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Models of Psycho-Spiritual Care: Responding to the Spiritual Needs of Our Contemporaries

Addressing spiritual issues in psychotherapy is relatively new, but members of faith-based communities have been doing this for ages. For centuries, they have provided pastoral care to believers interested in spiritual growth as well as support in facing personal problems; today, some of these are considered to be psychological issues, sometimes they even include mental illness. Nowadays, pastoral care provided by members of faith-based communities is rooted more and more in contemporary clinical and pastoral education[1]. Spiritual direction, spiritual formation, and recently pastoral counseling are approaches that have developed within many religious traditions and are focused on helping believers to deepen their relationship with the Sacred. Presently, there are multiple ways in which spirituality is being integrated into clinical work. This is called pastoral integration and means bringing together the psychological and theological dimensions of both in order to provide a more complete possibility of insight and growth for the client. Generally speaking, pastoral counseling refers to the attempt to provide this integration. In fact, this field is very broad and contains a wide array of perspectives and modalities[2].

People come to any of these places of care with similar concerns: they struggle or suffer and want to make sense out of it spiritually. Although various approaches can address these issues, they differ in what they each emphasizes. Pastoral counseling and spiritual direction primarily work towards spiritual change or conversion in line with the fundamental values and beliefs of their religious framework. Spiritually integrated psychotherapy leans towards psy-

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1 H. Stone, *Pastoral counseling and the changing times*, "Journal of Pastoral Care" 53(1999), pp. 47-56.

2 R. Piedmont, T. Wilkins, *Understanding the Psychological Soul of Spirituality*, New York 2020, pp. 45-46.

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chological change where people are helped to draw on spiritual resources in order to address psychological and relational problems. Although spiritually integrated psychotherapy can foster spiritual growth, it is not its primary goal. Pastoral counselors and spiritual directors encourage people to draw directly from spiritual resources rooted in a particular religious faith, whereas psychotherapists are neutral toward any particular religious solution[3].

Spiritually integrated/oriented psychotherapy is the newest of the three approaches, and originated in psychological theory and research. Its primary goal is psychological change, and spiritual change or growth is seen as secondary[4]. In this context, clinical situations have been identified where spirituality becomes an important resource for coping with serious problems and traumatic situations such as undergoing a crisis of faith or searching for a deeper meaning in life as well as pursuing an increase of well-being and spiritual growth[5]. Interestingly, people increasingly prefer psychotherapists rather than religious ministers when they seek to foster their spiritual growth and development. In this article we will present a variety of approaches that help people deal with their spiritual issues. We will begin with more traditional ones such as spiritual direction and pastoral care to eventually dive into more modern approaches illustrated through a number of psychotherapies that intend to include spirituality as an integral part of their conceptualizing and healing of life challenges. We will conclude with our proposal of a general understanding of how spirituality can be present and addressed in the process of helping other persons grow through psychotherapy.

Spiritual direction

Spiritual direction, also known as spiritual guidance or companionship, and sometimes soul friendship, finds its roots in the 3rd century when it was practiced primarily by Christian monks and priests. Later, it thrived in all Christian traditions and was reflected in the writings of many well-known spiritual teachers. Among them, Ignatius of Loyola and Teresa of Avila are undoubtedly the most familiar[6]. Spiritual direction has been rediscovered in our times and has evolved so that it is now practiced in various spiritual traditions while still being primarily associated with the Catholic tradition. The primary goal of spiritual direction is to facilitate spiritual growth, but psychological change is also desirable.

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3 L. Sperry, *Distinctive Approaches to Religion and Spirituality: Pastoral Counseling, Spiritual Direction, and Spiritually Integrated Psychotherapy*, in: *APA handbook of psychology, religion, and spirituality*, vol. 2: *An applied psychology of religion and spirituality*, ed. K. Pargament, Washington 2013, pp. 223-238.

4 K. I. Pargament, *Spiritually Integrated Psychotherapy. Understanding and Addressing the Sacred*, New York 1997, pp. 330-331.

5 *Spiritually oriented psychotherapy*, eds. L. Sperry, E. P. Shafranske, Washington 2005.

6 D. B. Perrin, *Studying Christian Spirituality*, New York 2007, pp. 282-283.

The meetings with one's spiritual director usually occur weekly or monthly and continue for a year or longer. Throughout this process, a commitment to actively engage in a life of prayer is made by the directee. (A fee may or may not be required). What distinguishes these meetings, especially from crisis interventions, is that they are planned. The role of the spiritual director is to be an objective point of reference for one's spiritual experiences offering his or her perspective on what the directee shares. Such a process takes time and for this reason some continuity and regularity of these encounters are essential[7].

