

# Hindu Way of Spiritual Care

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**Beyond the Surface:** Spiritual Care and Mental Health



Opening prayers

सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः ।  
सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः ।  
सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु ।  
मा कश्चिद्दुःखभाग्भवेत् ॥

**Transliteration:**

*Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah  
Sarve Santu Nirāmayāḥ  
Sarve Bhadrāṇi Paśyantu  
Mā Kaścidduḥkha Bhāgbhavet*

**Meaning:**

May all beings be happy  
May all be free from disease  
May everyone see goodness and auspiciousness  
May none suffer in any way



**Beyond the Surface: Spiritual Care and Mental Health**

## Workshop Objectives

- Understanding Hindu spiritual beliefs and practices
- Our approach to spiritual care
- Use of meditation, chanting, and scripture-based counselling



**Beyond the Surface: Spiritual Care and Mental Health**

Emotional and Existential Support  
Rituals, Worship, and Practices  
Supportive Presence and  
Compassion  
Collaboration and Referral

Bhakti (Devotion)  
Japa (Chanting)  
Study of Sacred Texts  
Seva (Selfless Service)  
Satsang (Spiritual Gatherings)  
Pilgrimages  
Spiritual Teachings and  
Philosophy  
Meditation and Yoga



Support during Life Transitions  
Respect for Diversity and Inclusivity  
Individualized Approach

## Beyond the Surface: Spiritual Care and Mental Health

Belief and Faith  
Hope, Resilience and Inspiration  
Inner Peace and Emotional Well-being  
Connection and Relationship  
Life Journey, Ethics and Values  
Transcendence and Transpersonal Experiences  
End-of-Life and Bereavement Support

Rituals, Sacraments, and Festivals  
Respect for Individual Practices  
Ethical and Moral  
Spiritual Counselling and Guidance



# A billion+ Hindus *across the world* Spiritual Care Australia



PS - Numbers are not accurate on the slide, to be updated – credits to the Hindu American Foundation





# A million+ Hindus *in Australia*

Hindus have migrated from over 32 countries and made Australia their home. i.e., Afghanistan, **Bangladesh**, Bhutan, Cambodia, **Fiji**, **India**, Indonesia, **Maldives**, Malaysia, **Nepal**, Pakistan, South Africa, **Sri Lanka**, Singapore, Thailand, and many other countries.

In the broader Dharmic tradition, there is a deep cultural and spiritual connection between Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists. While each tradition maintains its own distinct identity, they share many common values, philosophies, and festivals rooted in ancient Indian civilisation.

The recent Census reveals that the number of people in Australia who identify as Hindu surged by 55 per cent over the past five years (**Hindus** - 2.7%, *Buddhism* – 2.4%, *Sikhism* 0.8%)

There are also **Hindus** who are temporary residents (students and work visa holders) from the above-mentioned countries who live in Australia.

The Hindu community is spread throughout Australia, with significant populations in major cities and widely spreading across many regional towns.

*Australian Census 2021 says - Hinduism is one the fastest growing religion in Australia.*

Hindus are those who follow the spiritual tradition of the Vedas. One of the first Vedic periods is called the Rig Veda, dated 21,000 years ago.

एकं सद्भिप्रा बहुधा वदन्ति  
*Ekam sad viprā bahudhā vadanti*

Meaning:  
Truth is one, sages call it by many names.

This profound line promotes spiritual unity and inclusiveness, a cornerstone of  
*Sanātana Dharma*.



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## Paying my respects

Before I begin, I pay my respects to the elder's past, present, and emerging, and I pay respect to the land from where I have come today and the land I travelled from the land of cammeraygal people.

I feel we Hindu and First Nation people of Australia, share similar cultures in many ways. like paying respects to nature is one that resonates with me in this instance.

The act of touching the ground is often associated with expressing gratitude to Mother Earth. we leave home by walking out of the door; we run, we ride, we use various modes of transport for which we pay respect and express our gratitude, and reverence to the Mother Earth and nature.

