Developing Spiritual Awareness and Enhancing Integration Skills in Supervision

Terminology

By Bill Van Schie
Terminology 1 - SPIRITUALITY

“Spirituality is about restoration, about peace of mind, about courage and purpose, and about unity with the Transcendent.

It helps make sense of life, assists in the choice of values, establishes absolutes, determines what is right or wrong, and makes decisions on lifestyle and plans towards a destiny the future.

Spiritual and psychological aspects of human functioning are inextricably related. They require careful reflection.”

(P Henry - 2003, p 119).
Terminology 2 - Psychotherapy: (Phil Henry – 2003)

“The helping relationship of the psychotherapist and the person begins within the experience of confusion about the person’s behaviour, mental processes, moods, and inability to cope and relate in work and / or relationships.

The goals of psychotherapy relate to awareness, the reduction of conflict, integration within, increased ability, a willingness to function in love and work, and an increase in normality and ego control.

The attitude of the psychotherapist is to heal or cure, to comprehend and solve mystery, and to help the person to find peace and personal fulfilment.”
“Clinical supervision can be defined as “a process whereby a person in a supervisory role facilitates the professional growth of one or more designated supervisees, to help them attain knowledge, improve their skills, and strengthen their professional attitudes and values as they provide clinical services to their clients” (Cohen, 2004, p. 3).
Worldview refers to our core beliefs, our presuppositions which influence all our other beliefs and interpretation of our world.

Worldview includes theological understanding, philosophy, morality and values.

Our worldview will influence which of the counselling theories we are drawn to, and which we resist.

Conscientious Christian counsellors need to understand how their clinical practice is drawn from a theoretical position and how the foundations of that theory articulate with theology.
World Views

“World views are like sand at a picnic, they get into everything”

Bevan and Kessels (1994)
Terminology 5 - Integration -

“Integration simply refers to the process which incorporates and brings together two different disciplines, namely psychotherapy and spirituality. The issues of integration must be considered and appropriately addressed by the therapist. Initially, these relate to the therapist’s worldview, behaviour, training, practice and ethics.

Phil Henry (2003 P119)
Integration Approach to Spirituality/Psychology

1. Eradication

- **Freud** – hostile to Christianity, restrictions cause issues, we need to free patients from restrictions.
- Religious faith is seen as being the source of the clients problem either in whole or in part.
- It is the goal of therapy to eradicate religious values and replace them with another system. Freud referred to religion as The “delusion of the masses”
- **Consent** – eradicate Religious faith is seen as normal
- **Effectiveness** – denies clients rights, and world view
- **Result** - Spirituality a taboo subject, is to be dismissed
2 - Avoidance

- **Avoidance** – Counsellor takes the conversation in another direction, minimizing the importance of these issues for counselling, refusing to acknowledge client’s efforts to discuss them, or in any other way discourages or postpones dealing with them.
- **Competence** – non religious, unqualified to deal with
- **Consent** – fear to proselytise, fear to impose values
- **Effectiveness** – irrelevant to core identity? Fear based?
- **Result** – Not deal with the whole person. Limits effectiveness.
The Counsellor makes him/her self aware of the spiritual assumptions underpinning the clients worldview that may effect positively or negatively the client’s issues or therapy.

The counsellor is aware of his/her own spiritual assumptions that may effect the therapeutic relationship and the direction of therapy.

- **Competence** – Can be used by religious and non religious
- **Consent** – avoids proselytising, respects others values
- **Effectiveness** – Is core relevant. Uses client’s resources.
- **Result** – Deals with the whole person. Most effective.

Is becoming best practice today
Integration Approach to Spirituality/Psychology

4 - Integration

“The issues of integration must be considered and appropriately addressed by the therapist. Initially, these relate to the therapist’s worldview, behaviour, training, practice and ethics.” - Phil Henry (2003)

- **Competence** – Aware of psychology, theology, spirituality, multicultural issues that are underlying counselling
- **Consent** – Respect clients world view, works with spirituality resources of the client
- **Effectiveness** – Client’s choice, use assessments, can use holistic resources
Our Dilemma

Approaches:
- Eradication
- Avoidance
- Multiculturalism Sensitive
- Integration

Dilemma

For many years many have been taught to avoid and exclude any spiritual discussions in the counselling room. Yet now with multicultural sensitivities, (indigenous, Muslim, etc) best practice is requiring us to take their, and our, spirituality into account.