Spiritual direction can be seen as the art of listening while keeping one's focus on the interior movements produced by the work of the Holy Spirit within the client's life story. It involves a director who accompanies persons called directees. It can sometimes take place in a group, but it is most commonly practiced in an individual relationship. The central theme in spiritual direction is the spiritual discernment of the ultimate meaning of events and circumstances in one's life in connection with God. The relationship in spiritual direction is based on the assumption that both director and directee are walking the same spiritual journey. Some say that spiritual direction presumes a moderate degree of psychological health and the relative absence of psychopathology[8].

Normally, spiritual direction includes instruction in prayer and other similar spiritual practices like meditation or contemplation as a focal point. Sometimes spiritual directors may refer directees with certain psychological problems to psychotherapists and will put the spiritual direction on hold until the therapy is successfully completed. Attempts at doing both things at the same time by the same professional, even well-trained, remain disputable[9].

All religious faiths are concerned about the spiritual growth of their members. Spiritual direction intends to help people to live a fulfilling and meaningful life within the context of their religious values while examining the role of the divine within their lives. Spiritual direction is characterized by a utilization of the techniques and rituals identified by a particular tradition engaged in fostering spiritual growth. What distinguishes spiritual direction from a more integrative, psychotherapeutic approach is its goal. Whereas in spiritually integrated therapy, the goal is to help clients better respond to the psychosocial demands of their lives, in spiritual direction the goal is to define the directee's objective within their faith journey. Spiritual direction relies on the classical

[7] Ibidem, p. 283.

[8] L. Sperry, *Transforming self and community: Revisioning pastoral counseling and spiritual direction*, Collegeville 2002; L. Sperry, *Distinctive Approaches to Religion and Spirituality: Pastoral Counseling, Spiritual Direction, and Spiritually Integrated Psychotherapy*, op. cit.; G. Moon, *Spiritual Direction: Meaning, Purpose, and Implications for Mental Health Professionals*, "Journal of Psychology and Theology" 2002, pp. 264-275.

[9] G. G. May, *Care of Mind. Care of Spirit: Psychiatric Dimensions of Spiritual Direction*, San Francisco 1992, p. 14.

concept of grace, where it is understood that the directee is being led by God himself. Mixing these two approaches can become confusing for the client[10].

Pastoral care and pastoral counseling

In the past, pastoral care and pastoral counseling were often used interchangeably. Today, pastoral care refers to pastoral communication exercised through interpersonal relationships such as in visits to the sick. It may involve the use of natural counseling skills by the caring person, but it does not involve full-fledged therapy as is required in pastoral counseling. It can be seen as a form of authentic care taking place outside a formal counseling context[11].

Pastoral counseling is a complex form of pastoral communication involving a request from people seeking it. There are formal sessions, schedules, and fees involved similar to those in traditional psychotherapy, but for the most part, pastoral counselling is exercised by religious ministers with formal supervised training in the psychotherapeutic context. In pastoral counseling, a therapist's personal orientation in their understanding of the Sacred influences the process of engaging clients in a collaborative spiritual journey[12]. Sometimes it may include a text-based approach, e.g., the Koran, Hebrew Bible, or Christian Scriptures, where the therapist encourages believers to re-examine their religious beliefs as well as to involve themselves in particular rituals and activities[13] informed by these sacred texts. There are three forms of pastoral counseling in use: (a) brief situational single session counseling; (b) problem-solving counseling of two to five sessions; and (c) long-term counseling, called pastoral psychotherapy, often psychoanalytically oriented and focused on personality change[14].

Possible relationships between psychology and spirituality

The third way of helping people grow in their spirituality is called a spiritually integrated/oriented psychotherapy. A look at certain general methodological challenges that we will have to face while developing this modern approach is important here.