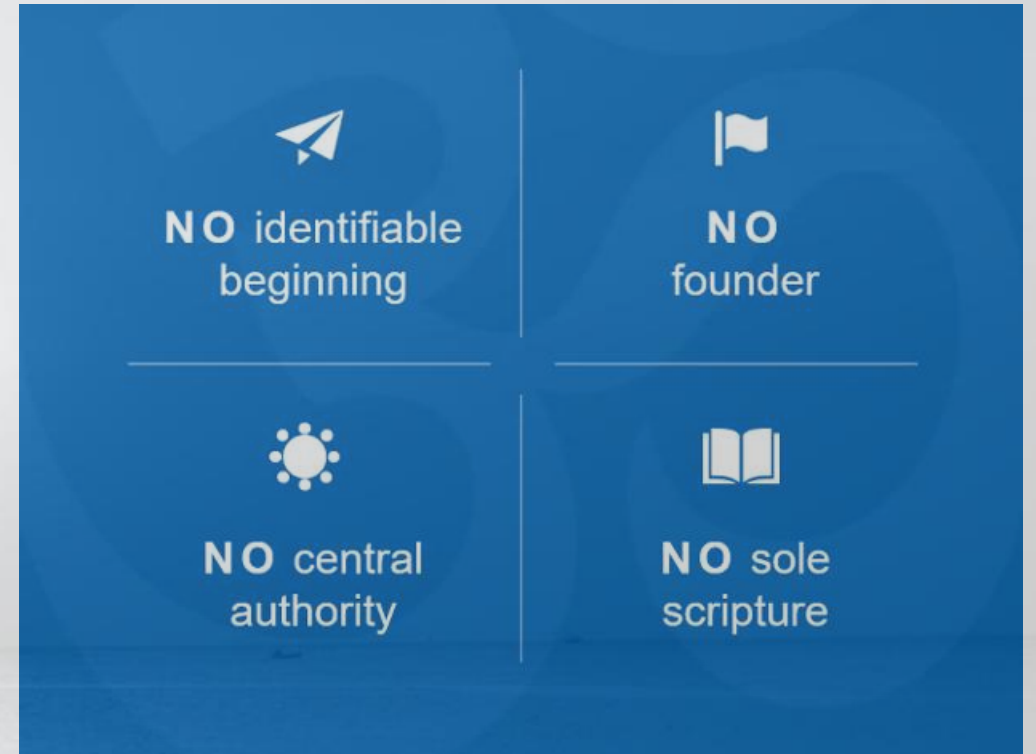
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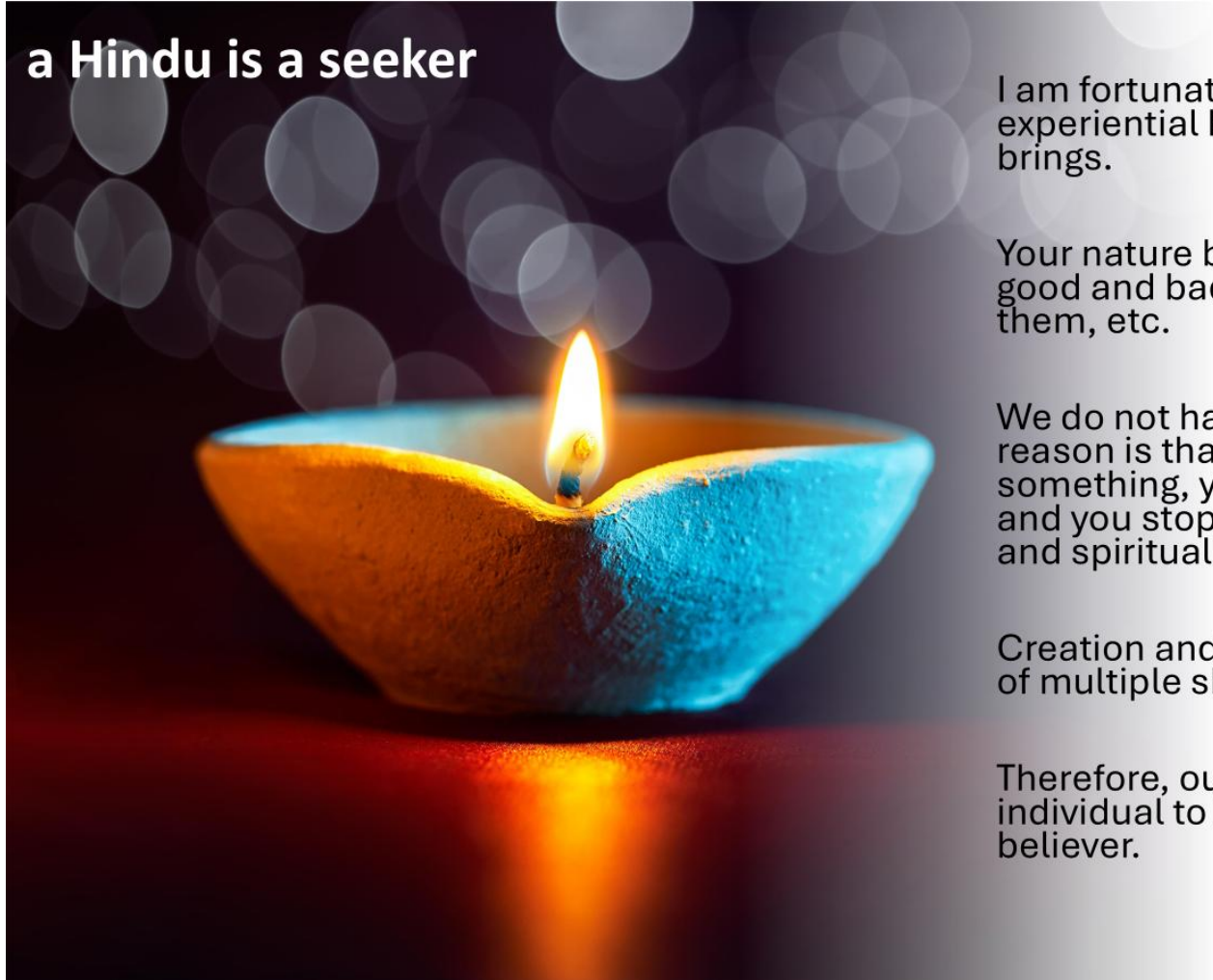
## It is Not a 'Religion' in the Conventional Sense

