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Spirituality in Supervision: A Phenomenological Study

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ACCEPTANCE

This dissertation, SPIRITUALITY IN SUPERVISION OF COUNSELING; SPIRITUALITY IN SUPERVISION: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY, by DEBORAH KAY ROSS, was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Dissertation Advisory Committee. It is accepted by the committee members in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the College of Education, Georgia State University.

The Dissertation Advisory Committee and the student's Department Chair, as representatives of the faculty, certify that this dissertation has met all standards of excellence and scholarship as determined by the faculty. The Dean of the College of Education concurs.

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ABSTRACT

SPIRITUALITY IN SUPERVISION: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY
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The counseling profession has recognized the importance of spirituality in the counseling process (Hall, Dixon, & Mauzey, 2004; Kelly Jr., 1994; Miranti, 2007; Young, Wiggins-Frame, & Cashwell, 2007). As a component of providing quality care, Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development Counseling Competencies call upon counselors to respect clients' religious and spiritual beliefs as a matter of diversity (Arredondo et al., 1996). A supervisor's approach to spirituality shapes the nature not only of the supervision itself but also of the supervisee's practice (American Counseling Association, 2005). While authors (Aten & Hernandez, 2004; Bishop et al., 2003; Carlson et al., 2002; Frame, 2003; Isakson et al., 2001; Kilpatrick & Holland, 1990; Okundaye et al., 1999; Polanski, 2003; Stebnicki, 2006) have suggested that supervisors are already addressing spirituality in supervision, little data exist about the process of how supervisors actually incorporate spirituality in their supervision. In this manuscript, the author provides a conceptual consideration of effective ways to discuss spirituality in supervision with implications from Quaker practices, Native American spiritual teachings, and models of spiritual development from Sukyo Mahikari.

In the second chapter, the author presents the results of a qualitative phenomenological methodology (Creswell, 2007) to examine three research questions: How are supervisors helping their supervisees conceptualize the involvement of spirituality with their clients? How are supervisors teaching their supervisees to process spiritual content to help their clients? How does a supervisor inform her own therapeutic

perspective on spirituality? Eleven supervisors who integrate spirituality in their practices shared their supervision experiences. Their recorded interviews were transcribed, examined for significant statements, and then synthesized into descriptions of essential essences (Creswell, 2007). The meaning units are described in three stages: 1. beginning to be, during which time the supervisors describe how spirituality shows up in their work with supervisees in regards to creating a safe and authentic space for supervisees to explore their own therapeutic spiritual framework and practice working from their authentic selves; 2. creating a map to all directions, a co-creation of the supervisor and supervisee regarding the nature and boundaries of spiritual experiences; and 3. sojourning, the collaborative journey in which learning and processing spiritual experiences shapes how the supervisors foster spiritual presence and authenticity.

Keywords: spirituality, supervision, therapy, phenomenology, Quaker, Sukyo Mahikari, Native American spirituality

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CHAPTER 1

SPIRITUALITY IN SUPERVISION OF COUNSELING

The discussion is no longer a question of whether or not to include spirituality in counseling; it has now moved to a discussion of *how* to include spirituality (Cashwell & Watts, 2010). This, then, is the backdrop for this paper: How do counselors and supervisors have "the birds and the bees" conversation regarding the sources of spirituality, and ways to foster a spiritually therapeutic setting? Such conversations facilitate transformational growth in both supervisors and supervisees and by extension influence the individuals the supervisees counsel. Counselors who have trained in secular programs may be particularly interested in how to effectively discuss spirituality in supervision.

Albert Einstein said, "The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we used when we created them" (Calaprice, 2000, p. 317). As the profession of counseling moves forward to include spirituality in supervision and counseling, it is helpful to move to another level of thinking to find creative approaches. Many definitions of spirituality are found in the literature. Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) defined spirituality as "a sense of a relationship with or belief in a higher power or entity greater than oneself that involves a search for wholeness and harmony" (CACREP, 2009, p. 63). Thomas Sweeney described spirituality as an "essential dimension of human existence" (Burke & Miranti,1995, p.vii) that provides common connections in the midst of cultural diversity. Called by many names, religions, spirituality, consciousness, or New Age thinking, these new ways of thinking come from many sources: Buddhism (Lama, 2010), medical

intuitives (Myss & Shealy, 1988), Eastern medicine (Chopra, 1996), Eckhart Tolle (Tolle, 2004), Institute of Noetic Sciences (Ray, 1996), and many others. Counseling and religious/spiritual values both endeavor to reduce human suffering and elevate the quality of life (Corey, 2005).

Spirituality is more than just Roger's unconditional position regard super-sized. The intent of Roger's unconditional positive regard and acceptance is to guide therapists to express caring for their client in a genuine and nonjudgmental way that is also not possessive of the client (Corey, 2005). "According to Rogers's (1977) research, the greater the degree of caring, prizing, accepting, and valuing of the client in a non-possessive way, the greater the chance that therapy will be successful" (Corey, 2005, p. 173). The significance of the therapeutic relationship being "non-possessive" may also be considered in light of the spiritual content of therapy. How does the counselor provide a psycho-spiritual perspective that is non-possessive, but at the same time is caring and connected? This question comes into focus within this paper.

