**THE IMPORTANCE OF SPIRITUALITY FOR A SOBRIETY-LIVING GROUP HOME**

Esbriety is the process by which the Board invites a spiritual approach as one of several methods to assist our group home clients to reach and maintain sobriety. The importance of spirituality is its power to unite people wherein differences and negativity are melted away, and one is left with a strong sense of belonging and an interconnectedness with all around them. To reach this point, one must properly care for one's soul and the soul of others. This act is done by watching for "the small details over everyday life, as well as to major decisions and changes… to give ordinary life the depth and value that come with soulfulness" (Moore, Care of the Soul, 1994, p. 4). To be clear, however, there is a profound difference between the soul and spirituality. The soul unites us with the **Creator**, while spirituality unites us with being inclusive.

As Fr. Leo Booth points out about recovery and maintaining sobriety, "Spirituality is something that unites you and me, regardless of culture, race or religion… Unlike religion, I see spirituality as being the unifying factor that incorporates all religions and none" (Richard Dunn, Spirituality, Alcoholism and Drug Addiction, Promethean Institute, a Division of Daytop, Richard Dunn, 1992, p. 4). Similarly, Professor Paul Tillich (Harvard University, School of Theology, 1965) points out that everyone has an ultimate concern in life. He averred that people often substitute lesser things, such as success, the good life, or nationalism, as their ultimate concern. Tillich further clarifies that only religion has genuine ultimate concern because ultimate concern, according to Tillich, is directly tied to religious faith and God (as the **Creator**). However, at SHPEV, the Board's policy will promote spirituality instead of religion while encouraging clients to pursue their Ultimate Concern through their faith if they choose to do so to reach and maintain their sobriety and humaneness.

Like Paul Tillich, Black Elk speaks of how his tradition helps people reach their ultimate concern through the power of peace. He states "The first peace, which is the most important, is that which comes within the souls of people when they realize their relationship, their oneness with the universe and all its powers, and when they realize that at the center of the universe dwells **The** **Great Spirit** and that this center is really everywhere, it is within each of us" ([Black Elk](https://www.azquotes.com/author/4438-Black_Elk), "The Sacred Pipe: Black Elk's Account of the Seven Rites of the Oglala Sioux." Book by Black Elk and Joseph Epes Brown, 1953.) When our clients begin to embrace this self-guiding approach to **Esbriety**, we at SHPEV expect that the shift in our clients' consciousness (belief system) will help to turn the tides away from the harmful norms of abusing alcohol while embracing a way of life commiserate with the teachings of **Black Elk Speaks.**