

Spiritual Fitness Inventory User Guide

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SPIRITUAL FITNESS INVENTORY USER GUIDE

1. Purpose and Scope.

The Spiritual Fitness Inventory (SFI) shown at Appendix B is a tool to assist screeners in assessing Soldiers' spiritual fitness as a component of their resilience and readiness. The results of the SFI can be used to facilitate a discussion related to spirituality, and to help an individual track changes in his or her spiritual fitness over time (such as during pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment) as part of a comprehensive approach to wellness and resiliency.

2. Background.

Research has shown that spirituality is positively associated with good physical and psychological health; however, the definitions of spirituality are varied. At its most basic level, spirituality refers to a person's deepest beliefs, way of relating to others, and way of making sense of the world around him/her. "Spirituality" is often used synonymously with "religion." Traditionally, the definition of religion includes spirituality. However, in modern times, spirituality and religion have been separated (reference 1). Hill et al. (reference 2) argued that religion and spirituality are not independent constructs but are related. Many individuals experience spirituality in the context of an organized religious setting. Spirituality and religion both honor what is held sacred. Spirituality has been described as a search for the sacred, as well as a process through which people seek to discover, hold on to, and transform what they hold sacred in their lives (reference 3). Researchers agree that spirituality is an understudied variable in health research and that it is a moderately robust variable in predicting health-related outcomes (reference 4). All SFI questions were formulated based on the following:

a. The traditional "Description of Components of Spiritual Fitness," as stated by David J. Hufford, Ph.D.; Matthew J. Fritts, MPH; and Jeffrey E. Rhodes, D.Min (reference 5).

b. Kenneth I. Pargament and Patrick J. Sweeney's definition of spiritual fitness "as the capacity to: (1) identify one's core self and what provides life a sense of purpose and direction; (2) access resources that facilitate the realization of the core self and

strivings, especially in times of struggle; (3) and experience a sense of connectedness with diverse people and the world” (reference 6).

3. Test Administration.

a. Procedure. The SFI can be completed in approximately 3-5 minutes and can be either self-administered or taken during a one-on-one or group session with a counselor/facilitator.

(1) Instrument Construction. The ten-item SFI has been formulated based on the traditional “Description of Components of Spiritual Fitness” (reference 5).

(2) Permissions. Permission to use the cited research in the development of this guide has been granted by the publishers.

b. Measures. The SFI is comprised of 10 questions on a 10-point scale. Each answer is equally weighted. Each item may be analyzed separately, or the scores from all items may be combined to determine a total score.

(1) Spiritual Practices, SFI Items 1-3. These three items measure one’s involvement in public and private practices that build the human spirit and the degree to which these practices are effective for this particular individual.

(2) Spiritual Beliefs/Core Values, SFI Items 4-6. These three items measure the extent to which one’s core beliefs or values are effective in providing meaning, purpose, hope, and direction in one’s life.

(3) Self-awareness: SFI Item 7. This item measures the extent to which one’s core beliefs or values encourage self-awareness.

(4) Transcendence:

(a) Relationships outside of self, SFI Items 8-9. These items measure one’s commitment to someone or something outside of one’s self and the extent to which one values pro-social behavior over self-interest.

(b) Exceptional experiences: SFI Item 10. This item assesses the extent to which one has been impacted by unusual or profound experiences that have been exceptionally meaningful and life-changing.

c. Scoring. The response to each item corresponds with a numeric value (score). Combining the items’ scores will determine the total SFI score. Higher scores indicate greater spiritual fitness. (Information on interpreting the results is provided in Appendix B.) The SFI results can be useful for tracking changes in an individual over time. In

addition, the SFI administrator or a counselor can choose to discuss responses to individual items on the SFI, facilitating a dialogue with the Soldier about his or her spirituality and bolstering his or her resiliency.

4. Spiritual Fitness Inventory.

The SFI is intended to help Soldiers measure their spiritual fitness. Spiritual fitness is a key component of Soldier readiness and force protection. Being spiritually fit improves Soldiers' resilience and aids their recovery from combat-related traumas (reference 5).

5. Post-inventory Instructions.

Everyone has a lens through which he or she views and interprets the world, whether that "lens" is a religious faith, a belief system, a world view, or general outlook on life. As stated in Chapter 6-1 of Army Regulation (AR) 600-63, "When a person's actions are different from his or her stated values, the person lives with inner conflict. This person struggles for integrity and congruity, but cannot find inner peace until this struggle is dealt with. The extent to which this is accomplished is a measure of spiritual fitness." (reference 7)

The questions on the SFI are divided into three categories: Spiritual Practices, Spiritual Beliefs, and Transcendence. Appendix B includes guidelines to assist Soldiers in understanding their SFI responses.

APPENDIX A**REFERENCES**

1. Koenig, H.G. 2001. Religion and medicine II: Religion, mental health, and related behaviors. *Int J Psychiatry Med.* 31:97-109.
2. Hill, P.C. et al. 2000. Conceptualizing religion and spirituality: points of commonality, points of departure. *J Theor Soc Behav.* 30(1):51-77.
3. Pargament, K.I., H.G. Koenig, J. Tarakeshwar, and J. Hahn. 2004. Religious coping methods as predictors of psychological physical and spiritual outcomes among medically ill elderly patients: a two-year longitudinal study. *J Health Psychol.* 9:713-30.
4. Hill, P.C. and K.I. Pargament. 2003. Advances in the conceptualization and measurement of religion and spirituality. Implications for physical and mental health research. *Am Psychol.* 58:64-74.
5. Hufford, D. J., M.J. Fritts, and J.E. Rhodes. 2010. Spiritual fitness. *Military Medicine: International Journal of AMSUS*, vol. 175, 8:73-87.
6. Pargament, K.I. and P.J. Sweeney. 2011. Building spiritual fitness in the Army: an innovative approach to a vital aspect of human development. *Am Psychol.* 66(1):58-64. Copyright © 2011 by the American Psychological Association. Reprinted with permission. The use of APA information does not imply endorsement by the APA.
7. Department of the Army. 2007 (Rapid Action Revision, 2010). Regulation 600-63, *Army Health Promotion*.

