

# Spiritual Needs of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy Patients and their Use of Spirituality as Part of a Coping Strategy

Symposium III „Integrating Religion / Spirituality  
into Psychotherapy / Psychiatry / Neuroscience“  
ECRSH14 - Malta, May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2014

Franz Reiser, Lic. Psych. Lic. Theol.  
Anne Zahn, M.D.

Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg



**UNI  
FREIBURG**

# Clinical Survey: Study Design

Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg



UNI  
FREIBURG

- University Clinic for Psychiatry and Psychotherapy Freiburg (Germany)
- June 2010 – December 2011
- All new inpatients (except the acute locked ward)
- Open, prospective, explorative, cross-sectional
- Standardised Questionnaires developed by Arndt Büssing et al.
- Questionnaire “Expectations towards the Clinic“ by Franz Reiser and Anne Zahn

# Characteristics of the Sample

Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg



- Participants:** 248 at admission (23.3% response rate)  
228 at discharge (21.4% response rate)
- 60% women, 40% men
- Mean age 39.6 ±13.4 years
- **Diagnoses**
  - 7% Psychotic Disorders
  - 11% Alcohol Addiction
  - 42% Depressive Disorders
  - 5% Bipolar Disorders
  - 14% Obsessive-compulsive Disorders
  - 11% Borderline-Personality-Disorder
  - 11% Others
- **Distribution** of sex, age, education and diagnoses similar to the population of the clinic

