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SPIRITUAL FIRST AID KIT

PRACTICAL TOOLS TO
HELP YOU IDENTIFY AND
COPE WITH STRESS

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Spiritual First Aid
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HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

Welcome to the *Spiritual First Aid Kit*. This toolkit is crafted to help you navigate life's distressing seasons by understanding Spiritual First Aid's BLESS Needs and following CALM coping actions.

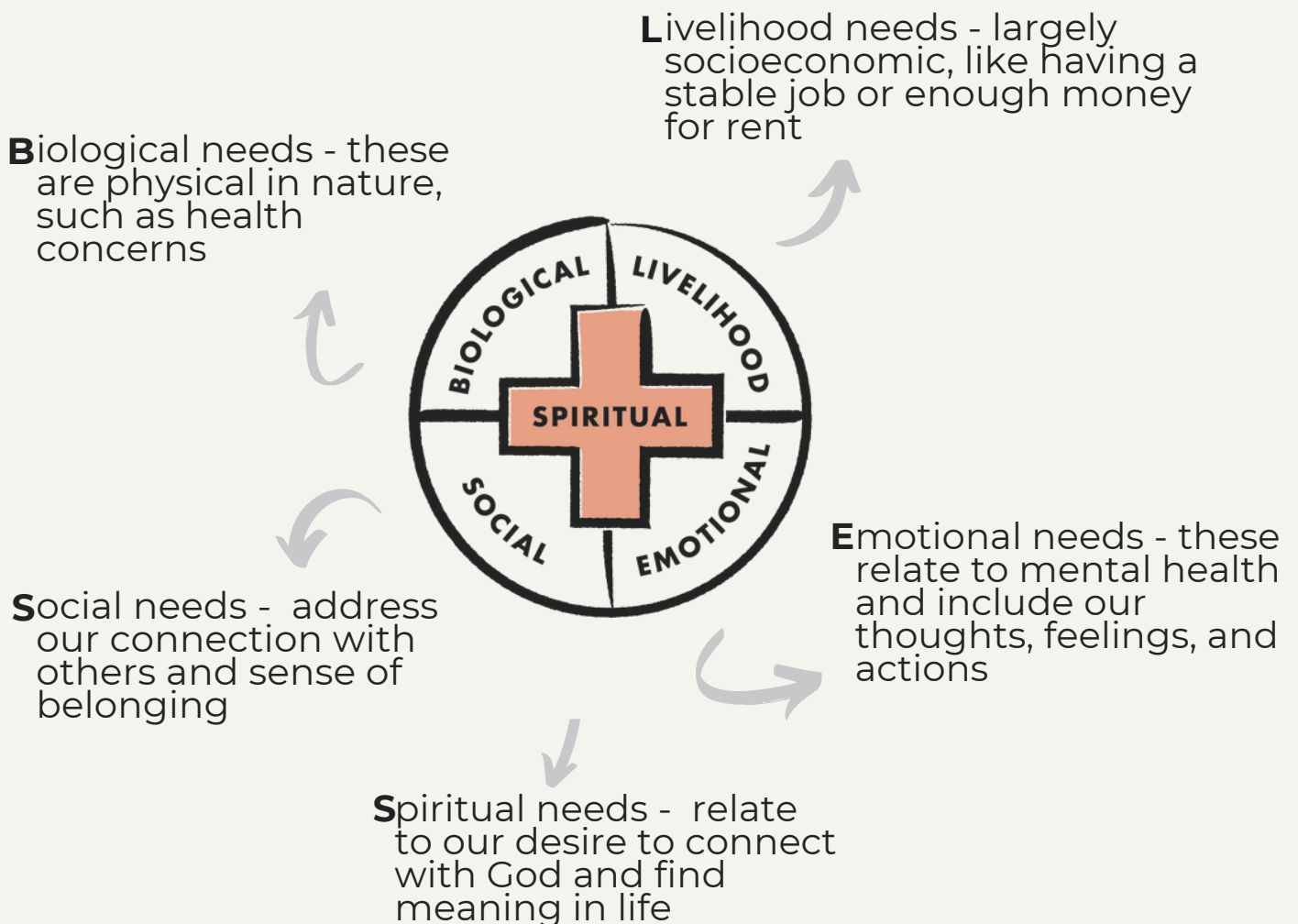
To get the maximum benefit from this toolkit, we urge you to be patient and open-hearted. Reflect on each area, evaluate your current situation, and be sincere with yourself regarding your needs. The toolkit is divided into three easy-to-follow steps:

- **Step 1:** The first segment provides insights into BLESS Needs. You will explore each area: Biological, Livelihood, Emotional, Social, and Spiritual, and understand their significance in our well-being.
- **Step 2:** The following section guides you through recognizing your own unmet BLESS Needs. We will assist you in discerning the ones causing the most distress and guide you on how to prioritize them to address the most urgent needs first.
- **Step 3:** The final part offers practical strategies and methods to manage your identified needs. The approaches range from coping practices that can help bring instant relief to more long-term strategies. We've included a full page with the Coping Practices Tool.

Remember that this toolkit is not a one-time fix, but rather a resource you can return to as your needs change. Let's get started!