How do we do that?
What are the ethical guidelines?
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Awareness Competencies

By Bill Van Schie
Integration Competency - Vietten & Scammel (2014)

1. Aware Spirituality & Religion Importance

Competency - Psychologists view spirituality and religion as important aspects of human diversity, along with factors such as race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, disability, gender, and age.

- Do not work from ignorant assumptions.
- Be aware that understanding the client’s spirituality will inform assessment, diagnosis, treatment planning and therapeutic interactions.
- Understand how client’s multiculturalism effects their mental and emotional well being.
- Treat the person in a holistic way

Supervisors must know their supervisees well, including supervisees tendencies regarding the use of spirituality in their work. (Munson 2002)
2. Spirituality & Religion Overlap

Competency: Psychologists can describe how spirituality and religion can be viewed as overlapping yet distinct constructs.

- **Religion** refers to an affiliation, a search for significance with an organisation guided by shared beliefs and practices.
- **Spirituality** refers to the journey people take to discover their essential selves and higher order aspirations, or a search for the sacred.
- Clients may show a shift away from external religion towards greater internal spirituality.
3. Aware of Diverse Forms of Spirituality

Competency: Psychologists know that many diverse forms of spirituality and religion exist, and explore spiritual and religious beliefs, communities, and practices that are important to their clients.

- We need to learn more details about our client’s spirituality.
- We can learn by consulting the experts in a given religion.
- We need to understand our client’s unique lived experience.
- We need to distinguish our client’s unique spirituality from her “labelled” background and tradition.

The supervisor must be keenly aware that some settings are more likely to involve situations regarding religious beliefs or spirituality. (Munson 2002)
4. Aware of Our Own Spirituality & Beliefs

Competency: Psychologists are aware of how their own spiritual or religious background and beliefs may influence their clinical practice, and their attitudes, perceptions, and assumptions about the nature of psychological processes.

- Our own SRBP’s have probably tinted our own world view
- Our on SRBP’s effect how we formulate cases, choice of interventions, language we use, clothes we wear and how we decorate our office

The supervisee and supervisor must be willing to acknowledge any ideological or philosophical issues that might interfere with their relationship and their ability to address spiritual issues in intervention. (Munson 2002)
5. Aware of Spirituality Development and Change Competency: *Psychologists recognize that spiritual or religious beliefs, practices, and experiences develop and change over the life span.*

- SRBPs metamorphose over a lifetime.
- **Casandra** = Consciousness transformational model – Noetic experience, Exploration, Finding a practice, Life as practice, I to we, Living deeply, service to community
- Conversion or commitment, intensification, and cycling
- Conversion = context of conversion, crisis, quest, encounter, interaction, commitment and consequences
- **The supervisor and supervisee must continuously process changing beliefs or values as a result of their experiences with clients. (Munson 2002)**
Summary - Awareness

1. Aware of the importance of the Spirituality discussion
2. Aware Spirituality and religion overlap and are also distinctive.
3. Aware of diverse forms of Spirituality
4. Aware of own Spirituality and religion
5. Aware the Spirituality is developing.
6. Aware of Spiritual Relating Problems

Any Questions?
Integration Competency Skills - Vietten & Scammel (2014)

7. Demonstrating Empathy, Respect & Appreciation

Competency: *Psychologists demonstrate empathy, respect, and appreciation for clients from diverse spiritual, religious, or secular backgrounds and affiliations.*

- Clients are **afraid** that religious views will be judged, minimised
- We need to **avoid any prejudice** against our client’s spiritual beliefs, experiences or practices.
- Studies show that therapists ability to be empathic, respectful, warm, genuine and appreciative of their clients is strongly correlated with **positive treatment outcomes**.

- *The supervisor must be comfortable with the use of a client’s beliefs and values in the intervention process in order to successfully aide the supervisee in this integration. The supervisor must protect clients by ensuring the supervisee does not impose his/her values on the client.* (Munson 2002)
8. Empathic Therapy

Competency: - *Psychologists are able to conduct empathic and effective therapy with clients from diverse spiritual or religious backgrounds, and affiliations.*

- Even with “colour blindness” deeply ingrained biases remain.
- We need to bring our *biases into the light* and be aware of them and consciously chose behaviours that are in our value alignment.
- In recognising, acknowledging and appreciating the unique *differentiating characteristics* clients bring into the room our therapy becomes more effective.