APPENDIX B

**REPRODUCIBLE SPIRITUAL FITNESS INVENTORY AND POST-INVENTORY
INSTRUCTIONS**

SPIRITUAL FITNESS INVENTORY

DATA REQUIRED BY THE PRIVACY ACT OF 1974

Authority:	United States Constitution, First Amendment; Title X, United States Code (USC), section 3073, 3547, 5142, and 8067; and DoD Directive 1300.17.
Principal Purpose:	To assess spiritual fitness.
Routine Uses:	Answers provide a basis for personal reflection and growth.
Disclosure:	Disclosure is voluntary ; however, failure to disclose may limit the chaplain's capability to provide feedback, guidance, and/or direction.

Everyone has a lens through which he or she views and interprets the world, whether that "lens" is a religious faith, a belief system, a world view, or general outlook on life. As stated in Chapter 6-1 of Army Regulation (AR) 600-63, "When a person's actions are different from his or her stated values, the person lives with inner conflict. This person struggles for integrity and congruity, but cannot find inner peace until this struggle is dealt with. The extent to which this is accomplished is a measure of spiritual fitness."

This assessment is intended to help you measure your spiritual fitness. Spiritual fitness is a key component of Soldier readiness and force protection. Being spiritually fit improves Soldiers' resilience and aids their recovery from combat-related traumas.¹

Please turn the page to begin the Spiritual Fitness Inventory.

¹ Hufford, D. J., M.J. Fritts, and J.E. Rhodes. 2010. Spiritual fitness. *Military Medicine: International Journal of AMSUS*, vol. 175, S1, 8:73-87.

Spiritual Fitness Inventory

In each section, circle the number in the column that most closely matches your answer.

Question	Never	Less than once each year	Four times each year	Six times each year	Once each month	2-3 times each month	Once each week	2-3 times each week	Once each day	Several times each day
1. How often do you get together with other people in wholesome activities outside of work? Some examples are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending worship services • Attending Family events • Playing team sports • Volunteering in the community 	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2. How often do you engage in activities that build the human spirit? Some examples are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening to music • Enjoying nature • Furthering your education • Fasting • Journaling • Praying • Giving to charity • Enjoying humor • Meditating 	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Question	Not at all									A lot
3. How much do these kinds of activities help refresh you?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4. Life brings big questions. (Who am I? Why am I here? What is my purpose in life? What happens after I die? Why is there evil and suffering? etc.) How helpful are your core beliefs or values in giving meaning and purpose to your life?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Spiritual Fitness Inventory (continued)

Question	Not at all									A lot
5. How much do your core beliefs or values provide you support in times of stress?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6. How much do your core beliefs or values influence your moral and ethical decision making?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7. How much do your core beliefs or values encourage you to stop and think about who you are and who you are becoming?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8. How much do your core beliefs or values build within you an allegiance to anyone or anything outside of yourself? (This could be God, nature, Country, Corps, community, Family, humanity, the greater good.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9. How much do your core beliefs or values encourage you to be caring, forgiving, patient, gentle, generous, selfless, kind?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Question	Never									Many times
10. Have you ever been changed by an unusual or profound experience? (You might call this a spiritual crisis, conversion experience, mystical experience, exceptional human experience, sense of enlightenment, or a near-death experience.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

UNDERSTANDING YOUR SPIRITUAL FITNESS INVENTORY RESPONSES

The Spiritual Fitness Inventory is divided into three categories: Spiritual Practices (Questions 1-3), Spiritual Beliefs (Questions 4-6), and Transcendence (Questions 7-10). Following are some guidelines to help you understand your SFI responses.

Spiritual Practices:

Questions 1-3. If you spend most of your time alone, you may want to consider being more active socially. You could join a sports team, attend worship, or gather with friends more often. Some activities or practices may help to refresh you more than others. You may want to try new or different activities or increase the frequency of those in which you already participate.

Spiritual Beliefs:

Question 4. If you struggle to make sense of the big questions in life (*Who am I? Why am I here? What is my purpose in life? What happens after I die? Why is there evil and suffering? etc.*), you may want to talk to a chaplain or your religious leader. Sometimes it is helpful to explore these questions with others who have spent more time dealing with them.

Question 5. What you believe should help strengthen and comfort you in stressful times. Sometimes it is helpful to take inventory of your beliefs during a less stressful time so that when a difficult time comes, you can draw on your beliefs for strength. Each one of us goes through difficult times in life; they are normal and unavoidable. But if you struggle to make sense of life, to keep your perspective, or to find hope or comfort in the midst of stress, a chaplain, religious leader, or behavioral health counselor can help you think through your beliefs and regain hope.

Question 6. Sometimes life brings difficult choices. If your beliefs do not help you to make good choices, you may want to talk with others from your religious faith or world view who have more experience and can guide you in your decision-making process. If you make decisions that do not match up with your beliefs, you may want to change either your beliefs or your behavior. When your actions and your beliefs match up, you will feel better about the decisions you make, and you will be more resilient.

Self Awareness and Transcendence:

Questions 7-10. At times, it helps to take an inventory of who you are and how much you have grown in life. Sometimes it is good to do this alone, and sometimes it is good to do this with other people. The results of such an inventory can be very meaningful and life-changing. These times of reflection can help you to know what is important to you and what gives your life meaning and purpose.

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