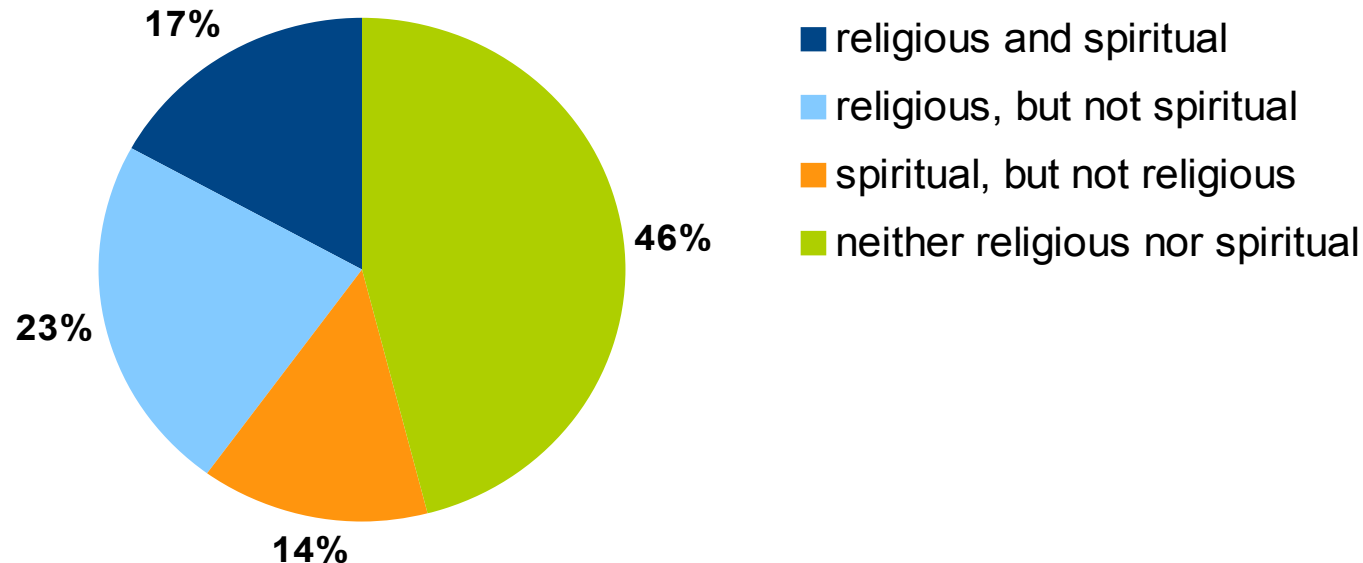
## Religious orientation

77% Christian (Cath./Prot. equally),  
8.5% other, 14.5% none

Distribution similar to the regional general population

## Self-rating as religious and/or spiritual

Distribution similar to the regional general population





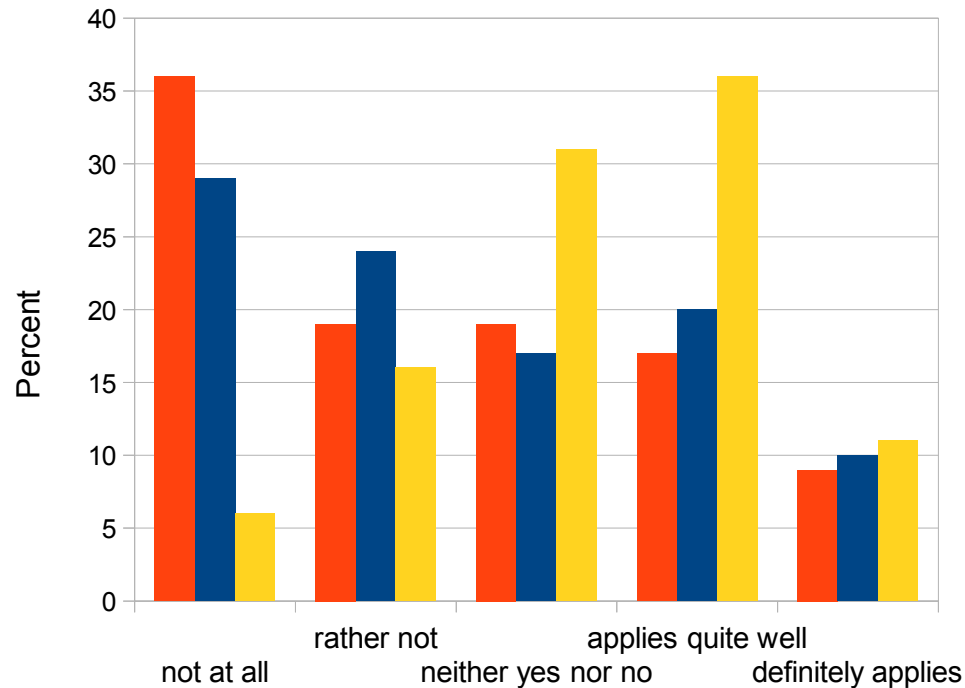
- Measure for spiritual or religious attitudes and convictions of patients dealing with chronic diseases
- Avoids exclusive terms such as God, Jesus, church
- Three factors:
  - (1) **Search**  
(for support / access to Spirituality/Religiosity)
  - (2) **Trust**  
(in higher guidance / source)
  - (3) **Reflection**  
(positive interpretation of disease)

# SpREUK-15: Results at admission

Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg



(simplified; N=248)



- Search for Support / Access
- Trust in Higher Guidance / Source
- Reflection: Positive Interpretation of Disease