For helping professionals, who are spiritually sensitive, both theological and psychological dimensions are clearly intertwined and are difficult if not impossible to separate. Nonetheless, each set of concepts has its own characteristics and functions differently in one's mental life. In order to deal with this

[10] R. Piedmont, T. Wilkins, *Understanding the Psychological Soul of Spirituality*, op. cit., pp. 52-53.
[11] J. L. Snodgrass, D. McCreight, M. R. McFee, *To whom shall I refer?*, "Counseling Today" 57(2014), pp. 54-59.
[12] Ibidem.
[13] R. Piedmont, T. Wilkins, *Understanding the Psychological Soul of Spirituality*, op. cit., p. 46.
[14] D. Montgomery, *Pastoral Counseling and Coaching*, Monticello 2009.

appropriately, one would need to have training in both areas: psychology and theology. This combination of expertise can potentially facilitate therapeutic as well as pastoral conversations with the client. However, this would require many years of formation, is not very common and because there are different theological concepts across various denominations, finding a universal pattern that integrates theology and psychology remains greatly problematic. Nonetheless, spiritually sensitive therapists are often asked to provide explanations that make sense from the theological perspective of the particular client[15]. There are many options of how to correlate both areas of expertise to each other. Sperry and Mansager (2007) propose five different characteristics of any possible relationship between psychology and spirituality/theology. Their proposal is based on two considerations: (1) Are they similar or different (i.e., unique) domains? (2) Which one should have primacy in the therapeutic encounter? This last characteristic is holistic, which practically means that neither psychology nor spirituality has primacy, although they remain in some respect different[16].

The psychological and spiritual domains of human experience and development are essentially the same, but with the psychological having primacy. Viewed from this perspective, spiritual growth is linked to psychological growth and its social and interpersonal dimensions. In practice, it means that by way of effective psychotherapeutic work and personality development, we will achieve sounder spirituality as well. In such a case, there is little need for direct spiritual intervention. This approach is the fruit of psychological reductionism present in the classical psychoanalytic view of Freud (1927/1995) or Rizzuto (1979). This reductionism is seen by examining the individual's representation of God that, according to the classical psychoanalytic view, reflects one's paternal representations[17].

The psychological and spiritual domains of human experience and development are essentially the same, but with the spiritual having primacy. As a common basis for psychology and spirituality, this would undoubtedly lead to spiritual reductionism, nonetheless, Jung would use this approach to some extent. He attempted to deal with religious images and processes and was at times accused of 'psychologizing theology,' or the opposite, of 'theologizing psychology'. Without any doubt, Jung developed an original approach to the psychology of religion. Some would even say that he himself is the founder of a new religion, based on natural terms. These kinds of discussions only show that Jung was keen to go back and forth between the two disciplines[18].

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15 R. Piedmont, T. Wilkins, *Understanding the Psychological Soul of Spirituality*, op. cit., p. 50.

16 A. Jastrzębski, *On the possibility of the psychology of spirituality*, "Counseling and Spirituality" 36(2017), no. 1-2, pp. 33-49.

17 L. Sperry, E. Mansager, *The Relationship between Psychology and Spirituality: An Initial Taxonomy for Spiritually Oriented Counseling and Psychotherapy*, "The Journal of Individual Psychology" 63(2007), pp. 359-370.

18 K. L. Becker, *Unlikely Companions. C. G. Jung on the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola*, Herefordshire and Surrey 2001, p. 5.

For instance, from the perspective of spirituality, the individuation process so important for Jung, especially through the encounter with the shadow, bears a striking resemblance to the passive night of the senses, which in the Christian tradition is a necessary prerequisite for mystical transformation[19].

The psychological and spiritual domains of human experience and development are different, though at times overlapping, with the psychological having primacy. Spiritual and psychological dimensions of human life are distinct realities. They can intermingle and the growth in one of them may be reflected in the other. In this approach, psychological development does not necessarily involve spiritual growth. Some would say that spiritual development depends on psychological development so that a person would have to develop sufficient psychological maturity to become able to undertake any spiritually-oriented endeavor. This remains a back-and-forth process and is represented, for instance, by an existential-humanistic approach to spirituality where psychotherapy would be conceived so as to embrace the spiritual dimensions of the human being. Here, that primacy belongs to psychology[20].

The psychological and spiritual domains of human experience and development are different, though at times they overlap, with the spiritual having primacy. In this approach, spirituality is seen as distinct from psychological development so that spiritual growth does not require psychological growth. Both spiritual and psychological growth can intermingle, but there have been saints who were not without apparent psychopathologies, as for example those of St. Theresa of Lisieux who despite her suffering from Separation Anxiety Disorder was able to develop a sound spiritual life[21]. This leads to a more general statement that pathology may occasionally serve to authenticate religious experiences[22]. The implication of such an approach is that both spiritual direction and regular psychotherapy are required. Examples of such an approach may be: transpersonal psychology; a theistic spiritual strategy for psychotherapy[23]; integrative spiritually-oriented psychotherapy[24]; spiritually oriented cog-

19 J. Ruffing, *Psychology as a Resource for Christian Spirituality*, "Horizons" 17(1990), pp. 47-59.

20 L. Sperry, E. Mansager, *The Relationship between Psychology and Spirituality: An Initial Taxonomy for Spiritually Oriented Counseling and Psychotherapy*, op. cit., p. 363.