From its inception, counseling has oriented to a developmental model that looks for ways to enhance the individual's personal growth through psycho-education and development (Raskin & Rogers, 1995). Many efforts are underway to continue this development. In the state of Georgia, the Licensed Professional Counselors Association titled its 2002 annual conference *Serving the Soul*. The keynote speaker was Dr. Thomas Moore, author of several books, including *Care of the Soul* (1993). In February 2002, the American College Counseling Association, a division of the American Counseling Association (ACA), held its annual conference with the Georgia College Counseling Association. Its keynote speaker, Dr. Tom Balistrieri addressed the role of counselor as

interpreter of spiritual experiences. In 2005 the ACA National Conference again addressed the topic of spirituality and called its conference *Spiritual Creativity in the Fabric of Therapy: Employing Client Religious and Spiritual Beliefs in the Service of Therapeutic Goals*.

Diversity brings our attention to honoring the differences between people without possessing, neutralizing, or dismissing them (Arrendondo, Toporek, Brown, Jones, Locke, Sanchez & Stadler, 1996). Spirituality brings our attention to reaching the places where we make connection and relationship with respect for the many diverse aspects that we bring to the process. The importance of spirituality in the process of therapy and supervision is central to creating a sense of worth, welcome and respect for the individual. A topic of such importance merits attention, dialogue and elucidation. It is possible for a counselor to be culturally competent in many ways, but still not bring the essence of spirituality to the therapeutic process. How does a counselor develop a concrete understanding of the ineffable realm of spirituality? How does a counselor create a platform from which to operate within the infinite realm of spirituality? The full realm of spirituality is a complex topic, so if a counselor hasn't begun to reflect upon it, it is not likely that they will be competent to deal with spirituality in regards to the clients' therapy. This paper offers introduction to some elements of spirituality in counseling to contribute to the concrete development of competency and encourage the development of competence in addressing spirituality in the therapy session.

Literature Review

In the 1994 CACREP Standards there was no mention of spirituality (CACREP, 2009). The standards described addressing cognitive, emotional, and physical domains—

but not a spiritual domain (CACREP, 2009). However, in the 2009 CACREP Curriculum

Standards, spirituality's relationship to professional identity is described as knowledge of

"counselors' roles in developing cultural self-awareness, promoting cultural social

justice, advocacy and conflict resolution, and other culturally supported behaviors that

promote optimal wellness and growth of the human spirit, mind, or body" (CACREP,

2009, p. 11). The curriculum standards also called for the counselor to understand

spirituality in the addiction recovery process (CACREP, 2009).

In 2009, ASERVIC updated "Competencies for Addressing Spiritual and

Religious Issues in Counseling in Summit on Spirituality II" to guide the therapist in

assessing the individual cognitively, emotionally, physically, socially, and spiritually

(Cashwell & Watts, 2010). By initiating these competencies, ASERVIC has set the

course for the counseling profession to enter the 21st century with organizational support

to pursue this important discussion. These competencies call for the counselor to not only

be knowledgeable about basic beliefs of various religions and spiritual beliefs but also to

be aware of her own attitudes, beliefs, and values about spirituality or religion and to

have competency in spiritual development, assessment, diagnosis, and treatment

(Cashwell & Watts, 2010).

Rather than attempt to "define" spirituality, it is perhaps more interesting to

consider how spirituality is "described." Many descriptions of spirituality are found in the

literature. CACREP speaks of spirituality as "a sense of a relationship with or belief in a

higher power or entity greater than oneself that involves a search for wholeness and

harmony" (CACREP, 2009, p. 63). Gardner (2011), a Quaker social worker, considers

spirituality as what "really matters for this person" (p. 19) and describes spirituality as

"that which gives life meaning; including a sense of something beyond or greater than the self" (p. 19). African-centered psychology historically addresses spirituality and a meaningful connection to nature (Akbar, 1995) and describes spirituality as "the vital life force that animates us and connects us to the rhythms of the universe, nature, the ancestors, and the community" (Wheeler, Ampadu & Wangari, 2002; p. 73).

A residential addiction treatment program in North Carolina, Pavillon International, describes their model of spirituality (see Figure A1) as an encircling dimension that connects the mental, physical, social and emotional realms (Eick, 2000). This model places the spiritual dimension as part of each of these realms and represents a sense of wholeness and unity.

Another model that describes spirituality in context comes from Sukyo Mahikari, an international spiritual development center. Sukyo Mahikari describes three realms that are interconnected in such a way that spiritual growth influences the well-being of the mind and body. Described as Spirit first, mind follows, body belongs, if one elevates spiritually, then mind and body will follow and elevate in accordance with the spiritual growth (S. Chang (Ed.), 2007, p. 54). The spiritual realm is considered to be upstream of the mental and physical world so that improving the spiritual attitudes, such as humility, gratitude and caring, can lead to improvement of a person's mental and physical well-being.