*The supervisor must monitor and oversee the supervisee’s willingness to accept the client’s perspective, perhaps particularly when their views conflict, and limit any effort to influence the views or beliefs, including religious orientation, of their clients.* (Munson 2002)
9. Spiritual History

Competency: -

_Psychologists inquire about spiritual and religious background, experience, practices, attitudes, and beliefs as a standard part of understanding a client's history._

- In making this a **part of our intake** we give the client the message that we value this aspect in their lives and will include it in our work together.
- A spiritual and religious assessment can provide extremely useful information in how our **client views the world** and her place in it. (Hodge 2005)
- After the initial brief inquiry a **visual assessment tool** can give a comprehensive overview of one's spiritual development.
9b. Spiritual History Tools

- **Spiritual Genogram**
  Marsha Wiggins Frame (200)
  Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, April 2000, Vol. 26, No. 2, 211-216, *University of Colorado at Denver*

- **Spiritual Life Map**

- **Spiritual Eco Map** – Hodge, D.R. (2004)

- **Spirituality in Supervision Scale**
  A DISSERTATION IN MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY
  Texas Tech University
10. Access Spiritual Resources

Competency:
Psychologists help clients explore and access their spiritual and religious strengths and resources.

- Discussions regarding the clients' attendances can help the client access their outer spiritual resources.
- Research indicates that inner or intrinsic aspects of religion and spirituality may have a larger influence on psychological resilience and well being.

- The supervisor can help the supervisee to determine how the client’s worldview and beliefs are impacting their situation. (Munson 2002)
11. Positive Spiritual Impacts

Competency:

*Psychologists are aware of clients' internal and external spiritual or religious resources, and practices that research indicates may support psychological well-being and recovery from psychological disorders.*

- Much empirical evidence has demonstrated beneficial relationships between various dimension of SRBPs and psychological health.
- SRBPs can provide significant sense of meaning and support in times of stress.
- Many aspects of SRBPs provide a sense of identity for adolescents and young adults in their identity development.
- SRBPs bring and increased sense of meaning, purpose, resilience, satisfaction and happiness.
12. Negative Spirituality Impacts

Competency - Psychologists can identify spiritual and religious experiences, practices, and beliefs that may have the potential to negatively impact psychological health.

- People sometimes use negative religious coping instead. OCD Scrupulosity, which is a feature of certain types of OCD involves obsessive religious doubts and fears and compulsive religious rituals.
- Over involvement in SRBPs is revealed by a lack of conscious choice and compulsive behaviour.
- Belonging to a cultic group with its isolation and “brain washing” techniques is also harmful.
- Unresolved religious and spiritual struggles.
13. Address Psycho/Spiritual Problems

Competency: Psychologists can identify and address spiritual and religious problems in clinical practice and make referrals when necessary.

- **Spiritual problems** such as, spiritual questioning, loss of faith, meditation related problems, disruptive or distressing mystical experiences, near death experiences, or leaving a spiritual teacher or path.
- **DSMIV** = recognised Psycho religious and the psycho spiritual
- We need to discuss spirituality with **openness and curiosity**
- Need to ask about clients **lived experience** of their spirituality
- We need to identify the problem source – **unhelpful belief**?
- **Look for imbalances** and potentially helpful counter beliefs
Integration Competencies – Vietten & Scammel (2014)

14. Differentiation Spirituality & Psychology

Competency: Psychologists understand that clients may have experiences that are consistent with their spirituality or religion, yet may be difficult to differentiate from psychopathological symptoms.

- Mental illness = a mental, behavioural or emotional disorder of sufficient duration to meet diagnostic criteria specified in DSM IV… resulting in functional impairment.” (NIMH 2013)
- Not all visions are hallucinations, not all ecstatic bliss is mania and not all existential distress is depression.
- **How differentiate?** – Eliminate medical, physical issues
  - Consider cultural context of the client
  - Examine level of functionality
  - What meaning is found in the experience
  - How coherent is your client regarding the experience?
  - What capacity of self-reflection is there?
  - What were the circumstances of the onset of the condition?
  - What is the duration of the condition?
  - Does the client have any knowledge or context about the experience?
  - Is the client’s experience in alignment with her social context?
15. Update Research Competency: Psychologists stay abreast of research and professional developments regarding spirituality and religion specifically related to clinical practice, and engage in ongoing assessment of their own spiritual and religious competency.

