Spiritually Integrated Counseling: Conceptualization

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Workshop Presented to CASC Conference
Hamilton, ON
April 15, 2015
Plan of the Day

- How to understand and evaluate spirituality in counseling
- How to assess spirituality in counseling
- How to address spirituality in counseling
- How to sustain ourselves in counseling
What is Spiritually Integrated Counseling?

- Holistic
- Pluralistic
- Integrative
Hidden Ingredients
Hey everybody, look out! It's one of those...
Um... you know... uhh, with the fire and stuff...

Despite its name, the thesaurus was quite often at a loss for words.
New York Cabbie

“We’re here to die, just live and die. I drive a cab. I do some fishing, take my girl out, pay taxes, do a little reading, then get ready to drop dead. Life is a big fake. Nobody gives a damn. You’re rich or you’re poor. You’re here, you’re gone. You’re like the wind. After you’re gone, other people will come. We’re gonna destroy ourselves, nothing we can do about it. The only cure for the world’s illness is nuclear war – wipe everything out and start over” (from Life Magazine).
Ways to Think about Spirituality

- Spirituality is a way of seeing
Sacred Core

God

Divine

Transcendent Reality
Sacred Core

Sacred Ring

God

Transcendent

Reality

Divine

Soul

Children

Nature

Time

Place

Meaning

Marriage
Sacred Qualities

- Transcendence
  - [There is an] ‘otherness’ [to religious experience. It is] ‘wholly other. . . quite beyond the sphere of the usual, the intelligible and the familiar, which therefore falls quite outside the limits of the canny” (Otto, p. 26).
Sacred Qualities

- Transcendence
- Boundlessness

“To see a World in a grain of Sand; And Heaven in a Wild Flower; Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand; And Eternity in an Hour” (William Blake)
Sacred Qualities

- Transcendence
- Boundlessness
- Ultimacy
The Varieties of the Sacred

- People

“God has a deep raspy voice – God is a jazz singer. She is plush, warm, and rosy – God is a grandmother. He has the patient rock of an old man in a porch rocker; He hums and laughs, he marvels at the sky. God coos at babies – she is a new mother. He is the steady, gentle hand of a nurse, the cool reassurance of a person pursuing his life’s work, and the free spirit of a young man wandering only to live and love life” (McCarthy, 2006).
The Varieties of the Sacred

- People
- Nature

“Whatever happens in the world to me or others, nature is still there, it keeps going. That is a feeling of security when everything else is chaos. The leaves fall off, new ones appear, somewhere there is a pulse that keeps going. The silence, it has become so apparent, when you want to get away from all the noise. It is a spiritual feeling, if we can use that word without connecting it to God, this is what I feel in nature and it’s like a powerful therapy” (p. 134).
The Varieties of the Sacred

- People
- Nature
- Virtues

“Where is God? God is found in the incredible resiliency of the human soul, in our willingness to love though we understand how vulnerable love makes us, in our determination to go on affirming the value of life even when events in the world would seem to teach us that life is cheap.”
The Varieties of the Sacred

- People
- Nature
- Virtues

- Relationships
  - “The relationship to a human being is the proper metaphor for the relation to God – as genuine address here is accorded a genuine answer” (Martin Buber, I and Thou)
The Varieties of the Sacred

- People
- Nature
- Virtues
- Relationships

- Arts and crafts
“For him the craft of building a boat was like religion. It wasn’t enough to master the technical details of it. You had to give yourself up to it spiritually; you had to surrender yourself absolutely to it. When you were done and walked away from the boat, you had to feel that you had left a piece of yourself behind in it forever, a bit of your heart. He turned to Joe. ‘Rowing,’ he said, ‘is like that. And a lot of life is like that too, the parts that really matter anyway’” (Daniel James Brown, 2013, pp. 214-215).
Frederick Buechner

“Listen to your life. See it for the fathomless mystery that it is. In the boredom and in the pain of it, no less than in the excitement and gladness: touch and taste your way to the holy and hidden heart of it because in the last analysis all moments are key moments, and life itself is grace”

(Buechner, 1987, p. 87)
Perceptions of Sacredness: Results of a National Survey

- “I see evidence of God in nature and creation” (78%)
- “I see God’s presence in all of life” (75%)
- “I sense that my spirit is part of God’s spirit” (68%)
- “I experience something more sacred in life than simply material existence” (76%)
- “I see my life as a sacred journey” (55%)
Ways to Think about Spirituality