# Spiritual Needs Questionnaire 1.2

Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg



UNI  
FREIBURG

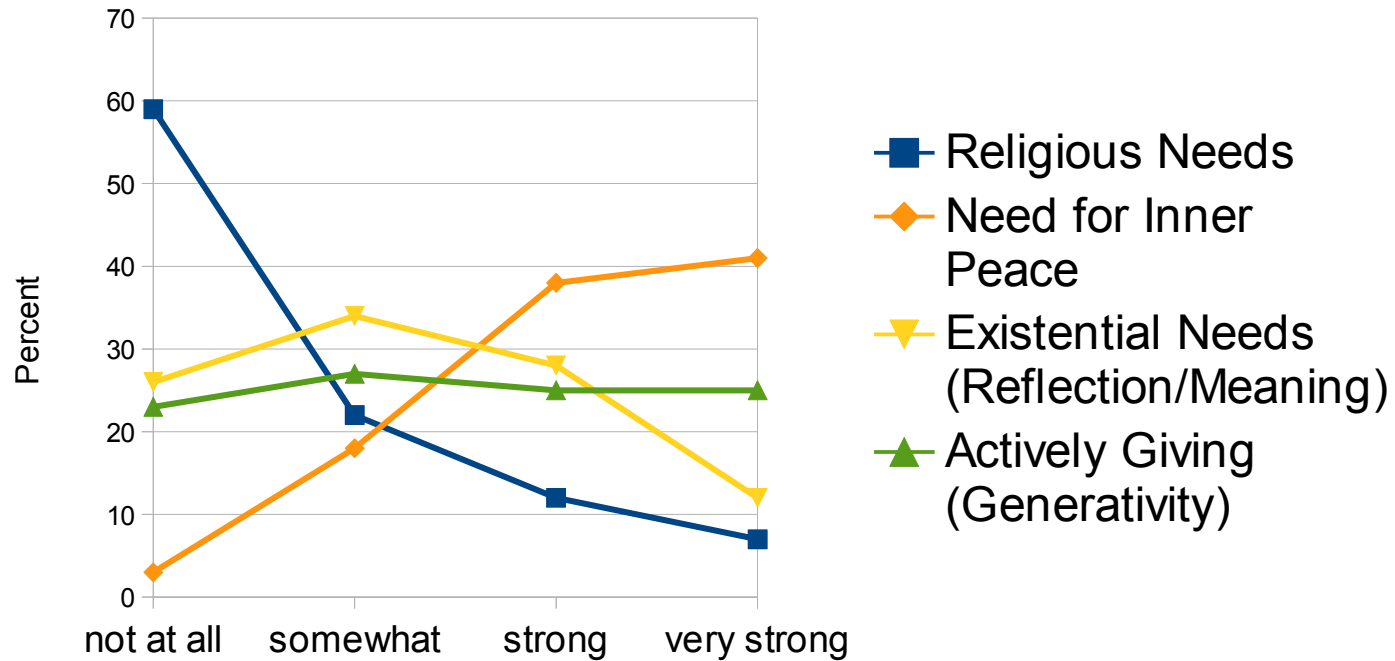
- Measure for patients' longing for spiritual well-being (cfr. Büssing et al., Eur J Med Res (2010) 15: 266-273)
- Avoids exclusive religious terminology, suited both in secular and also in religious societies
- Four factors:
  - (1) **Religious Needs** (6 items)
  - (2) **Need for Inner Peace** (5 items)
  - (3) **Existential Needs** (Reflection/Meaning) (5 items)
  - (4) **Actively Giving / Generativity** (3 items)

# Spiritual Needs Questionnaire 1.2

Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg



(simplified; N=248)





## Spiritual Needs Questionnaire: *Additional items*

(N=248)

- Need „to forgive someone from a distinct period of your life“ (N16W)

20% „strong“

20% „very strong“

- Need „to be forgiven“ (N17W)