21 P. C. Vitz, C. P. Lynch, *Thérèse of Lisieux From the Perspective of Attachment Theory and Separation Anxiety*, "The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion" 17(2007), pp. 61-80.

22 D. A. Helminiak, *Neurology, psychology, and extraordinary religious experiences*, "Journal of Religion and Health" 23(1984), pp. 33-46.

23 S. Richards, A. Bergin, *A spiritual strategy in counseling and psychotherapy*, Washington 1997; S. Richards, A. Bergin, *A theistic spiritual strategy for psychotherapy*, in: *Casebook for a spiritual strategy in counseling and psychotherapy*, eds. S. Richards, A. Bergin, Washington 2003, pp. 3-32.

24 L. Sperry, *Integrative Spiritually Oriented Psychotherapy*, in: *Spiritually oriented psychotherapy*, eds. L. Sperry, E. P. Shafranske, Washington 2005, pp. 307-329.

nitive behavioral therapy[25]; interpersonal psychotherapy from a spiritual perspective[26]; and Frankl's logotherapy[27].

The psychological and spiritual domains of human experience and development are different yet neither has primacy, nor is either one reducible to the other. Spirituality and psychotherapy are different, goal-oriented processes which strive toward their own ends. Depending on the client's concern, one applies either psychotherapeutically-oriented methods or spiritually-oriented ones. This would be a holistic orientation that moves adequately between psychotherapy and spiritual direction, appropriately addressing psychological or spiritual issues as they arise. In practice, it may mean for example combining elements of existential psychotherapy with spiritual accompaniment. Here, psychological and spiritual dimensions are two sides of an "inner self" with no sharp distinction between the psyche and the spirit, because both are seen as intimately linked. The holistic approach takes the view that conscious human awareness presents the link between spirituality and psychology. "Both spirituality and psychotherapy provide methods for exploring, deepening, and expanding consciousness"[28]. Both have to be in constant dialogue[29].

We have just discussed the possible relationships between psychology and spirituality, let us move on to illustrate these relationships with more practical examples.

Spiritually integrated/oriented psychotherapy

Spiritually integrated/oriented psychotherapy is a term that describes a variety of psychotherapeutic approaches which are sensitive to the spiritual dimension in human life. It is distinct from pastoral counseling and spiritual direction in its treatment focus on psychological problems. Although it draws from spiritual resources, it does so without restriction to any particular religion. Here, spiritual interventions such as prayer and meditation are also practiced and collaboration with or referral to clergy or a chaplain is supported[30].

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25 S-Y. Tan, W. B. Johnson, *Spiritually oriented cognitive-behavioral therapy*, in: *Spiritually oriented psychotherapy*, eds. L. Sperry, E. P. Shafranske, Washington 2005, pp. 77-103.

26 L. Miller, *Interpersonal psychotherapy from a spiritual perspective*, in: *Spiritually oriented psychotherapy*, eds. L. Sperry, E. P. Shafranske, Washington 2005, pp. 153-175.

27 V. E. Frankl, *The Will to Meaning. Foundations and Applications of Logotherapy*, New York 1988.

28 L. Sperry, E. Mansager, *Holism in psychotherapy and spiritual direction: A course correction* "Counseling and Values" 48(2004), p. 158.

29 J. M. Nelson, *Psychology, Religion, and Spirituality*, New York 2009; D. S. Browning, *Reviving Christian Humanism: The New Conversation on Spirituality, Theology, and Psychology*, Minneapolis 2010; J. L. Griffith, *Religion that heals, religion that harms: A guide for clinical practice*, New York/London 2010.

30 L. Sperry, *Spirituality in clinical practice: Incorporating the spiritual dimension in psychotherapy and counseling*, New York 2001.

It seems that there is no perfect model to integrate psychological and theological approaches. Therapists usually refer to spiritual concepts because they are spiritually sensitive themselves or because they are trained to address these issues either in response to client concerns or because they are interested in this dimension of human life. Nonetheless, it has to be noted that therapists should not practice outside of their sphere of competency and since spiritual training is often not part of their professional formation, addressing these issues can prove challenging as the complexity of the client's theological concerns may overwhelm the therapist's ability to manage them effectively. For many clinicians, spirituality comes down to a cultural variable, becoming more about understanding style than content[31].

