

# 1 Background Reading

## **Why *Spirituality in Healthcare*?**

As modern conventional medicine becomes more reductionist in its approach, and there is an increasing concern with new techniques and pharmaceuticals to manage disease, the challenge is to bring human values (spirituality) to the centre of healthcare, while maintaining high standards in healthcare delivery.

Integrating spirituality is a development of the holistic approach. It becomes more urgent at the beginning of the 21st century as we appreciate there is more to healthcare than treating illness; there is also a need for deep healing at all levels of our being, and that includes healing society and the environment.

Spiritual care is an area that needs to be developed, not only in terms of patients' needs, but also for healthcare practitioners themselves. It can be said that every illness has a spiritual dimension and at some level, every patient, regardless of the illness, is confronted by questions of meaning, existence and belief: 'Why me?' 'Why now?' 'Is this fair?' These questions are *transpersonal* in nature, that is, they make us look inward to get our bearings, to interpret what is happening to us in relation to the world out there.

## **Purpose of module**

During our training we learn about the normal and abnormal functioning of the body, the influence of the mind and emotions on illness, and the social and cultural factors that affect health. However, there is something more than all these elements combined; something deeper, personal, yet collective. It remains central to the healing process – it can be called the *spiritual aspect* of health and healing.

## **Introduction to the *Spirituality in Healthcare* module**

This module can be run separately exploring what is spiritual care within healthcare, or as a way of drawing together all the modules of the *Values in Healthcare* programme.