**Hindus** do not have a founder or a definitive beginning. It did not emerge from the teachings of one saint or guru, nor was it established through a single sacred text or historic revelation. Rather, it is a **civilisational tradition** that evolved over thousands of years through spiritual inquiry, lived experiences, and philosophical insights across the subcontinent.



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**a Hindu is a seeker**

I am fortunate to have inherited this vast experiential knowledge that Hindu culture brings.

Your nature becomes binary, for example, good and bad, black and white, us and them, etc.

We do not have a concept of belief. The reason is that once you believe in something, your ideas stop flowing freely, and you stop to seek, both scientifically and spiritually.

Creation and life are not binary and are full of multiple shades of all colours and hues.

Therefore, our culture teaches an individual to be a seeker, and not a believer.

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## A Hindu Perspective

In the **Hindu way of life**, this distinction becomes even more nuanced. **Sanātana Dharma**, often mislabeled as “Hinduism,” is not just a religion but a **way of living in alignment with cosmic truth**.

**Dharma (righteous conduct)** sustains the universe. **Shraddhā (faith or reverence)** is what enables one to walk the dharmic path.

Multiple paths to the Divine (bhakti, jñāna, karma, rāja yoga) are valid, and inner realisation is key.

So, in this worldview:

**Faith** is your connection to the **divine**.

Religion (Dharma) is how you live out that connection **ethically, practically, and spiritually**.



### *Connected with nature*

Hindus see nature as sacred and intimately connected with the divine.

The Pancha Bhootas, or the five elements (Earth, Water, Fire, Air, and Ether), are worshipped as manifestations of the divine.

- **Earth** (Prithvi): Revered as a mother
- **Water** (Jal) : Considered purifying and lifegiving
- **Fire** (Agni) : Seen as a purifier
- **Air** (Vayu) : The breath of life
- **Ether** (Akasha) : The element of space, representing the vastness and infinity of the cosmos.



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## Spiritual Concepts

Ethics and morals are rooted in the philosophical principles found within, which is one of the world's oldest practice. Hindus encompass a wide range of beliefs, practices, and philosophical schools, resulting in diverse perspectives on ethics and morals.

**Dharma** is a central concept in Hindu ethics. It refers to the moral and ethical duties, responsibilities, and righteous actions that individuals are expected to uphold. Dharma is seen as a guiding principle for leading a virtuous and ethical life in harmony with cosmic order.

**Karma**, the law of cause and effect, is closely tied to Hindu ethics. It suggests that one's actions, intentions, and thoughts have consequences, both in this life and in future lives. Practicing good actions and cultivating positive intentions is emphasized as a means to accumulate positive karma and progress spiritually.



## Spiritual Concepts

**Ahimsa**, the principle of non-violence, is a key ethical value in Hindu way of life. It advocates avoiding harm and violence towards all living beings. Ahimsa extends to physical, verbal, and mental actions, promoting compassion, kindness, and respect for all forms of life.

**Satya**, or truthfulness, is highly valued in Hindu ethics. Practicing honesty and truthfulness in speech, actions, and thoughts is considered virtuous. Truth is seen as a foundational principle for leading an ethical life and establishing harmonious relationships.

**Asteya** refers to the principle of non-stealing or non-covetousness. It encourages individuals to refrain from stealing, taking what is not rightfully theirs, or having an excessive desire for material possessions. Contentment and respecting others' property rights are emphasized.