17% „strong“

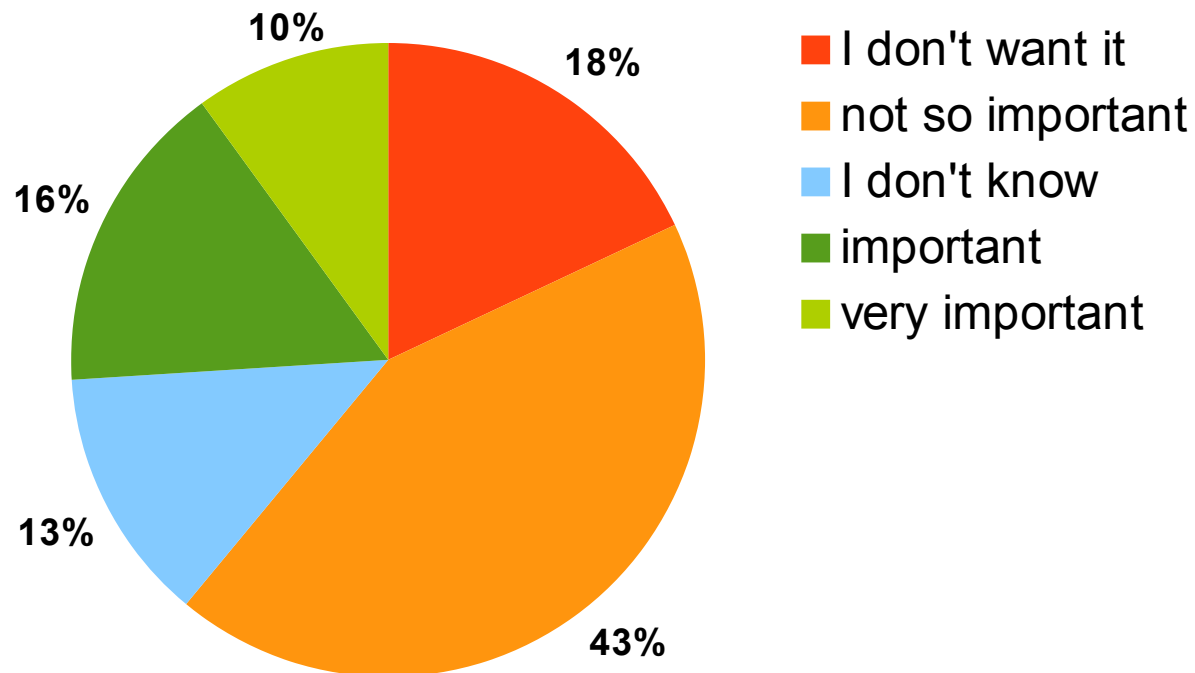
30% „very strong“

# Expectations towards the Clinic

Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg



Item ErwA1: importance of the clinic addressing issues of faith / spirituality (N=243)