- Spirituality is a way of seeing
- Spirituality is a magnet
The Sacred as a Magnet
(Mahoney et al., 2005)

- 100 adults in northwest Ohio

**Measures**
- Strivings a la Emmons, sacred and nonsacred
- Behavioral sampling of time and energy devoted to strivings

**Findings**
- More thoughts devoted to the sacred over prior 24 hrs.
- More behavior directed toward the sacred over 24 hrs.
- More time devoted to the sacred over prior 24 hrs.
Ways to Think about Spirituality

- Spirituality is a way of seeing
- Spirituality is a magnet
- Spirituality is an organizing force
The Sacred as an Organizing Force

“If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; it is therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? . . . But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee, nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary” (I Corinthians 12: 15, 17, 20-22).
Ways to Think about Spirituality

- Spirituality is a way of seeing
- Spirituality is a magnet
- Spirituality is an organizing force
- Spirituality is a stream
Cindy Videoclips

- ..\..\Ken Video Clips\Clips from Cindy\01 Discovery.mp4
- ..\..\Ken Video Clips\Clips from Cindy\02 Conservation.mp4
- ..\..\Ken Video Clips\Clips from Cindy\03 Struggle.mp4
- ..\..\Ken Video Clips\Clips from Cindy\04 Disengage.mp4
- ..\..\Ken Video Clips\Clips from Cindy\05 Rediscovery.mp4
- ..\..\Ken Video Clips\Clips from Cindy\06 Conservation 2.mp4
The Search for the Sacred

Discovery → Conservation → Conservational Spiritual Coping → Spiritual Struggle → Transformational Spiritual Coping

Threat, Violation, and Loss → Spiritual Disengagement

Socio-Cultural Context
Ways to Think about Spirituality

- Spirituality is a way of seeing
- Spirituality is a magnet
- Spirituality is an organizing force
- Spirituality is a stream

- Spirituality is an onion
Ways to Think about Spirituality

- Spirituality is a way of seeing
- Spirituality is a magnet
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- Spirituality is a stream
- Spirituality is an onion

- Spirituality is good and bad
In the Words of Jon Stewart

“Religion, it’s given people hope, in a world torn apart by religion.”
Positive Spiritual Coping: Benevolent Spiritual Appraisals

“I was told by the swamis early in my study of Vedanta that disability was present in my life so that I could grow in new ways and progress along the path to God consciousness. . . This life is riddled with physical frustrations but wealthy with opportunities for spiritual growth” (Nosek, 1995, Hindu woman disabled with neuromuscular disorder)
Positive Spiritual Coping: Spiritual Support
Positive Spiritual Coping: Spiritual Support

“I’m speaking to my higher power, my God. And I give thanks to that power. It has been a source of strength. You know, it’s like tapping in to some sort of power source that I can recharge my batteries” (Siegel & Scrimshaw, 2002).
Positive Spiritual Coping: Active Spiritual Surrender

“I pray a lot. I gave it to God because I couldn’t deal with it, it was too stressful for me. It was like a load had been lifted off of me. I didn’t have to worry about that because I knew it was in God’s hands. . . Before I thought I was running everything, but I realized that it’s God that’s in charge of everything about me (Siegel & Scrimshaw, 2002).
Positive Spiritual Coping: Seeking Support from Religion

“The pastor there, he doesn’t look down on a person because of HIV. . . And when the congregation prays, they pray for all different kinds of thinigs without saying anyone in particular and they also pray for people what are HIV positive and who have AIDS. So that’s my support group really, is my church” (55-year old Puerto Rican Baptist woman, Siegel & Scrimshaw, 2002).
Positive Spiritual Coping: Spiritual Purification

“In the beginning when I was first diagnosed and everything, I was angry at myself. . . Through the spiritual part of my life, I’ve gotten to be understanding that I have to forgive myself and I have to forgive him (the man that infected me), and God forgives both of us” (Siegel & Scrimshaw, 2002).
Positive Spiritual Coping: Quantum Change in Men

- Wealth
- Adventure
- Achievement
- Pleasure
- Respect

- Spirituality
- Personal peace
- Family
- God’s will
- Honesty
Positive Spiritual Coping: Quantum Change in Women