STEP 1: UNDERSTAND THE BLESS NEEDS

BLESS Needs (i.e., biological, livelihood, emotional, social, and spiritual) are the five core needs our research has found cause distress when left unmet. These needs are all interconnected, as illustrated below:



STEP 2: IDENTIFY YOUR UNMET BLESS NEEDS



Instructions: Take a few minutes to reflect on the self-aid prompts below. Then take steps to put what you learn into action in your daily life throughout the week.

2.1. Start by brainstorming some challenges currently causing you stress in your day-to-day life. Jot down what comes to mind without judging your thoughts or overthinking.

Internal Stressors:	External Stressors:
i.e. emotions, beliefs, mental wellness	i.e., events, circumstances, tasks

2.2. Now begin to narrow down the list of items you just brainstormed above by circling the three that feel most significant to you.

2.3. Do your best to categorize the three most pressing unmet BLESS Needs you circled into the BLESS Triage Tool provided below. Separate them into concerns **that feel most pressing to you in the present moment** for each corresponding BLESS Need. (Reference back to the BLESS wheel in Step 1 for help distinguishing the type of need.)

PRESSING NEEDS	SAFETY ISSUES	URGENT	LESS URGENT	NOT URGENT
B iological				
L ivelihood				
E motional				
S ocial				
S piritual				

⚠ Address threats to self and others immediately. Call 911 or 988 in case of emergency.

2.4. Respond to each of these reflection questions to deepen your understanding even further:

- Do you notice any connections, similarities, or themes in the unmet BLESS Needs you wrote above?
- What might be the root cause(s) of the unmet BLESS Needs you've identified?
- Out of the three unmet BLESS Needs you've written above, which one feels most pressing that you should prioritize and work on first?

STEP 3: USE "CALM" ACTION TO REDUCE DISTRESS



Instructions: Follow these "CALM" (acronym for the steps below) actions to identify and implement healthy coping practices to reduce distress caused by unmet BLESS Needs.

C Consider coping practices you have previously found helpful to reactivate (if applicable, healthy, and doable).

- What are some ways you've coped with difficult situations in the past that were useful?
- What was it about this coping practice that you found most helpful?
- Do you think this particular coping practice might help in your current circumstances?

A Anticipate possible barriers to using the coping practice(s) being considered (and adapt as needed).

- Can you think of any barriers that might get in the way of you using this practice? How can you adapt to overcome the barrier you just shared?

L Look at the Coping Practices Tool (p. 9) to identify one or two coping practices to use the next time you feel distressed.

- Or begin with the breathing or grounding practices we've provided (including implementation instructions, p.8) to help you cope.

M Make a list of trusted people, services, and resources you could reach out to for additional support if needed.

PSALM 46:10: DEEP BREATHING PRACTICE



"Be [inhale for four]
still, [exhale for four]
[pause for two]
and [inhale for four]
know [exhale for four]
[pause for two]
that [inhale for four]
I [exhale for four]
[pause for two]
am [inhale for four]
God." [exhale for four]

5-4-3-2-1 GROUNDING PRACTICE

Acknowledge FIVE things you see.
Acknowledge FOUR things you can touch.
Acknowledge THREE things you can hear.
Acknowledge TWO things you can smell.
Acknowledge ONE thing you can taste.

COPING PRACTICES TOOL



Biological

- Write out health goals
- Eat well and maintain healthy weight
- Exercise and stay active, if possible
- Get adequate rest and sleep
- Accept what you can't control about your health or body
- Advocate for your medical needs
- Develop health literacy
- "Listen" to your body and know your limits
- Be aware of body-mind connection
- Talk with a healthcare physician

Livelihood

- Try and maintain routines
- Seek assistance with living arrangements, bills, medicine, transportation as needed
- Do your best adjusting to new roles and situations
- Participate in a financial class
- Sign up for community services and programs
- Take a career assessment
- Participate in vocational training
- Talk with a social services professional

Emotional

- Use slow rhythmic breathing
- Accept what you can't control
- Use guided imagery
- Express your feelings
- Spend time in nature
- Do what is life-giving
- Moderate/limit media intake
- Try writing in a journal
- Practice muscle tensing and relaxing
- Practice mindfulness
- Talk with a mental health professional

Social

- Talk with someone you trust
- Try to maintain relationships
- Accept and give help
- Reach out to others
- Set appropriate boundaries
- Make sure you aren't pulling away
- Let go of unhealthy relationships
- Join a support group
- Get to know your neighbors
- Attend a community event
- Cultivate forgiveness
- Talk with a mentor

Spiritual

- Hold onto faith
- Pray
- Meditate on scripture
- Try and make meaning of struggles
- Use spiritual journaling
- Focus on spiritual concerns and goals
- Keep a hopeful perspective
- Practice gratitude
- Surrender what you can't control over to God
- Lament
- Join a small group or Bible study
- Participate in church life and worship
- Talk with a clergy person



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TAKE THE GUESSWORK OUT OF HELPING

Gain Practical Tools to Make a Difference

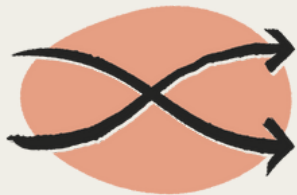
Mental health is complex.
Helping doesn't have to be.

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Spiritual First Aid is a frontline peer-to-peer spiritual and emotional care intervention structured around the BLESS CPR framework.



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