

Integrated into the National Intrepid Center of Excellence's interdisciplinary care model, the Spiritual Healing Program seeks to address the spiritual needs of service members with comorbid traumatic brain injury and psychological health conditions. Regardless of religious affiliation or denomination, admitted service members have the opportunity to individually meet with the NICoE's chaplain to help identify what is important to him or her in a spiritual context and how that impacts his or her healing process.

Key Components of the Program

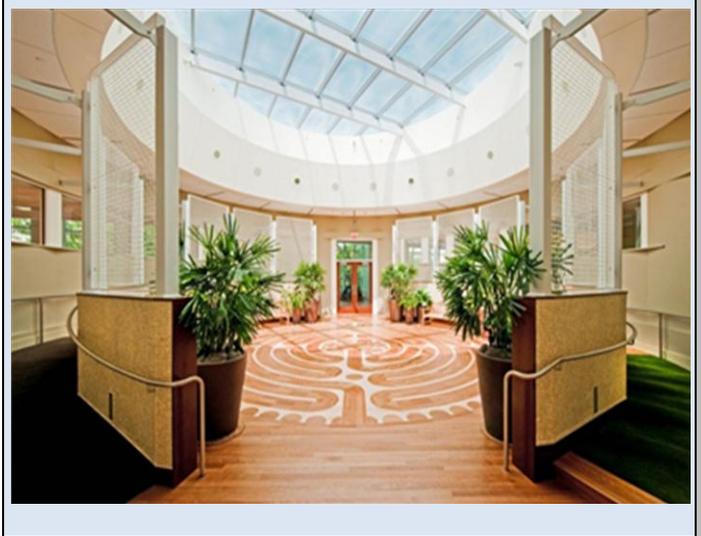
- Features one-on-one sessions with a religiously affiliated and ordained NICoE chaplain in total confidentiality
- Open to all service members and family members regardless of religious affiliation, denomination or faith
- A detailed spiritual assessment that looks at the patient's life and spiritual history, spiritual practices that may or may not be helpful to the healing process, and how the patient feels about his or her life in the context of personal relationships, family members and military career
- An initiation into learning how to mindfully walk the NICoE's labyrinth in a safe and peaceful setting

Goals of the Spiritual Healing Program

- Create and instill an environment of trust for service members during his or her four-week treatment
- Individually tailored to the spiritual needs of each service member and his or her family
- Constructively allow the service member's spirituality to help, rather than hinder, the healing process
- Teach and institute self-management techniques to learn how to effectively address difficult emotions such as inner conflict, grief, anger and forgiveness
- Educate the service member to adopt skills for greater self-compassion, self-awareness, and self-control

What's a Labyrinth?

One of the techniques the Chaplain teaches involves the labyrinth in the NICoE's "Central Park." Popular among cathedral builders during the Medieval Ages, labyrinths were built into the cathedral floors for congregants who wanted to meditate on particular struggles confronting their lives. By slowly walking the labyrinthine circuits from start to finish, service members at the NICoE benefit from not only a relaxing environment, but also an uninterrupted chance to reflect on issues that may be causing them distress.



Incorporating the spiritual assessment into the service members' overall treatment plan allows the NICoE providers to learn more about the patient and what is causing him or her personal difficulty. Service members often cite grief, guilt, and loss as being resultant feelings from moral injury or inner conflict. The NICoE chaplain works with service members individually by listening to their challenges and offering suggestions or techniques that can help them on their overall path to recovery.