## Spiritual Concepts

**Brahmacharya** traditionally refers to the practice of celibacy or moderation in sexual conduct. It is seen as a means to conserve vital energy and direct it towards spiritual growth. In a broader sense, it can also encompass moderation in all sensual pleasures and the responsible use of one's energies.

Aparigraha promotes non-possessiveness and **non-attachment**. It advises individuals to minimize material desires and avoid excessive accumulation of wealth and possessions. It encourages a mindset of detachment and contentment.

Hindu ethics emphasize **compassion** (karuna) and service (seva) towards others. Acts of selfless service, philanthropy, and helping those in need are considered virtuous. Practicing empathy and extending support to the less fortunate are seen as integral aspects of a morally upright life.



## Spiritual Concepts

Respect for Elders and Ancestors, Hindu ethics place significance on respecting and honouring elders, ancestors, and lineage. This includes caring for parents, seeking their guidance, and maintaining family bonds.

Hindu ethics emphasize reverence and respect for elders, gurus (spiritual teachers), and scholars. Seeking guidance and learning from those with wisdom and experience is considered important for moral and spiritual growth.

The ultimate goal is to lead a righteous and virtuous life that promotes spiritual growth, personal well-being, and the well-being of others and the world.





## Hindus and Rituals

In Hindu dharma, spiritual care encompasses various practices, beliefs, and rituals aimed at nurturing an individual's spiritual well-being and fostering a connection with the divine. It involves the cultivation of a deeper understanding of oneself, the universe, and the ultimate reality.

**Rituals** hold significant importance and are an integral part of the religious and cultural practices within the faith. Rituals are diverse, ranging from simple daily practices to elaborate ceremonies and festivals. They are considered a means of connecting with the divine, expressing devotion, and seeking spiritual progress.

**Bhakti** (Devotion) refers to the practice of deep devotion and love towards a chosen deity or deities. Spiritual care among Hindus often involves engaging in devotional practices such as singing hymns, reciting prayers, participating in religious ceremonies, and visiting temples to establish a personal connection with the divine.





## Hindus and Rituals

**Japa** (Chanting) involves the repetitive chanting of sacred mantras or the names of deities. This practice is believed to purify the mind, focus one's thoughts on the divine, and create a sense of inner peace and spiritual connection.

the study and contemplation of sacred texts (scriptures) like the Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, and various Puranas. These texts provide philosophical insights, moral teachings, and spiritual guidance to individuals seeking a deeper understanding of life, purpose, and the nature of reality.

**Seva** (Selfless Service) refers to selfless service performed for the benefit of others without any expectation of personal gain. Engaging in acts of kindness, charity, and service to humanity is considered a spiritually uplifting practice, fostering compassion and selflessness.

**Satsang** (spiritual gatherings) involves coming together with like-minded individuals for spiritual gatherings, discussions, and lectures on philosophical and spiritual topics. These gatherings provide an opportunity for learning, sharing experiences, and fostering a sense of community in the pursuit of spiritual growth.



## Hindus and Rituals

**Samskaras** are significant life-cycle rituals among Hindus, that mark important milestones in an individual's life. They include rituals such as birth ceremonies (jatakarma), marriage (vivaha), and funeral rites (antyeshti). Samskaras are performed to invoke blessings, seek divine guidance, and ensure the well-being and spiritual progress of individuals.

Hindus place great emphasis on **pilgrimages** to sacred sites and temples. Pilgrimages offer devotees the opportunity to immerse themselves in a spiritually charged environment, seek blessings, and deepen their connection with the divine.

Hindus have a rich spiritual heritage, and individuals may choose different paths and practices based on their personal inclinations and beliefs. spiritual care practices may vary among different Hindu traditions, sects, and individuals, and hence, the above aspects are not exhaustive.



## **Spiritual care for Hindus**

Hindus are diverse with a wide range of ideologies, deities, and philosophies. Spiritual caregivers need to have a good understanding of core concepts, such as karma, dharma, reincarnation, and the pursuit of moksha (liberation).

Hindus are allowed individual interpretation and practices. Hindus engage in various forms of worship (nirgun / sagun).

Hindus significantly emphasise ethical living and moral values. Living a righteous life, practicing non-violence (ahimsa), being truthful (satya), and cultivating compassion (karuna) are some of the key tenants in our way of life.





## Understanding Hindu Spiritual Care

Spiritual care for Hindus is deeply rooted in the beliefs, practices, and traditions of their way of life. nurturing the spiritual well-being of individuals, supporting their religious practices, and provide guidance for their spiritual growth and spiritual well-being.