Three Spiritual Practices for Consideration

In this paper, the author seeks to bring a new language into the spiritually inclusive supervision of counseling by considering languages informed by Quaker Friends (Palmer, 2004), Sukyo Mahikari (Okada, 2004), and Native American spiritual

practices (Yeh, Hunter, Madan-Bahel, Chiang & Arora, 2004). These three models are offered because they support the CACREP definition of spirituality, that is, the belief in a higher power and search for wholeness and harmony, (CACREP, 2009) and address the topic in the following ways: 1. Quakers, also known as the Religious Order of Friends, or simply Friends, have a strong tradition of peacemaking (West, 1998) and thus bring a sense of wholeness and harmony to their perspectives; 2. Native Americans who practice indigenous rituals and initiations respect Mother Earth as the source of all life and harmony of all living things (McGaa, 1990;Johnson, 2001; Mehl-Madrona, 2003; Balistrieri, 2011) and; 3. Sukyo Mahikari, an international organization whose implementation of universal principles promotes the establishment of health, harmony, and prosperity (S. Chang (Ed.), 2007).

Quaker Principles

The Religious Order of Friends, also known as Quakers, has its roots in 17th century England and currently has membership of more than 200,000 worldwide (West, 1998). With an eye for forming "wholeness and harmony," (CACREP, 2009, p. 63) it may be helpful to consider Quaker principles in a therapeutically spiritual application because they focus on "that of God within" each of us (Fox, 1831 p. 289) and draw on methods of centering, practicing non-violence and seeking clearness. In contrast to other organized religions, Quakers have very simple beliefs. Firstly, Quakers believe within each person exists "that of God in them" (Fox, 1831 p. 289) an oft-repeated expression attributed to founder George Fox (Kemp, 2011;West, 1998; Stanley, 2010); other writers refer to it as the "Light" within (Molina-Markham, 2012, p. 4; Stanley, 2010, p. 552). Secondly, Quakers assert a peace testimony and testimony of equality, both of which

inform their pacifism, social activism, (Molina-Markham, 2012) and non-violence (Stanley, 2010). Palmer (1997) offers an inclusive Quaker definition of sacred to be: "that which is worthy of respect" (p. 20). By recognizing and extending respect to supervisees, supervisors are creating a setting to foster wholeness and harmony.

In a phenomenological study, Quaker psychotherapists were asked about the impact of their spiritual beliefs on their work as therapists (West, 1998). Four-fifths of those interviewed reported that they spiritually prepared themselves routinely before seeing a client by centering, sitting in silence, praying, or letting go of their personal agenda to connect with "a much deeper reality and energy source" with their client (West, 1998, p. 8). Another therapist described that as a result of spiritually preparing for a therapy session he found "peace and calmness now which I never had before" (p. 8).

As part of recognizing the presence of the Divine source in each person, Quaker psychotherapists described praying for their clients, silently, much like the Quaker tradition of "holding someone in the light" (West, 1998, p. 8). For one Quaker therapist it was the act of thinking of the client as "infused with spiritual light—the same light as the light within" (p. 8). Centering and recognizing that of God in a person is a process that the therapist generated internally and called for no consensus or participation on the part of the client, or any outward accommodation; even so, the therapist found significant benefits in terms of peace, deeper reality, and calmness.

While on the surface centering may appear to be simply setting aside attention on the activities at hand, it is a much more profound act that involves putting on hold daily concerns and the outside world to focus on the spiritual aspect of silence (Dandelion, 1996). By secular standards, "God time" (Loring, 1997, p. 9) would likely be considered

wasted time; however, Quaker practice calls the practitioner to "be willing to waste time with God" (Loring, p. 9). The Quaker traditional practice of centering is used at the beginning of meeting for worship, meeting for business, and holding Clearness Committees (discussed below) to bring those present to collectively seek a spiritual source. One Quaker, Susan Furry, described her effort to center herself and find peace with others: "Let's not make an idol of our perception of the nature of God and use it to hurt or exclude sincere seekers (Furry, 2007). Palmer (1997) tells about the Quaker feminist and science writer Evelyn Fox Keller, describing the highest form of love as "intimacy that does not annihilate difference" (p. 23). Palmer calls this the "precious otherness" (p. 23) that knows and forms connection by serving that of God within a person, a process that brings harmony and wholeness.

When a Friend is unclear about a concern or matter of importance, the Friend may ask the members of Ministry and Counsel for oversight in a Clearness Committee (Hoffman, 1999). A small number of diverse Friends are called upon to gather in the discipline of worship to support the questioning Friend's discernment process. The members who tend to the Friend offer listening and unbiased queries to help the Friend receive the discernment he seeks. Care is made not to provide answers, and attention is given to holding centered space for the Friend seeking clarity. Silence is valued in a Clearness Meeting with an understanding that important things could be happening inside the person. A clerk records the meeting and leads the meeting with attention to centering, asking the Friend how he would like to proceed; this same person also closes the meeting (Hoffman, 1999). This simple, direct process could be used in supervision as a way for a

supervisee to explore a particular client or concern in a way that promotes a sense of harmony and wholeness.