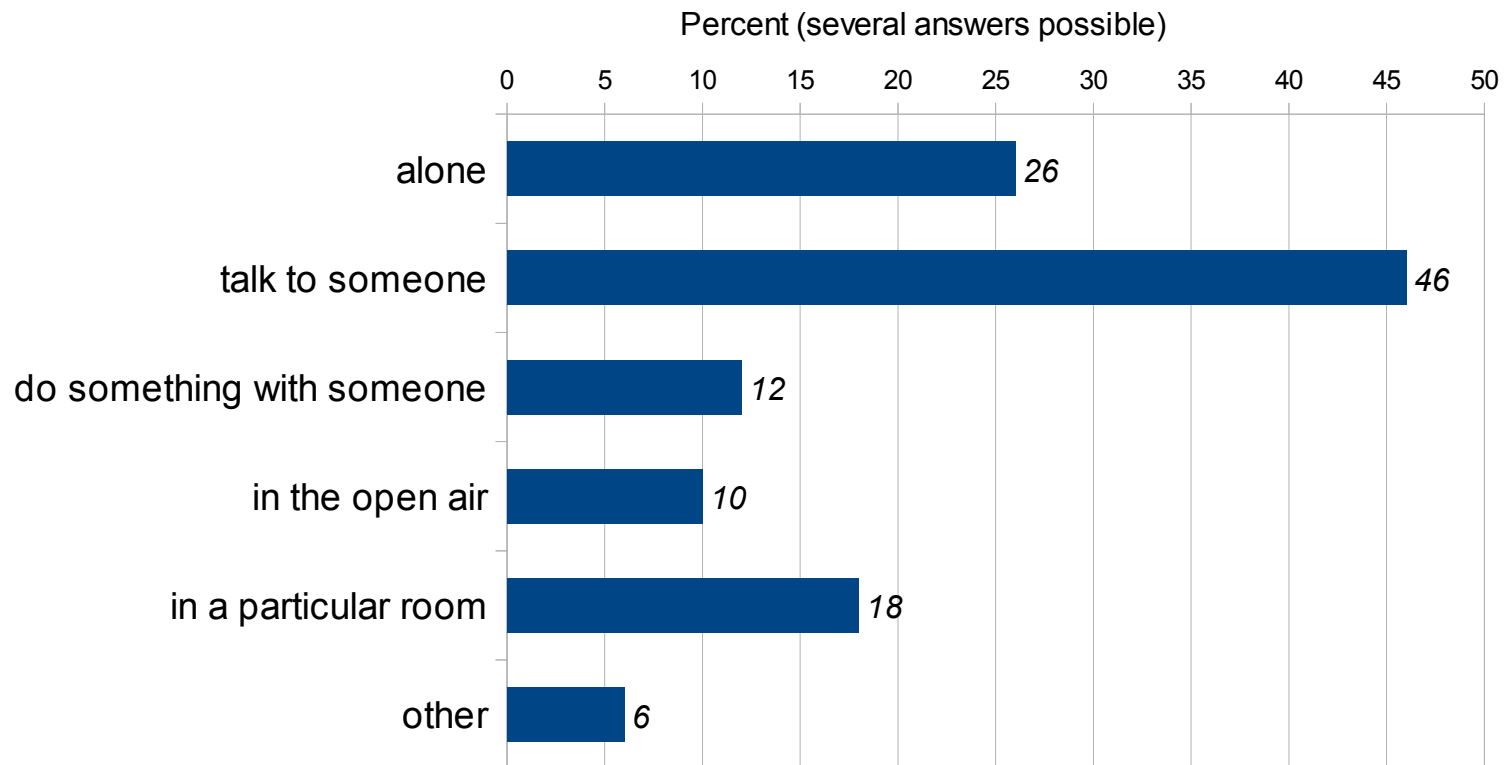


# Expectations towards the Clinic

Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg



Item ErwA3: How should this take place? (N=243)