- Family
- Independence
- Career
- Fitting in
- Attractiveness
- Growth
- Self-esteem
- Spirituality
- Happiness
- Generosity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Religious Coping with Positive Health Outcomes</th>
<th>Number of Studies</th>
<th>Cumulative Effect Size</th>
<th>Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
<td>.33*</td>
<td>.30 to .35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Religious Coping with Negative Health Outcomes</th>
<th>Number of Studies</th>
<th>Cumulative Effect Size</th>
<th>Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>38</td>
<td>-.12*</td>
<td>-.14 to -.10</td>
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Spiritual Meditation among Patients with Vascular Headaches
(Wachholtz & Pargament, 2005)

- 83 college students with vascular headaches according to criteria of the International Headache Society (1988)
- Random assignment to four groups
  - Spiritual Meditation (e.g., “God is peace,” “God is joy”)
  - Internally Focused Secular Meditation (“I am content,” “I am joyful”)
  - Externally Focused Secular Meditation (“Grass is green,” “Sand is soft”)
  - Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Practice technique 20 minutes per day for four weeks
- Assess changes in headache frequency, pain tolerance, affect, headache control efficacy
Headache Occurrence Prior to and during the Intervention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP</th>
<th>Time 1</th>
<th>Time 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Meditation</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Secular</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Meditation</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxation</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The graph illustrates the trend of headache occurrence over time for different groups using various interventions.
Diary Analyses of Headache Occurrence by Group and Time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Headaches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day 1-5</td>
<td>Spiritual Meditation</td>
<td>.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internal Secular</td>
<td>.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 6-10</td>
<td>External Meditation</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relaxation</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 11-15</td>
<td>Spiritual Meditation</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internal Secular</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 16-20</td>
<td>External Meditation</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relaxation</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 21-25</td>
<td>Spiritual Meditation</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internal Secular</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 26-30</td>
<td>External Meditation</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relaxation</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pain Tolerance by Group and Time
Migraine Specific Quality of Life by Group and Time
Spiritual Problems

- Religious struggles
A Definition of Religious Struggles

- Religious struggles refer to experiences of tension, strain, and conflict about spiritual matters within oneself, with others, and with God.
Three Types of Religious Struggle

- Supernatural
Divine Struggles

“I’m suffering, really suffering. My illness is tearing me down, and I’m angry at God for not rescuing me, I mean really setting me free from my mental bondage. I have been dealing with these issues for ten years now and I am only 24 years old. I don’t understand why he keeps lifting me up, just to let me come crashing down again” (undergraduate dealing with bipolar illness).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Divine Struggle Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Felt as though God had let me down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt angry at God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt as though God had abandoned me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt as though God was punishing me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questioned God’s love for me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonic Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Felt tormented by the devil or evil spirits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worried that the problems I was facing were the work of the devil or evil spirits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt attacked by the devil or by evil spirits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt as though the devil (or an evil spirit) was trying to turn me away from what was good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Three Types of Religious Struggle

- Supernatural
- Intrapersonal
“Imagine a happy group of morons who are engaged in work. They are carrying bricks in an open field. As soon as they have stacked all the bricks at one end of the field, they proceed to transport them to the opposite end. This continues without stop and everyday of every year. One day one of the morons stops long enough to ask himself what he is doing. He wonders what purpose there is in carrying the bricks. And from that instance on he is not quite as content with his occupation as he had been before. I am the moron who wonders why he is carrying the bricks” (in Yalom, 1980, p. 419, suicide note).
Moral Struggle Items

Wrestled with attempts to follow my moral principles

Worried that my actions were morally or spiritually wrong

Felt torn between what I wanted and what I knew was morally right

Felt guilt for not living up to my moral standards
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>R/S Doubt Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Struggled to figure out what I really believe about religion/spirituality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt confused about my religious/spiritual beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt troubled by doubts or questions about religion or spirituality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worried about whether my beliefs about religion/spirituality were correct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questioned whether life really matters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt as though my life had no deeper meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questioned whether my life will really make any difference in the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had concerns about whether there is any ultimate purpose to life or existence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Three Types of Religious Struggle

- Supernatural
- Intrapersonal
- Interpersonal
**Interpersonal Struggle Items**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Felt hurt, mistreated, or offended by religious/spiritual people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt rejected or misunderstood by religious/spiritual people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt as though others were looking down on me because of my religious/spiritual beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had conflicts with other people about religious/spiritual matters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt angry at organized religion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Spiritual Problems

- Religious struggles
- Small gods
Small Gods

- The Grand Old Man
- The God of Absolute Perfection
- The Heavenly Bosom
- The Resident Policeman
- The Distant Star
- The God in Retirement
God Sanctioning Violence
(Bushman et al., 2007)

- Participants read story about man traveling in the land of Benjamin with his wife. A mob attacked the host’s home and the wife was raped and killed.
- Half the participants then read commandment from God to seek vengeance, and other half did not.
God Sanctioning Violence (cont)

- Those who read the violence passage with the divine instruction to seek vengeance were more likely to display physical aggressiveness in the study (inflicting ostensible partner with loud levels of noise).

