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Introduction

The provision of spiritual care is receiving sustained attention in nursing and healthcare. Importantly the determination of core competencies for spiritual care has now been finalised and agreed in a European context (EPICC 2019). This *Erasmus Plus* project, led by several international experts in the field -*Enhancing Nurses and Midwives' Competence in Providing Spiritual Care through Innovation, Education and Compassionate Care* (EPICC) is crucial to the support of spiritual care in healthcare for the future by building a European network of nursing and midwifery educators, supported by other key stakeholders in order to share knowledge and skills in spiritual care and inform healthcare practice. Mirroring these international trends there is growing interest in supporting spirituality in healthcare in the Republic of Ireland (ROI). Arising from this, the Spirituality Research and Innovation Group (SRIG) was formed in the School of Nursing and Midwifery, Trinity College Dublin, in 2013. The group aims to provide a platform to develop a greater awareness about the provision of spiritual care in healthcare. Its purpose is to act as a forum to develop a deeper understanding of the concept of spiritual care and to provide a space to promote, debate and discuss the roles of spirituality in healthcare. SRIG host a local and national network in addition to a yearly international conference (spirituality in healthcare) and members work closely with EPICC towards the realisation of their ultimate goals.

Objective

To outline the progress of SRIG with regard to the Nurses and Midwives' Competencies developed by EPICC.

Method

- Review of national health policy and quality standards documents for inclusion of spirituality and EPICC competencies.
- Review of national nursing & midwifery regulatory documentation for Inclusion of spirituality and EPICC competencies.
- Review of nurse and midwifery registration programmes for Inclusion of spirituality and EPICC competencies.
- Full mapping exercise of competencies across 5 disciplines of BSc Nursing and Midwifery from theoretical and practical perspectives for 2009 and 2018 curricula.
- Purposeful selection of healthcare staffs' views of emerging competencies.

Mapping of 9 initial competencies

| Examples | | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|---|---|
| Recognise the importance of the spiritual dimension that sustains physical and mental well-being. | Value knowledge and experience as important elements in dealing with the patients/clients' and their families existential questions. | Be aware of own spirituality and use of self as a resource for spiritual care. | Acknowledge and respect the patients/clients' diverse cultural world views , beliefs and practices in relation to your own spirituality. | Demonstrate availability, authenticity and presence throughout the patients/clients' journey within a caring and compassionate relationship. | Respect the patients/clients' right to make informed decisions about their care and treatment in line with their spirituality. |
| Explicit direction that raises awareness | Explicit direction on person centered care. | Explicit direction on generic self awareness. | Explicit direction on awareness of diversity. | Explicit direction on relationship building. | Explicit direction on advocacy. |