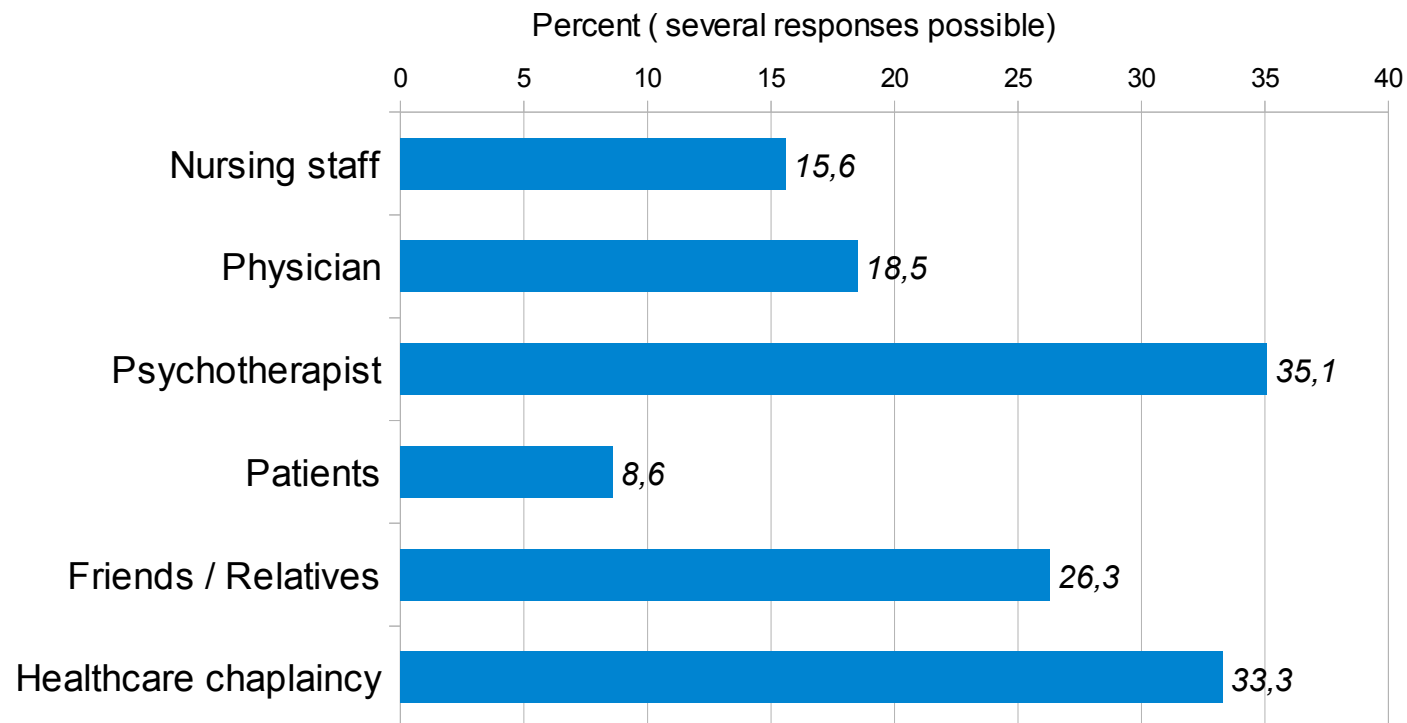


# Expectations towards the Clinic

Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg



Item ErwA2: Who should address issues of faith / spirituality?  
(N=243)



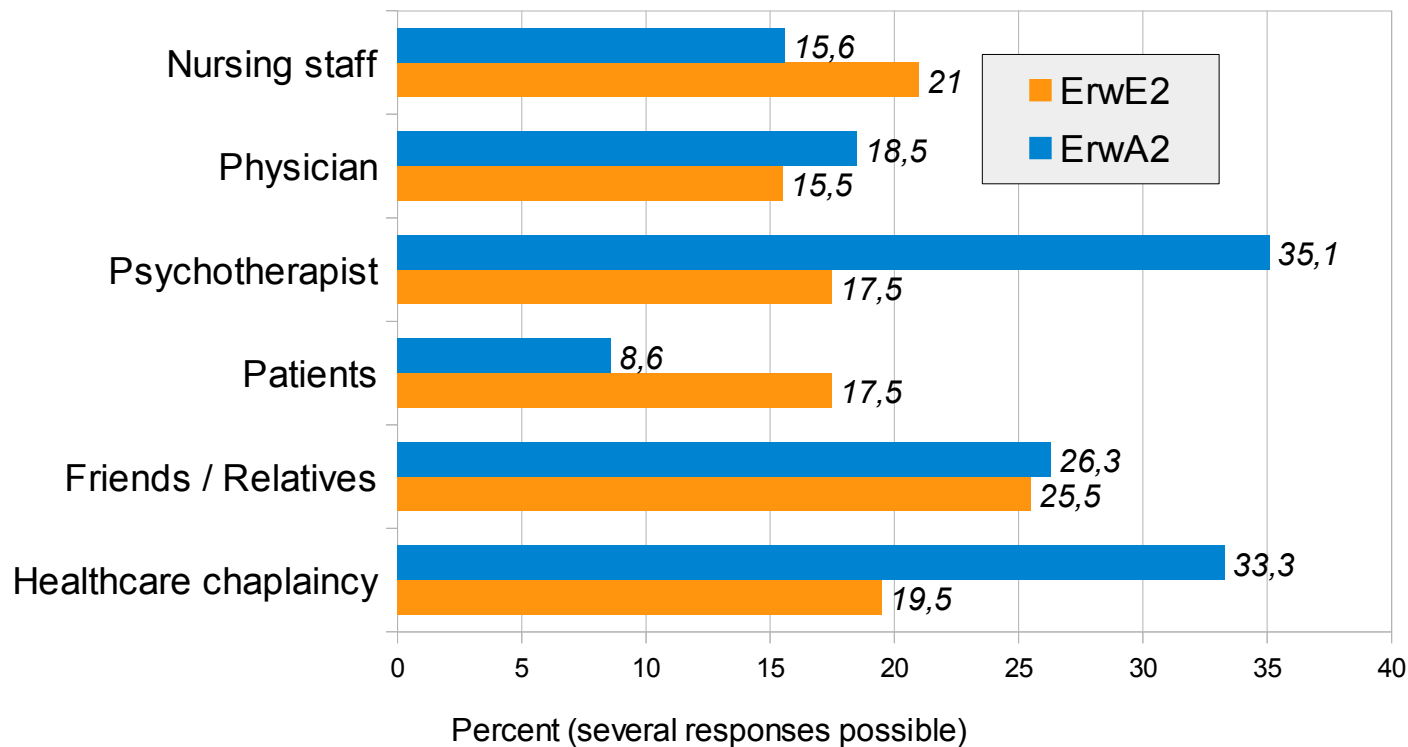
# Expectations and Experience in the Clinic

Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg



*At admission* (ErwA2): Who should address issues of faith / spirituality? (N=243)

*At discharge* (ErwE2): Who has supported or accompanied me in issues regarding faith / spirituality? (n=221)





## **Sex, level of education and diagnosis:**

minor group differences

### • **Age Groups:**

only „60+ years“ had some higher values  
on more religious scales

→ consistent with many studies

### • **Self-rating as religious and/or spiritual (or not)**

creates four significantly different groups:

R+S+, R+S-, R-S+, R-S-



- A considerable amount of patients does have religious or spiritual attitudes, needs and expectations which might be adequately addressed
- Some aspects (search for meaning, connectedness ...) are relevant also for skeptical or agnostic rather non-religious persons
- *A more systematic and patient-centered approach to addressing issues of religiosity/spirituality seems to be advisable*
- A short “spiritual assessment“ during anamnesis might be very fruitful for a differentiated treatment

# Acknowledgements

Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg



UNI  
FREIBURG

## Part of the **Research Project** **“Spirituality in Psychiatry and Psychotherapy“**

Department of Caritas Science  
Faculty of Theology  
University of Freiburg

in **cooperation** with:

Prof. Mathias Berger M.D. (Freiburg)

Director of the University Clinic for Psychiatry and  
Psychotherapy Freiburg /Breisgau

Prof. Arndt Büssing, M.D. (Witten / Herdecke)

Prof. Klaus Baumann, S.T.D. (Freiburg)





# Thank you for your attention!

[franz.reiser@theol.uni-freiburg.de](mailto:franz.reiser@theol.uni-freiburg.de)

[www.caritaswissenschaft.uni-freiburg.de](http://www.caritaswissenschaft.uni-freiburg.de)

[anne.zahn@uniklinik-freiburg.de](mailto:anne.zahn@uniklinik-freiburg.de)

[www.uniklinik-freiburg.de](http://www.uniklinik-freiburg.de)



- Büssing, Arndt (2010): Spirituality as a Resource to Rely on in Chronic Illness: The SpREUK Questionnaire.  
In: *Religions* 1 (1), S. 9-17. DOI: 10.3390/rel1010009
- Büssing, A.; Balzat, H.-J.; Heusser, P. (2010):  
Spiritual Needs of patients with chronic pain diseases and cancer - Validation of the Spiritual Needs Questionnaire.  
In: *European Journal of Medical Research* 15, S. 266-273
- Lee, Eunmi; Baumann, Klaus (2013): German psychiatrists' observation and interpretation of religiosity/spirituality. In: *Evidence-based complementary and alternative medicine* (Article ID 280168), S. 1-8. DOI: 10.1155/2013/280168