

Age	Primary Fears	Concept of Death	Spiritual Interventions
Infant	Separation Strangers	Unable to differentiate death from temporary separation or abandonment	Provide consistent caregivers Minimize separation from significant others Decrease parental anxiety Maintain crib/nursery as "safe place" no procedures encourage parental presence Facilitate spiritual support system for family
Toddler	Separation Loss of control	Recognizes death in terms of immobility often viewed as reversible, temporary, or foreign	Minimize separation from significant others Keep security objects at hand Provide simple, brief explanations explain and maintain consistent limits Encourage participation in daily care Provide opportunities for play and play therapy Reassure the child that disease is not punishment
Early school-age child	Bodily injury and mutilation Loss of control The unknown The dark Being left alone	Recognizes death in terms of immobility often viewed as reversible, temporary, or foreign Begins to question and develop a mature concept	Don't underestimate level of comprehension Provide simple, concrete explanations Use pictures, models, actual equipment, medical play when providing explanations When appropriate, initiate discussion of love and caring from Higher Power to relieve anxiety and loneliness Show behavioral qualities of love, trust, respect, caring and setting of firm limits
School-age child	Loss of control Bodily injury and mutilation Failure to live up to expectations of important others Death	Recognizes all the components of irreversibility, universality, nonfunctionality, and causality	Provide choices whenever possible Stress contact with school, sports, religious peer groups Use diagrams, pictures and models for explanations Emphasize the "normal" things the child can do Reassure child he/she has done nothing wrong (Hospitalizations isn't a punishment) be alert to anxiety about being punished by deity Provide appropriate concrete explanations in response to questions regarding spiritual beliefs Continue spiritual rituals when appropriate Model behaviors that show forgiveness and acceptance

Adolescent	Loss of control Altered body image Separation from peer group	Speculates on the implication and ramifications of death Understands effect of death on other people and society as a whole Future-oriented, difficult to understand reality of death as a present possibility	Allow Adolescent to be an integral part of decision making regarding care Give information sensitively Allow as many choices and as much control as possible Be honest about treatment and consequences Stress what the adolescent can do for themselves Stress the importance of cooperation and compliance Assist in maintaining contact with peer groups Provide answers without bias and enable participation in discussion of illness in terms of philosophical or spiritual beliefs Encourage contact with friends and use of spiritual rituals if appropriate Observe and document verbalizations of adolescent's values and beliefs
------------	---	--	--