A variation of the Clearness Committee is the inner practice of retirement for discernment (Loring, 1997) that is not unlike *Lectio Divina,* a Benedictine contemplative prayer that begins with a devotional reading and leads to focusing attention on God (Loring). Retirement for discernment is an ongoing, daily practice of reopening and attending to the movement of spirit. Much of the fruit of this practice comes from self-examination and/or journaling (Loring, 1997). For supervisors and their supervisees, the repetition and consistency of retirement can provide experiences of insight into ways to work with clients and foster personal and professional growth. The contemplative time can be incorporated in the beginning of spiritually centered supervision as a way to engage spiritual resources. While the language of Quakers can provide helpful jumping off points for supervisors and supervisees to discuss spirituality in counseling, Stanley cautions that it would be in error to assert that religion has exclusive answers to psychological problems (2010).

In West's (1998) phenomenological study, therapists who had experienced something transcendent in a client session at times found it "difficult to deal with being supervised by someone who had no sense of the spiritual. (p. 7). Counselors reacted to the supervisors' potential lack of understanding by "down-playing the experience "(p.10), or at times "I left it outside supervision, protected it increasingly by not getting it supervised (p. 7)."

Native American Indigenous Practices

As a way to recognize contributions that create wholeness and harmony, this manuscript considered the Native American traditions, ceremonies and initiations that centered on their respect for Mother Earth. A central premise of Native American spiritual teachings is that every particle of our bodies comes from the goodness of the Earth (McGaa, 1990), and as such the Earth merits our respect, protection, and honor. It is the source of truth and we are collectively responsible to it (McGaa, 1990). Indigenous psychology addresses healing and holistic balance with attention to living in harmony with the earth and its wholeness (Rybak, Lakota Eastin & Robbins, 2004; Rybak & Decker-Fitts, 2009). Four commandments from the Great Spirit begin with addressing Mother Earth: 1. respect for Mother Earth, 2. respect for the Great Spirit, 3. respect for our fellow man and woman, 4. respect for individual freedom, provided that individual freedom does not threaten the tribe or the people of Mother Earth (McGaa, 1990, p. 204). Indeed, the process of healing is described as a path to recover one's wholeness in connection to nature (Rybak & Decker-Fitts, 2009). Hunter and Sawyer (2006, p. 236) describe that "[i]n the symbolic Native American Circle of Life, all things are connected, all things have purpose, and all things are worthy of respect and reverence." *Mitakuye oyasin,* all my relatives," (Grobsmith, 1981, p. 90) is spoken as a reminder of this interconnection.

Many sacred healing practices are drawn from the Native American spiritual traditions and can be practiced by Indians and non-Indians (Rybak & Decker-Fitts, 2009; Mehl-Madrona, 2003; Grobsmith, 1981). This section derives guiding principles from Native American that are germane to healing practices that can help create harmony and

wholeness in the supervision of counseling. Two areas considered are ceremony and initiation.

It is said that true ceremony begins when the person requests help from a healing person (McGaa, 1990; Balistrieri, 2011). The word *ceremony* in the Native American healing tradition names the sacred experience of like-minded people gathering to seek help from the spirit-world and to collectively create "a great chain of being" (Mehl-Madrona, 2003, p. 155) that can help restore a person's waning spirit. All who are present in a ceremony contribute to the healing process; there are no passive observers (McGaa, 1990; Mehl-Madrona, 2003). Experiencing interconnectedness in ceremony contributes to an individual's ability to make meaning in life and to become aware of the interconnections of all beings (Hunter & Sawyer, 2006). By implication, when a person seeks counseling, the counselor and supervisor become part of the interconnected spiritual process of seeking help for that person. When the supervisor and supervisee begin from a place of harmony with the earth, the ceremony of therapy adds a sense of wholeness to the healing process. While many ceremonies exist that have specific steps and traditions to follow (Grobsmith, 1981; McGaa, 1990; Johnson, 2001; Mehl-Madrona, 2003), the supervisor and supervisee may want to draw on the sense of interconnection to create a ceremonial way to begin supervisory time, or to set aside time for reflection and contemplation.

Initiation, or a rite of passage, is a process that leads a person into independence (Hunter & Sawyer, 2006) and marks a transition into adulthood and responsibility (Balistrieri, 2011). Balistrieri's (2011) *Passage* program describes a yearlong commitment made by young men to learn how to become balanced in virtue, character,

integrity, strength, courage, humility, generosity, compassion, and wisdom and

"constantly learn all that it means to be an adult" (p. 10). The lessons are provided by

mentors, parents, elders, and others who share their own experiences of becoming an

adult and accepting those responsibilities. Initiates are encouraged to consider the

lessons, gather in their own information, and then come to their own conclusions

(Balistrieri, 2011). The culminating initiation ceremony conveys the recognition that this

person has been taught good ways of living and that he accepts responsibility for making

choices in support of what matters most (Johnson, 2001; Balistrieri, 2011). The initiated

person lives, not perfectly, but with awareness and intention to live in harmony with the

Earth (Johnson, 2001; Balistrieri, 2011). The initiation experience conveys a distinction

on the individual to engage in the world in an effective way.