Even if a therapist has expertise in both pastoral care and psychotherapy, there may be concerns about the development of a dual relationship. In such a case, it is of crucial importance that therapists provide clear information regarding the proposed treatment and its nature including the procedures, obligations, and expectations regarding outcomes. Even if clients adhere to a faith-based worldview, they may want to consult a therapist because of psychosocial issues and want to address them specifically from a psychological perspective. Sometimes they may wish to include their beliefs in the therapeutic process, but at other times they may not. Clients have the right to be assured that there will be no hidden religious agenda. In fact, too often changing between religious and psychological perspective in guiding a person can result in more confusion than real help, so it is rather desirable that one perspective is chosen in order to be professionally evaluated and supervised[32].

In practice, therapists actually use techniques commonly found in spiritual direction and pastoral care interventions such as scripture reading, prayer, and meditation as far as the goal remains addressing the basic psychological issues of infinitude, meaning, or worthiness, and as long as they are guiding their clients psychologically and not theologically. Thus, spirituality can become a medium through which psychotherapists can access more basic psychological motivations. One has to keep in mind this subtle and yet important distinction[33]. Many times, psychotherapy offers the client the means to initiate a spiritual quest, because in certain contexts, it addresses fundamental existential issues such as sense of meaninglessness, feelings of dissatisfaction, emptiness and matters of faith such as a desire for a more intentional spiritual practice[34]. Some people search for guidance from an expert in spiritual discernment to put their spiritual issues in order. In such cases, they may reach out to a pastor,

[31] R. Piedmont, T. Wilkins, *Understanding the Psychological Soul of Spirituality*, op. cit., p. 56.
[32] Ibidem.
[33] Ibidem, p. 58.
[34] L. Sperry, E. P. Shafranske, *Addressing the spiritual dimension in psychotherapy: Introduction and overview*, in: *Spiritually oriented psychotherapy*, eds. L. Sperry, E. P. Shafranske, Washington 2005, pp. 11-29.

rabbi, imam, spiritual director, or even to a spiritually oriented therapist. The majority seeks help in personal difficulties that are sometimes linked to spiritual longings or fears but also to conscious or unconscious neurotic religious or spiritual convictions that interfere with their life's goals as well as with their spiritual commitments. People search for the help of a therapist or a spiritual guide in order to obtain relief from suffering and orientation in moments of confusion, but also some orientation on their journey of spiritual self-transformation[35].

Some Examples of Spiritually Integrated/Oriented Therapy

There are many approaches that combine spirituality and psychotherapy. One of the most prominent examples is logotherapy developed by Viktor Frankl early in the twentieth century. Other humanist and existential approaches were always sympathetic to dealing explicitly with spiritual questions that were often framed in existential terms. A current psychotherapist, Kenneth Pargament (1997), has also undertaken the development and work of integrating psychotherapy and spirituality. Below, we present certain more recent examples of spiritually integrated therapies. They are all non-reductionist approaches, acknowledging the spiritual dimension of being human in their methodologies.

A psychoanalytic approach to spiritually oriented psychotherapy

Working with the spiritual dimension in the context of psychoanalysis means a high-risk venture into the unknown[36]. A spiritually oriented psychoanalytic approach would examine developmental factors of human beliefs in particular, but without negating the divine dimension. Such an attitude leads to exploring both psychological and spiritual trajectories as related, but also fundamentally distinct realities. In practice, it means taking non-reductionist, hermeneutic and open stance that allows listening to religious experiences with an empathic ear and avoiding any potential misunderstandings[37].

Spiritually oriented cognitive-behavioral therapy

The spiritually oriented CBT perspective offers a way of working with religious clients. To do so, SO-CBT uses certain therapeutic interventions such as cognitive disputation supported by religion's sacred scriptures in order to argue against irrational and self-defeating beliefs that, for the most part, are not in line with the sound religious doctrine. SO-CBT encourages the use of spir-

[35] A.-M. Rizzuto, *Psychoanalytic considerations about spiritually oriented psychotherapy*, in: *Spiritually oriented psychotherapy*, eds. L. Sperry, E. P. Shafranske, Washington 2005, pp. 31-50.

