBSITE

10-35. The Army currently maintains the Army Fit website (<https://armyfit.army.mil>) that provides resources for teams, leaders, and individuals. The resources cover five dimensions: physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and family. There are articles under the spiritual dimension that provide insights into various spiritual readiness practices as well as discussions of potential obstacles or challenges an individual might experience in the exercise of a particular spiritual readiness practice.

LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

10-36. In the immediate area surrounding military installations, several civilian religious and secular organizations often provide spiritual readiness education and direction. Leaders seeking information regarding spiritual readiness practices of their subordinates or looking for places to refer subordinates looking for specific spiritual advisement and practices might benefit from contacting these organizations. The chaplain section or UMT maintains a list of various local organizations to facilitate ease of referral. Maintaining these diverse lists does not constitute official government endorsement of any particular organization, but rather as a way to aid individual spiritual development.

INTERNALLY ASSIGNED ASSETS

10-37. Spiritual or religious practices of Soldiers and their Family members are diverse and often represent a cross-sectional demographic of the U.S. population. As such, leaders can benefit from learning about respective spiritual or religious groups from assigned Soldiers and their Family members. Those who practice a particular spiritual or religious tradition often understand nuances within that tradition. Providing regular opportunities for these individuals to provide information on their respective spiritual beliefs, practices, and customs can create a climate of understanding, dignity, and respect. Such classes also provide an opportunity for Soldiers to develop professional briefing and teaching skills. Identifying individuals in the unit who exercise a specific spiritual or religious tradition can prove beneficial for supporting other members of the team in a time of crisis or stress.

Summary

Spiritual readiness is a vital domain in the H2F System, and it directly impacts the resiliency of individuals and organizations. Encouraging Soldiers to connect and reflect on the worldview or value system that informs their core beliefs, principles, ethics, and morals can empower them to endure and overcome stress, hardship, and tragedy. Leaders have a responsibility to support spiritual readiness practices and create a climate where dignity and respect guide the process. Understanding common spiritual readiness practices enables leaders to support individual spiritual readiness development, sustainment, maintenance, and repair.