The process of initiation could be used to create a meaningful experience for the

supervisee beginning to incorporate spirituality in the therapeutic setting. Setting aside

time for meaningful discussion with experienced therapists and culminating in a

recognition ceremony may be one way to recognize a supervisee's incorporation of the

qualities of wholeness and harmony to spiritual aspects of counseling.

Sukyo Mahikari Principles

Sukyo Mahikari is an international organization that was founded in Japan in

1959 by founder Kotama Okada (Chang (Ed.), 2007). The organization establishes

training centers where members of the organization receive teachings and practice the art

of conveying a spiritual energy referred to as Divine Light (Chang (Ed.), 2007). The goal

of the organization is to teach spiritual development "that transcends the differences of

religions" (Okada, 2004, p.147). Although the organization offers several models for

living in a spirit-centered way, for the sake of this paper, the discussion will focus on

only two relevant models used in Sukyo Mahikari teachings:

1. The principle of the "innermost attitude" (Okada, 2004, p.33) and 2. the principle of

"dawning" (p. 94). These two principles help generate a spiritual experience of wholeness

and harmony that can facilitate a spiritual approach to supervision of counseling

(CACREP, 2009).

  The principle of the innermost attitude refers to the inner dialogue that a person

has within about the world at large. One way to understand this is to imagine a crystal

clear ball that with the passing of time becomes so clouded that light is not able to pass

through the crystal. The crystal ball represents the innate capacity to be transparent and

capable of resonating with the source of all light, while the cloudiness represents

impurities that accumulate from our worldly, materially-focused thoughts. By

considering ways to make our innermost attitudes harmonious, it is as though the surface

of the crystal ball is cleaned and with the clarity is able to again reflect the source of

light. "When wiped, glass covered with dirt becomes clean and transparent, allowing

light to pass through easily. . . . Changing our innermost attitude is like wiping a pane of

glass clean" (Okada, 2004, p. 33–34). The reason that the condition of a person's

innermost thoughts and actions is so important is that they are closely intertwined with a

person's spiritual nature. Creating positive innermost thoughts and attitudes is more

likely to attract positive experiences, and the person is likely to be happier (Chang (Ed.),

2007). Okada said, "We have clouded over our pure, God-given souls with negative

thoughts. We have generated negative vibrations such as grudges, envy and hatred, and

have thus polluted the souls of others as well as our own" (Chang (Ed.), 2007, p.

91).Vibrations generated by negative thoughts reverberate like echoes and return to us. In the teachings, this phenomenon is referred to as "the principle of echo." According to this principle, "people today are causing harm to their souls with their own negative vibrations" (Chang (Ed.), 2007, p. 91-92). The practice of generating positive thoughts and attitudes can create the harmony and wholeness that define the essence of spirituality in the counseling room.

The second Sukyo Mahikari principle to consider is the principle of dawning, which "encourages people to notice things on their own" (Okada, 2004, p. 94). Okada described three steps of logic to teach a person to grow awareness. The first step involves an indirect mention of a condition but does not tell the person what needs to be done. If the person notices what needs to be done and completes the task, then it can be said the person has "developed powers of discernment" (Okada, 2004, p. 94). However, if the person does not notice what needs to be addressed, Okada would name the problem indirectly with a description of how it is affecting the person. This second step would be to nudge the person toward an understanding, or a "dawning" of the situation. However, if this, too, fails to bring about the needed action, he would give direct instruction, followed by a scolding for not discerning the problem. Thus, the person is taught to attend to subtleties and to cultivate a capacity for discernment that leads to harmonious action.

The principles of innermost attitude and dawning can be helpful frameworks for supervisors. Recognizing innermost attitudes as things that can be changed to improve a person's condition has the potential to empower the person to engage in self-reflection

and identification of self-defeating attitudes. By teaching the principle of dawning, a person is allowed to naturally develop powers of discernment in a harmonious manner.

Conclusion

Many articles have declared that there is a "dearth" of training and research regarding the importance of spirituality. What these articles do not state, but need to state, is that, as Bache says, "The zeitgeist of our times simply doesn't trust great depth of experience, favoring instead the detail of objective measurement" (2008, p. 189). Harmon (2008) asserts that research in the ineffable domain of consciousness (and by extension, spirituality) has been hampered by a lack of agreement of an epistemology acceptable to scientific and humanistic outlooks. He calls for a new way of knowing that includes "subjective experience as primary data" (p. 103) that "seeks to understand the whole through the parts (p. 103).

