Pocket Guide: Referring Patients to Chaplain Jeanne Childs for Home Visits

REFERRAL INDICATORS:
Distress/suffering of the spirit (in your patients or their family members) around any of the following or similar conditions:

- lost sense of meaning/purpose
- difficulty coping with what’s happening to them, their lives/relationships
- decisional conflict (e.g. about life/death, treatment options, living options, beliefs .... facing great challenge
- needing comfort and listening to feelings, e.g. anger, anxiety, despair, fear, grief, loss, pain, guilt, loneliness, sadness, isolation/no support crisis situations
- soul wounds such as betrayal, disappointment, estrangement, resentment

You might hear indicators in the course of your conversation with them, such as: I don’t feel like eating since husband died (could be actively mourning); my daughter is going through a bad divorce and I don’t believe in divorce (values conflict); I miss being able to go to church/senior center etc. (isolation/loneliness/yearning); nothing is going well; I am headed straight down hill (pessimism, loss of will);

Or, you might see indicators in behaviors (e.g. social withdrawal, lack of affect, loss of interest or ambition); these can indicate clinical depression and need medical treatment; their etiologies can be spirit distress which can be treated with spiritual care interventions.

WORDING SUGGESTIONS FOR RESPONSES:
- Sounds like you could use someone to think that through with you in a supportive kind of way.
- We have a woman who works with us and could come visit you. She is very supportive and helpful for the kind of things you are talking about.
- I work with someone who I think could really help you with this. She’s a good listener and seems to be able to help people find their bearings in hard situations like you are facing.

“Well, who is she? What does she do?”
She’s provides care for your spirit. She’s a Chaplain and part of our team. Chaplains listen and offer support. They can be helpful in sorting out what can be changed and what can’t .... and in working through a hard time.

“I’m not religious. Don’t even believe in God.”
Chaplains care for people’s spirits regardless of their beliefs. You and the Chaplain talk about what is important to you, not what isn’t.

“I’m Mormon. Will she be able to support my faith!”
She will support what matters to you … your beliefs. She will help you find strength in them as you deal with your present circumstances.