[36] L. Corbett, M. Stein, *Contemporary Jungian approaches to spiritually oriented psychotherapy*, in: *Spiritually oriented psychotherapy*, eds. L. Sperry, E. P. Shafranske, Washington 2005, pp. 51-73.

[37] E. P. Shafranske, *A psychoanalytic approach to spiritually oriented psychotherapy*, in: *Spiritually oriented psychotherapy*, eds. L. Sperry, E. P. Shafranske, Washington 2005, p. 106.

itual imagery to decrease anxiety and the use of scripture reading or prayer sessions as well as cognitive homework. The cognitive disputation of problematic beliefs may be exercised at either a general or specialized level. At the general level one's beliefs are challenged without challenging any particular religious views. Using the specialized level requires that the therapist possess a relatively good knowledge of the client's belief system so that they are able to dispute those religious beliefs or practices that are both dysfunctional and incongruent with client's beliefs[38].

A humanistic approach to spiritually oriented psychotherapy

Humanistic psychology has generally accepted spirituality as an integral part of human life. For example, Abraham Maslow promoted spirituality as a major positive component of the humanistic approach. Conversely to Freud, Maslow was convinced that it would be abnormal for a person not to be preoccupied with certain religious or spiritual issues. The humanistic approach to spiritually oriented psychotherapy is based on two assumptions: (1) that humans are often suffering at the level of the soul and (2) that psychotherapeutic relationship is a place where people's souls can be nurtured and healed. In fact, love is the most powerful healer of the suffering soul. In the therapeutic relationship love takes the form of empathy, respect, honesty, caring, and acceptance. These factors make "soul-to-soul" contact possible and have a profound effect on the client's inner life. Many prominent psychologists like Carl Jung, William James, Viktor Frankl, Gordon Allport, Abraham Maslow, Irvin Yalom, among others, were convinced that psychopathology sometimes has its roots in spiritual conflicts and deprivations[39].

Interpersonal psychotherapy from a spiritual perspective

Whereas traditional interpersonal psychotherapy is silent on spiritual matters, the main principle of interpersonal psychotherapy conducted from a spiritual perspective (IPTS) is that psychological events reveal a more fundamental spiritual reality and that human psyche is linked to spiritual truth. The intention of IPTS is to address suffering and improve spiritual clarity through reshaping one's relationships, which are viewed as divine gifts offering an opportunity for spiritual growth and for learning spiritual lessons. For IPTS, spiritual reality is more fundamental than the psychological one so that when one suffers in relationships, there is an underlying spiritual reason. People can evolve spiritually experiencing the unity of the universe through the love experienced in relationships. This approach can be applied to people from any religion[40].

Theistic Psychology

Theistic psychology proposes a new and revised epistemology where one accepts nonmaterial realities that influence human behavior and religiously

[38] S-Y. Tan, W. B. Johnson, *Spiritually oriented cognitive-behavioral therapy*, op. cit., p. 81.

[39] D. N. Elkins, *A humanistic approach to spiritually oriented psychotherapy*, in: *Spiritually oriented psychotherapy*, eds. L. Sperry, E. P. Shafranske, Washington 2005, p. 140.

[40] L. Miller, *Interpersonal psychotherapy from a spiritual perspective*, op. cit., p. 153.

based spiritual practices as potential techniques for obtaining therapeutic change. However, the theistic approach has presented serious problems in understanding the scientific model because normally one does not employ metaphysical concepts in scientific models[41].

This approach is based on the assumption that science is not a neutral way of knowing reality; it has its own underlying, untested assumptions: a) that the world has an intrinsic orderliness to it; and b) that God has no role in this process[42]. These assumptions are responsible for a negative bias in science that is expressed in an a priori rejection of anything that is not physical or experimentally verifiable. Theistic psychology can attend to some aspects of psychological phenomena that conventional approaches may overlook and thus it can become a potentially valuable addition to psychology[43].

Theistic integrative psychotherapy

According to the theistic view of personality development, people who attempt to follow God's Spirit and accept universal moral principles are more likely to develop a healthy personality. They also feel close to God and experience a sense of strength, meaning, and fulfillment originating in their spiritual beliefs. Although therapeutic change can be facilitated through a variety of means, complete healing requires a spiritual process involving God's inspiration and love. This often involves a deep affirmation of one's eternal spiritual identity and worth, facilitated by prayer or other spiritual experiences. Such experiences are life-transforming events and often reorient one's values from a materialistic value system to a more spiritually oriented one. The consequence of these inner changes results in alterations in their lifestyle, leading to healthier behaviors as well as a lessening of psychological and physical symptoms[44].