For a variety of reasons, many individuals are unwilling or unable to speak about their spiritual experiences for fear of being ridiculed, sent to a therapist, or otherwise marginalized (Bache, 2008). Counseling needs to create a world where everyone, and their spirituality, is significant. Clifton (2013) coined the term *critical spirituality,* which he defines as the inner sense of meaning with a sense of something greater. His intent was that this definition could be useful to those with or without a religious framework in helping to find a sense of purpose in their lives and a way to contextualize transcendent experiences. Harmon (2008) points out the oddity of scientific research giving only meager attention to the study of the capacity of spirituality to change a person's life in light of how medical care might be greatly changed by fully studying this phenomenon.

As the practical application of spirituality in counseling becomes a part of competent practice, the profession needs to sensitively address ethical issues with regards to therapeutic spirituality. Part of this process will require creating language to discuss the ethics of defining when, for instance, a therapist improperly exerts influence or critical judgment on an individual's spiritual practices. Another instance could involve the question of how to determine if the therapeutic process is being avoided by focusing on spiritual content and process. Consultation and supervision can provide the support and setting for counselors to become self-aware and fluent in fostering wholeness and harmony in the practice of their therapeutic spirituality. It is interesting to consider how the discourse and implementation of spirituality in counseling might improve the discourse of other multi-cultural competencies such as universal cultural backgrounds and values. And, by developing understanding of the lived experience of spirituality in supervision, counselors and supervisors will be positioned to consider questions with broader perspectives such as: Why do we suffer? What is my purpose in life? As supervisors and counselors become skilled and fluent in spiritual matters, we will collectively advance the ways of knowing more fully the human experience.

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CHAPTER 2

SPIRITUALITY IN SUPERVISION: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

Interest in spirituality in psychotherapy has steadily increased across the last 15

years (Hall et al., 2004; Kelly, Jr., 1994; Miranti, 2007; Young et al., 2007). This trend

has occurred at the organizational and the practical levels. In the counseling profession,

the earliest efforts to develop awareness of spirituality in therapy began in 1951 under the

initiative of the Catholic Guidance Council in New York (Association of Spiritual,

Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling, 2007), an organization that eventually

became the national division of the American Counseling Association's (ACA)

Association of Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling (ASERVIC).

Today, with over four thousand members (ASERVIC, 2007), the organization has

evolved from its Catholic origins to a diverse membership committed to infusing

spiritual, ethical, and religious values in counselor preparation and practice.

Another such organization is the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and

Related Educational Programs (CACREP). Progressing from the initial 1995 Summit on

Spirituality (Young, Cashwell, Wiggins-Frame, & Belaire, 2002), CACREP developed

updated standards that define spirituality as "a sense of a relationship with or belief in a

higher power or entity greater than oneself that involves a search for wholeness and

harmony" (CACREP, 2009, p. 62). The 2009 Standards incorporate spirituality as a

component of Diversity and Advocacy and as a topic to address in assessments and

evaluations of clients. Using the 1995 Summit on Spirituality competencies as a

measurement, a 2002 survey of 94 CACREP-accredited programs found that 69%

reported that their programs addressed spiritual and religious issues in their counselor

education coursework. However, only 46% of responding liaisons considered themselves as *prepared* or *very prepared* to integrate spiritual and religious material into their teaching and supervision, and only 28% of respondents considered their colleagues capable of such spiritual integration (Young et al., 2002).

A third organization, the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES), a division of ACA, establishes ethical guidelines and goals for supervision. ACES's Ethical Guidelines for Counseling Supervisors requires that there be ongoing supervision throughout a counselor's career regardless of the practitioner's level of education, certification, or professional affiliation (ACA, 2005). ACES's Best Practices describe promoting "contextual sensitivity" towards spirituality and to address the "power differential" in the supervisory relationship (Borders, DeKruyf, Fernando, Glosoff, Hays, Page & Welfare, 2011, p. 8).

Professional associations broadly call for the standard of care to address spirituality as an issue of diversity regardless of theoretical orientation (ACES, 2007; ASERVIC, 2007; CACREP, 2009). Although the academy intends for spirituality to be included in the supervisory process, scholarly literature offers very little to inform this once forbidden clinical process. The supervisory role is much more than super-sizing the counselor's role with clients in the processing of spiritual therapeutic material. Supervision provides the forum for counselors to foster self-awareness and recognition of how their own beliefs influence their views of therapy (Cashwell & Watts, 2010).

This study seeks to explore three questions: How do supervisors understand their therapeutic perspective on spirituality? How are supervisors helping their supervisees conceptualize the involvement of spirituality? How are supervisors teaching their

supervisees to process spiritual content? This study explores these questions using qualitative phenomenological methodology. Such an approach is well suited to these questions because it provides a structured yet open-ended exploration to consider all subjective descriptions of the experience (Souza, 1999). Spirituality in supervision, an emerging topic in professional literature, can benefit from an exploratory investigation that a phenomenological study provides by offering a deeper understanding of spirituality in supervision.

In order to support supervisors' efforts to develop this supervisory skill, it becomes meaningful to study the phenomena. How do supervisors make spirituality concrete and meaningful for their supervisees? How is spirituality discussed in clinical aspects of supervision? How do supervisors assist their supervisees' to develop their own self-awareness? The purpose of this study is to expand the research on how spirituality in the supervision of counseling is conducted in light of ASERVIC competencies (ASERVIC, 2007) and multicultural expectations (CACREP, 2009).