Spiritual care is needed in a variety of different contexts such as such as schools, colleges, universities, age-care, healthcare, corrective services, military and the corporate sector as well as settings that may not have formal chaplaincy arrangements, practice spiritual care in a way that is authentic to our traditions and meets the needs of Hindus.

*The practice of spiritual care can vary based on the specific sects, traditions, and cultural backgrounds Hindus believe in.*



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## Spiritual care for Hindus

Hindu scriptures, rituals, and practices help individuals navigate challenges and dilemmas in their spiritual journey. Hindu Council of Australia can connect with qualified spiritual leaders who can offer guidance.

Practices such as meditation and yoga are integral to Hindu spirituality. These practices can help individuals cultivate inner peace, mindfulness, and a deeper connection to their spiritual essence

Spiritual care is a personal journey, and individuals may have unique preferences and needs. reach out to your local Hindu Council branch or temple to inquire about specific spiritual care services they may offer.

*The practice of spiritual care can vary based on the specific sects, traditions, and cultural backgrounds Hindus believe in.*



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## Spiritual care for Hindus

Hindus have a rich tapestry of rituals, sacraments, and festivals. Support and resources for important life events, such as birth ceremonies (samskaras), weddings, and end-of-life rituals (antyeesti).

Temples play a central role in the spiritual life for many Hindus. These places of worship provide a sacred space for prayer, rituals, and community gatherings. They often offer various services such as regular religious ceremonies, festivals, classes on Hindu scriptures, and cultural events.

Spiritual Guidance and Counselling Trained Hindu spiritual leaders, such as scholars, priests, acharyas (teachers), swamis (gurus) can offer spiritual guidance and counselling to individuals seeking support and advice.



# Counsellor of Hindu Traditions (CHT) – Course Objective

## Outline –

- Bhagavad Gita & Hindu Traditions
- Spiritual care in the community
- Essential counselling skills
- Knowledge of wellness services
- Enhancing Quality of Life

## The course aims to –

- Facilitate your pursuit of Vedic Chaplaincy credentials
- Equips you as a trained volunteer for community service
- Career as a Hindu Chaplain in Police, Corrective Services, Armed Forces, hospitals, Education, and other establishments.

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# Counsellor of Hindu Traditions (CHT) – Course Content

Introduction & welcome to CHT

**Introduction** to Hindu and the Bhagavad Gita

What is **Healthy Aging?**

Counseling for **Counselors**

**Approach** to Community Service

Personal reflections in the context of service

Bhakti: **Vedic** chanting, Pooja **Vidhi**, Kirtan/Chanting

Psychology for counsellors: traditional approaches

Cognitive Vitality and **Dementia**

**Karma Yoga** in the Hindu Tradition

What is Life **Transition?**

Continuum of **spiritual care** in the Hindu Diaspora- an evolving model

Personal reflections in the context of service

**Samskaras**: Hindu Festivals and Customs

Counseling **Children**

Creating a **Safe Space**

**Hybrid** Parenting

Bhagavad Gita for **Loneliness**, Disputes

Tradition and Science on Diet, **Nutrition** and Fasting

Management of **Stress** and Burnout

Coping with Illness and Incapacity - **Quality of Life**

Fundamentals of **Palliative** and **Hospice** Care

OM\$ **Projects**

Wrap Up of the CHT Course



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**Spiritual caregivers (Counsellor's) to have a good understanding of core concepts –**

- Provide a safe and non-judgmental space for individuals to discuss their spiritual concerns, dilemmas, or experiences.
- Offer spiritual counselling, prayer, or meditation sessions tailored to the needs of the individual
- Share stories, parables, and teachings from Hindu scriptures that offer comfort, inspiration, and guidance.
- Providing access (arranging) to libraries of the Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, and other Hindu scriptures
- Meditation and yoga aim to discipline the mind, cultivate self-awareness, and achieve higher states of consciousness.
- Emphasize the importance of mindfulness, self-reflection, and connecting with the divine through these practices.
- Offer support and resources for important life events, and continuing support during crisis and instability.





## Practical Spiritual Care Tools

### Hindu Spiritual Practices for Healing:

- **Mantra Chanting:** Invocation chants
- **Guided Meditation:** Deep breathing and visualization
- **Scriptural Readings:** *Bhagavad Gita, Vishnu Sahasranama*
- **Symbolic Rituals:** Lighting a Diya (lamp), offering sacred chants

*Encouraging individuals to align their actions with their dharma (duty) and to seek spiritual growth through selfless service*

**Om Tat Sat**

**Thank You & Q&A**

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