Intensive Soul Care

In this approach soul and spirit are considered essential for the development of full personhood. The psychological and spiritual dimensions are two aspects of the inner self. No personal problem can be described as purely psychological so that any pathology can be conceptualized as a certain combination of soul suffering and spirit longing. The ISC therapist will be able to search for the spiritual implication of an apparently psychological problem and vice versa. Pathology should be understood in broader terms than DSM-5, and always include such elements as the human experience of isolation and aliena-

41 R. Piedmont, T. Wilkins, *Understanding the Psychological Soul of Spirituality*, op. cit., pp. 53-55.

42 B. D. Slife, J. S. Reber, G. T. Lefevor, *When God truly matters: A theistic approach to psychology*, "Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion" 23(2012), pp. 213-238.

43 Ibidem.

44 R. P. Scott, *Theistic integrative psychotherapy*, in: *Spiritually oriented psychotherapy*, eds. L. Sperry, E. P. Shafranske, Washington 2005, pp. 262-264.

tion, and a sense of meaningless and existential guilt, since all human experiences include both spiritual and psychological dimensions[45].

Integrative Spiritually Oriented Psychotherapy

In this approach, the clinician functions as both psychotherapist and spiritual guide. As an integrative approach, it is based on an integrated model of development and pathology that includes the biological, psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions, focusing on the comprehensive assessment of one's overall health status, including psychological strengths and defenses, as well as moral and spiritual development as exemplified in one's relationship with God, one's God-image, and one's spiritual practices in a spiritually supportive community. With healing as a goal, the therapist tries to be sensitive to both psychological and spiritual meanings in order to promote the processes of both the cure of symptoms and self-transformation through the use of various psychotherapeutic and spiritual tools[46].

Conclusions

Apart from traditional forms of spiritual care such as spiritual direction or, more recently, pastoral counseling, there is a growing need for the integration of spiritual issues and processes into a secular form of therapy. As the process of therapy unfolds, the counselor may choose to make certain interventions response to the client's spiritual concerns and experiences, in which case, the inclusion of spiritual content in the counseling process would be in reaction to problems brought up by the client. Most clients expect their counselors to do this. At some point in the counseling process, the client will very likely raise certain spiritual issues and expect counselors to be able to work with this material. In order to respond effectively to this demand, clinicians should actively seek to develop basic skills and competencies to be able to address these issues when they occur[47].

In this regard, the Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling (ASERVIC, 2009) has published a set of guidelines for counselors, which have to be mastered prior to deploying them in therapy; this is important in order to prepare therapists for addressing these types of issues before they occur[48].

Concluding, I would distinguish the following options with regards to the presence of spiritual issues found in therapy:

- Exclusively spiritual therapy (pastoral counselling): therapy which is exclusively focused on spirituality.

[45] D. G. Benner, *Intensive Soul Care*, in: *Spiritually oriented psychotherapy*, eds. L. Sperry, E. P. Shafranske, Washington 2005, pp. 291-292.

[46] L. Sperry, *Integrative Spiritually Oriented Psychotherapy*, in: *Spiritually oriented psychotherapy*, eds. L. Sperry, E. P. Shafranske, Washington 2005, p. 307.

[47] R. Piedmont, T. Wilkins, *Understanding the Psychological Soul of Spirituality*, op. cit., p. 51.

[48] Ibidem, p. 52.

- Spiritual process: a time of spiritual process within problem-focused therapy.
- Spiritual episode in therapy: a spiritual episode emanating from a spiritual discovery, insight, and challenge in someone's life and happening simultaneously with therapy.
- Spiritual intervention: a spiritual intervention in order to free the client from a certain blockage hindering the healing process. This might necessitate the intervention of a spiritual guide.
- Spiritual goal: such as when counseling's focal point is (or has become) the ultimate meaning of life.
- Spiritual perspective/understanding: a situation where only the therapist recognizes spiritual issues, paths and processes in the client's life.

The first option represents an approach that is entirely spiritually oriented. Both counsellor and client are aware of that dynamics and both agree to work with this dimension of human life which is faith, religiosity or spirituality.