Method

Purpose/Rationale

The counseling literature reports that fewer than half of teaching and supervising counselors consider themselves prepared or very prepared to incorporate spiritual and religious material into their teaching and supervision (Young et al., 2002). Furthermore, spirituality in supervision is regarded as a matter of cultural competence that is of concern to all counselors (CACREP, 2009). If almost half of practicing supervisors feel less than prepared to address spiritual and religious material into their supervision,

shouldn't the academy help inform these supervisors about how other supervisors incorporate spirituality into their supervision? How can supervisors advance their cultural competence and support their supervisees if they do not feel adequately prepared to address spirituality in their supervision? In light of these concerns, the purpose of this study, is to observe and describe how supervisors incorporate spirituality into their supervision and how they experience the process.

Phenomenological Design

Any study that asks "how" naturally begins with a qualitative approach because it offers a basis for observing and describing the lived experiences of a representative sample (Creswell, 2007; Van Manen, 1990) and looks at these experiences to inform a philosophy of that experience (Pillikkathayil & Morgan, 1991). Patton describes phenomenology as the "human study of human affairs" (2001, p.52) that aims to understand the phenomena by being on the inside of it. Phenomenology asks about the nature or essence of an experience so that one can better understand what a particular experience is like (Patton, 2001).

Because this study intends to explore supervisors' experiences with spirituality, it is necessary to collect their lived experiences and to understand them from their point of view. A phenomenological design is the best way to understand the essence or unifying meaning (Creswell, 1997) of spirituality in supervision.

Procedures

Scholars of phenomenology (Creswell, 1997; 2007; Patton, 2001) identify the starting point for such a study as curiosity and excitement about an experience. This study's starting point is my own interest in how supervisors incorporate spirituality into

their supervision. The emphasis is on the process of how supervisors practice. How can we describe the elements of the experience of incorporating spirituality in supervision? What language captures the essence? How can this be taught to new supervisors? Van Manen (1990) points to the purpose of phenomenology as coming to understand an experience deeply instead of merely explaining it.

Creswell (2007) describes phenomenology as best suited for understanding common or shared experiences. Creswell (1997) guides the researcher to engage with the shared experiences in the following ways:

1. Bracket, as much as possible, the researcher's own assumptions and perspectives. The topic is to be understood from the participants' perspectives.

2. Select participants from individuals who have experienced the phenomenon and conduct in-depth interviews.

3. Ask participants two broad questions: What have you experienced in terms of the phenomenon? What contexts or situations have typically influenced or affected your experiences of the phenomenon? These questions along with other open-ended questions help focus on gathering input that will lead to a textural and structural description of the experiences.

4. Utilize a research team to collaboratively analyze the data.

Bracketing

The researcher, as instrument, must maintain the position that Creswell calls "empathic neutrality" (2007, p. 53) and bring a sense of "newness" to the observation (2007, p. 269). Through the discipline of maintaining a reflexive journal and being self-aware, the researcher notes her own biases, prejudgments, and blind spots and brackets

them, a process that helps her set them aside and clear the field to focus on the supervisors' lived experiences at their most essential level (Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Selection

Following Creswell's (1997) recommendation, criterion sampling was used to select participants. Criterion for participation were supervisors who (1) self-identify as offering direct, clinical supervision that includes spirituality and (2) are professionally licensed by their state of residence as a professional counselor, psychologist, social worker, or marriage and family therapist. State licensure ensures that the participants are guided by their particular professional code of ethics. Years of experience are not used as criteria because the qualification of supervisor already establishes a level of experience. Because this study was looking at spirituality as a diversity issue, participants who are practicing exclusive religious affiliation therapy are not included. Eleven in-depth interviews were conducted to reach a point of data saturation. Data saturation was reached when no new information emerged in an interview (Plano Clark & Creswell, 2008). Participants were recruited by soliciting volunteers from on-line networks of supervisors and by referrals from counselors who incorporate spirituality in their therapy. Each participant signed a consent form prior to the interview. To protect the participants' confidentiality the researchers removed all personally identifying information from the transcripts and stored recorded interviews in a locked file cabinet.

Participants were asked to draw on specific experiences they have had and to offer as much specific description as they could. The first intention of this study was to listen with a learner's ear to experiences of supervisors who draw on spirituality in their

supervision. The second intention was to identify the common elements of these experiences in order to gain a deeper understanding of the essential elements of spirituality in supervision.

Interview Questions

Recognizing Creswell's (2007) emphasis on the importance of understanding the phenomena from the actors' perspective, the interviews were recorded with permission from the participant and transcribed for analysis. To gather data of lived experience, the study undertook in-depth interviews with those who directly experienced the phenomenon (Patton, 2001). Rather than evoking a structured interview, the present study used open-ended questions intended to foster a collegial dialogue with each participant.