- **Much research** is being done into the benefits of religious and spiritual inclusion in therapy.
- Therapists need to **be abreast** with the growing literature.
- We can utilise the internet for information and courses.
- We need to assess our **own spiritual competence** regularly.
- **Use tools** to assess your own strengths and work areas.

*The supervisor must be aware of and acknowledge the research that demonstrates the benefits of spirituality for dealing with many life situations.* (Munson 2002)
16. Consult or Refer

Competency: Psychologists recognize the limits of their qualifications and competence in spiritual and religious domains, including their responses to clients' spirituality or religion that may interfere with clinical practice.

- We need to **recognise our own limits** and competency.
- Seek consultation from and **collaborate with other qualified clinicians or spiritual or religious sources**.
- As appropriate, **refer clients** to more qualified individuals.
- **Supervisors must recognize when a client should be referred to a clergy member or spiritual advisor or even a clinician who is better prepared to address the client’s needs.** (Munson 2002)
17. Identify Ethical Issues – Client Approach

Competency: Psychologists can identify legal and ethical issues related to spirituality and religion that may surface when working with clients.

- "Psychologists need to be aware of and respect cultural, individual and role differences, including those based on; age, gender, gender identity, race ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, socioeconomic status and consider these factors when working with members of such groups."
  - American Psychological Association

- "A social worker must be mindful of individual differences and diversity while treating each individual with care and respect.....We must respect their beliefs and their right to autonomous decision making"
  - NASW Code of Ethics..
Ethical Considerations – Counsellor Attitude

- **Self Aware** - We need to be aware of our own spiritual assumptions as they effect our view of the client, our therapeutic relationship and therapy outcomes.
- **Respect** - We need to respect religious and spiritual background in our clients in the same way as other multi-cultural considerations.
- **Discrimination** - We need to avoid spiritual discrimination and bias and the temptation to proselytise or value judge.
- **Limitations** - We need to work within the scope of our expertise alone and consult or refer where necessary.
- **Researched Benefits** - Rely on researched benefits when recommending spiritual practices.
Ethical Considerations - Client Awareness

- **Individuality** - A Counsellor must be mindful of individual differences and spiritual diversity.

- **Self-determination** – Counsellors must both respect and promote the right of clients to be spiritually responsible and to practice self-determination.

- **Care and Respect** – Counsellors must treat each individual and their personal values and beliefs with honour, care and respect.

- **Autonomy** - Counsellors must respect client’s beliefs and their right to autonomous decision making.

- **Empowerment** – Counsellors must value and practice empowerment and safeguard the client’s own growth.
Ethical Considerations – Spirituality Dangers

- **Avoid becoming a Spiritual advisor** – Counsellors are not trained for the role of spiritual advisor and must not assume this role, regardless of their personal values or convictions.
- **Avoid Fundamentalism** - Spirituality looks toward the contemplative, sensitive and transformation with the sacred, dealing with *uncertainty*. However, fundamentalism looks for certainty, providing answers and absolutism.
- **Self Spiritual Disclosure** – Spiritual self disclosure is fraught with danger because it can over impact a vulnerable client.
Ethical Considerations – PACFA Guidelines

- To respect and value the person, their humanity, worth and dignity
- To recognize and respect diversity among people, opposing discrimination and oppressive behaviour
- To respect the privacy of the client, preserving confidentiality
- To protect the rights of the client
- To maintain and develop competence within their professional lives, and
- To abide by the laws of the society in which they practice.
Summary - Integration Competency Skills

7. Able to demonstrate spiritual empathy, respect and appreciation
8. Able to conduct Empathic Therapy
9. Able to take a Spiritual history
10. Able to access spiritual resources in supervisee & client
11. Able to assess positive or negative spirituality impacts in client.
12. Able to exercise spiritual disciplines with supervisee.
13. Able to address Psycho/spiritual problems
14. Able to differentiate Psychological and spiritual.
15. Able to update ones knowledge and skills.
16. Able to consult and refer.
17. Able to identify ethical issues

Any Questions?
**Terminology & Context:**


Henry, Phil, Psychotherapy and Spirituality – practical issues … A paper presented at the PACFA Inaugural Conference


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Approaches:


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Jones, Joan W, Training Supervisors to Integrate Psychology and Christianity, *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*; Winter 2007; 26, 4; ProQuest Central, pg. 336


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