The second option, spiritual process, may be an unexpected development in an otherwise routine, problem-focused therapy. In this context, both counsellor and client recognize that a life event, such as an unexpected death of someone close, needs to be immediately integrated into therapy as it presents a major issue to be dealt with here and now. It may be, for instance, a spiritually founded grieving process and may take from 5 to 8 sessions to work through. The third option, a spiritual episode, is a similar therapeutic phenomenon, but is less dramatic and less time consuming. It may take from 2 to 3 sessions. An example of this would be an abrupt spiritual discovery, a revelation, or an insight that needs to be integrated into the client's life.

The fourth option is spiritual intervention. The regular therapeutic work may be around trauma, but there is a spiritual doubt or obstacle that prevents the process from developing smoothly. Thus, one can imagine a situation when the therapist discerns that a spiritual or religious intervention may help the process even though the goal or focus of therapy or the intervention may not be religious or spiritual per se. In this event, resolving this spiritual issue may lead to the possibility of further healing. To do so, the counsellor either needs to be well-grounded in the spiritual tradition of the client, or would need to suggest the client ask for extra assistance from an experienced minister, priest, or other spiritual guide.

The fifth option is a spiritual goal. It means that either the client or therapist is aware that, in the final analysis, the entire therapy is spiritually oriented. One can say that in this situation, counseling has a spiritual horizon such as finding an ultimate meaning to life, but it is not the subject of direct discussion within the counseling session.

The last option is the spiritual perspective or understanding only on the part of the therapist. This means that the therapist is a spiritually sensitive and practicing person, but will never reveal it to the client as they never approach this question in therapy. Nonetheless, the spiritually sensitive therapist will

recognize spiritual issues, paths and processes in the client's life and will try to assist (*or* 'support') them indirectly. The ultimate spiritual horizon for a spiritually sensitive counsellor may simply be their faith, which may be expressed in praying for clients outside of the session without them being aware of this fact.

The above model can also be used to understand psychological issues present in the process of spiritual direction: punctually or more at length. Nowadays, it seems almost unavoidable that people seeking spiritual direction will not bring along certain psychological problems and will want to discuss them occasionally or more in depth with their spiritual directors. Some fundamental openness to do so as well as the awareness of one's professional limitations when a referral would be more beneficial for the client should underpin such encounters.

In early psychological approaches, scientists tried to find ways to connect metaphysical concepts with specific psychological dynamics. It is a well-known fact that Freud saw religious strivings and behaviors as mere expressions of underlying psychological processes related to basic primal needs. Thus, Freud understood theological content simply as one of many attempts at gratifying underlying unconscious tensions. Such an approach made religion seem understandable to scientists, but reduced it to unhealthy or immature psychological strivings. Although this approach exists to this day and its advantage is that it has established psychological models that offer useful interpretive frameworks, there are serious limitations to this perspective. A reductionist approach cannot be considered as contributing to the integration of the spirituality in psychology as it fails to appreciate the unique, non-reducible perspectives concerning the ultimate nature of being human. Surely, theologians and those interested in theological questions would argue that reductionism is an overly simplistic and naïve view of reality[49]. Whichever psychological approach helping professionals choose in order to provide optimum care for clients, therapists need to be open to using a range of tools in their therapeutic care of others which is not limited but should certainly include the spiritual dimension of being human.

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Models of Psycho-Spiritual Care: Responding to the Spiritual Needs of Our Contemporaries

Summary

Spiritual development has been an important issue in the lives of many people since the dawn of humanity. In order to achieve their goal of greater

[49] R. Piedmont, T. Wilkins, *Understanding the Psychological Soul of Spirituality*, op. cit., pp. 48-49.

spiritual maturity, they often asked help from a person they considered to be more spiritually advanced than themselves. With the beginnings of Christianity, this human propensity became even more pronounced and formalized, taking the shape of spiritual guidance in some form, which, over periods of both growth and decline, has recently come to resurgence in popularity. Today, there are also a significant number of people who seek professional help from therapists in resolving psychological issues and who, at the same time, would also like to use their personal spiritual resources to help them reach healing. Thus, a growing need for spiritually integrated psychological counseling has arisen. These developments require a better understanding of both the spiritual processes and the manner of helping people grow spiritually through the door of psychological counseling in some form. This article is a survey of the literature that presents a broad range of models to meet spiritual needs of modern people. Presenting such a variety of approaches is an attempt to widen the scope of what is offered as therapeutic assistance for spiritually sensitive individuals. In the conclusion, the author proposes new modalities for the inclusion of spiritual content in the counseling process.

Keywords: spiritual direction, pastoral counseling, spirituality, psychotherapy, integration.

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