- Those who believed passage was from Bible were also more likely to be physically aggressive.
Spiritual Problems

- Religious struggles
- Small gods
- False gods
Alcohol as a False God

“As my alcoholism progressed, my thirst for God increasingly became transmuted into a thirst for the seemingly godlike experiences that alcohol induced. Alcohol gave me a sense of well-being and connectedness – and wasn’t that an experience of God? Alcohol released me from the nagging sense that I was never good or competent enough – and wasn’t that God’s grace? Alcohol dissolved my worries about the future, allowing me to live in the present – and wasn’t that a divine gift? At my core there was a thirst, a thirst for whatever would fill the emptiness” (Nelson, 2004, p. 31).
Spiritual Struggle as a Predictor of Addiction
(Caprini & Pargament, 2008)

- 90 freshmen complete measures of addiction and spiritual struggles at three points in time over first year of college
- After controlling for neuroticism, social support, and global religiousness, spiritual struggles predict greater likelihood of developing 11 of 15 types of addictive behaviors, including
  - Gambling
  - Food starving
  - Prescription and recreational drugs
  - Sex
On self-worship: Kaiser Wilhelm

“You have sworn loyalty to me. That means, children of My guard, that you . . . have given yourself to Me, body and soul. . . It may come to pass that I shall command you to shoot your own relatives, brothers, yes, parents – which God forbid – but even then you must follow My command without a murmur” (Massie, 2003, p. 4)
Spiritual Problems

- Religious struggles
- Small gods
- False gods
- Jealous gods
Spiritual Problems

- Religious struggles
- Small gods
- False gods
- Jealous gods

- Lack of spiritual discernment
Spiritual Problems

- Religious struggles
- Small gods
- False gods
- Lack of spiritual discernment

- Spiritual compartmentalization
Spiritual Problems

- Religious struggles
- Small gods
- False gods
- Lack of spiritual discernment

- Spiritual compartmentalization
Integrated vs. Dis-Integrated Spirituality

The effectiveness of the search for the sacred lies not in a specific belief, practice, emotion, or relationship, but in the degree to which the individual’s spiritual pathways and destinations are well-integrated, working together in synchrony with each other. At its best, spirituality is defined by pathways that are broad and deep, responsive to life’s situations, nurtured by the larger social context, capable of flexibility and continuity, and oriented toward a sacred destination that is large enough to encompass the full range of human potential and luminous enough to provide the individual with a powerful guiding vision. At its worst, spirituality is defined by pathways that lack scope and depth, fail to meet the challenges and demands of life events, clash and collide with the surrounding social system, change and shift too easily or not at all, and misdirect the individual in the pursuit of spiritual value (Pargament, 2007).
Critical Elements of Spiritual Integration

- Guiding Transcendent Vision
- Differentiation
- Integration (balanced and discerning)
- Flexibility and Continuity
- Benevolence
“Continue on, for this seemingly disjointed wandering is the way of imperfection. By the end of this journey, the jarring notes, spatial dissonances, and cultural cacophonies will blend together into a sort of symphony, a chorus of separate, distinct and sometimes off-key voices harmonizing into a whole” (1993, pp. 10-11).
Ways to Think about Spirituality

- Spirituality is a way of seeing
- Spirituality is a magnet
- Spirituality is an organizing force
- Spirituality is a stream
- Spirituality is an onion
- Spirituality is good and bad
“As one stands face to face with the ultimate realities of life and death, religion and theology tend to come alive. Meaning tends to outstrip symbol and we have to seek for new words to express the new ideas which come surging in. Among these ideas we frequently find the sense of contact with that ultimate reality to which we give the name of ‘God’” (Boisen, 1955, p. 3).
Languages of Science and Spirituality

- Empiricism
- Individualism
- Exploration
- Agency
- Pragmatism
- Conservation

- Faith
- Love
- Humility
- Surrender
- Mysticism
- Transformation
Basic Assumptions

- We are spiritual as well as psychological, social, and physical beings
- Spirituality is not fully reducible to other psychological, social, and physical processes
- Spirituality adds a vital dimension to life, for better or worse
- Counseling that fails to integrate spirituality is incomplete