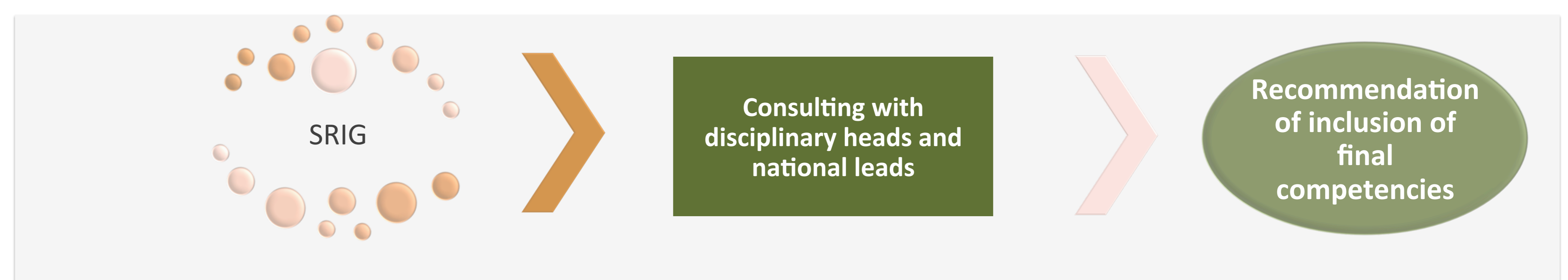
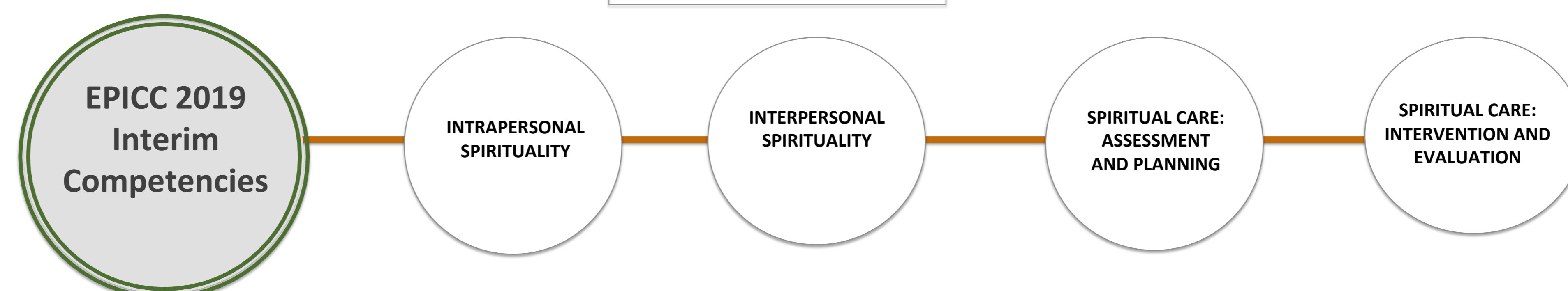
"Midwifery care combines art and science. Midwifery care is holistic, grounded in an understanding of the social, emotional, cultural, spiritual, psychological and physical experiences of women and based upon the best available evidence" "Midwifery values" [NMBI 2015a: 13].

"Assumes responsibility for having current knowledge in care of the older person (physical, psychological, cognitive, social and spiritual) and shares this knowledge" [NMBI 2015b: 23].

"If you have a conscientious objection based on religious or moral beliefs which is relevant to your professional practice, you must tell your employer" (NMBI 2014: 17).

"establish and maintains caring therapeutic interpersonal relationships with the older person/family [that are] respectful and sensitive to the older person and their family's cultural and spiritual diversities" [NMBI 2014b: 20].

"You should protect and promote the autonomy of patients: respect their choices, priorities, beliefs and values. Decisions to refuse care or treatment should trigger further discussion and be respected in the context of the person's capacity" [NMBI 2014b: 10].



Conclusions

The competency outcomes of the EPICC project are most closely reflected within guiding value statements and belief frameworks within professional guidance, rather than aimed at specific actions.

Many of the 8 original competencies were reflected within the guidance frameworks, although spirituality was not always explicit but encapsulated within an approach of person-centeredness & individualised person centred care.

While there is a clear commitment to the recognition of a person's spirituality in the context of holistic person centred care across most documents & a belief/ understanding of the importance of spirituality & spiritual care provision, there limited specific curricular inclusions or specific guidance from national guiding frameworks.

Recommendations

There are major gaps in relation to direction regarding spiritual care assessments & interventions.

Increase visibility of spiritual care competencies within programmes- need for a more explicit expression of the emerging competencies across curricula and national documentation.

Increase awareness and visibility in clinical practice around spiritual assessment, care planning & clinical decision making.

References

- Enhancing Nurses and Midwives' Competence in Providing Spiritual Care through Innovation, Education and Compassionate Care (EPICC 2019) NMBI (2015a) *Practice Standards for Midwives*. Dublin: NMBI.
 NMBI (2015b) *Working With Older People Professional Guidance*. Dublin: NMBI.
 NMBI (2014) *The Code of Conduct -and Ethics for Registered Nurses and Registered Midwives*. Dublin: NMBI.