The questions for the interview were formulated to address the need for more information resulting from a meta-synthesis of the literature on spirituality in supervision (Ross, Suprina, & Brack, 2013) Supervisors are creating the experience of spirituality in the supervision experience, but there is very little collective experience of these supervisors to share with the academy. The purpose of the questions in this study is to elicit a rich description of those experiences.

1. **Tell me about your reasons for including spirituality in your supervision.** This broad, open-ended inquiry is the beginning point for a phenomenological study (Creswell, 1997) that seeks to understand the experiences of supervisors.

2. **How do you incorporate spirituality in your supervision?** Many authors have recommended assessing spirituality and identified the need to integrate spiritual information into the psychosocial history of the client (Aten & Hernandez, 2004; Bishop et al., 2003; Carlson et al., 2002; Frame, 2003; Isakson et al., 2001;

Kilpatrick & Holland, 1990; Okundaye et al., 1999; Polanski, 2003; Stebnicki, 2006).

3. **How do you use models or some context to offer your supervisees a framework of spirituality in counseling?** In prior studies, several authors have suggested that supervisors help their supervisees learn to integrate meta-spiritual concepts (Carlson et al., 2002; Kilpatrick & Holland, 1990). This question seeks a description from the supervisor about that experience.

4. **How do you inform your own therapeutic perspective on spirituality?** Kilpatrick and Holland (1990) describe the importance of supervisors bringing their self-awareness to understanding their supervisees. This question asks supervisors to describe how they create their own map of spirituality to bring into their supervision.

5. **Tell me about your perceptions of your supervisee's experiences of spirituality in supervision?** This question addresses that if supervisors are indeed developing the therapists' competencies for addressing spirituality in therapy (Aten & Hernandez, 2004; Polanski, 2003; Frame, 2001), how does competency show up in the supervision relationship.

6. **What are your thoughts about what happens when incorporating spirituality in supervision that wouldn't happen in "other" supervision?** In the past, many training programs taught counseling from a secular perspective, exclusive of spiritual or religious considerations (Norsworthy, 2005; Brawer et al., 2002; Kurtz, 1999; Jung, 1965; Freud, 1959).

7. **Please describe your positive experiences of supervision that included spirituality.** This question seeks to better understand the lived experiences (Creswell, 1997) of supervisors when the experience is seen as a positive experience.

8. **Please describe your negative experiences of supervision that included spirituality.** By exploring what the supervisor considers a negative experience, this study will, by contrast, create a clearer depiction of the phenomena (Creswell, 1997).

9. **How do you teach your supervisees to develop their own approach to spirituality for their counseling work?** This question seeks to identify the actions that supervisors report not only to better understand the experience in supervision but also to help develop their supervisees' capacity to approach spirituality in their clinical work (Aten & Hernandez, 2004; Isakson et al., 2001).

10. **Tell me about your perceptions of your experiences of spirituality in supervision?** Young et al.'s study (2002) reported that only 46% of teaching and supervising respondents considered themselves *prepared* or *very prepared* to integrate spiritual and religious material.

11. **What else about being a supervisor who incorporates spirituality would you like to share?** This question, which is integral to a phenomenological technique, allows the researcher to elicit the information that the participant considers important (Creswell, 1997).

Research Team

All interviews were completed by the primary researcher, and the data analysis was conducted by the research team. The research team was comprised of the primary researcher (a doctoral student in Counselor Education) and a counselor with a master's degree and supervisory experience. Each researcher identified biases and set them aside by bracketing them and kept a reflexive journal throughout the phenomenological analysis. This self-reflection allowed the researchers to identify bias and stereotypes that would otherwise limit the understanding of the experience from the participants' perspective (Creswell, 2007). Collaborative discussions and collective analysis performed by the research team, generated insights and clarifying ideas (Van Manen, 1990). The team shared in the process of identifying themes and making meaning by reading all transcripts, identifying significant statements, and collectively generating theme clusters (Creswell, 1997). Any negative or discrepant material became a topic for closer examination by the team and added credibility to the account (Creswell, 2007).

Data Collection

Rossman and Rallis (2003) used triangulation as a means of creating the context that they wished to investigate. In this study, two sources contributed to the generation of data: demographic information and in-depth interviews. Demographic information was gathered from each interviewee to ensure that participants met selection criterion. Information such as the supervisor's theoretical orientation, type of licensure, and spiritual practice provides an understanding of his/her orientation and perspective. The duration of each interview was 60–90 minutes, with the exception of one interview that lasted 120 minutes. The interviews were conducted on the phone and were reflective

dialogues. During the interview, the researcher tested the accuracy of her understanding by summarizing what she had heard and asking for feedback about the accuracy of her summary. To ensure that the interviews were recorded accurately, they were transcribed by professional transcriptionists.

Data Analysis

The phenomenological approach to data analysis involves identifying significant statements, generating meaning units and themes, and developing a description of the essence of the experience.

(Creswell, 1997, p. 32) describes four steps to data analysis:

1. The researcher first reads all descriptions in their entirety.

2. The researcher then extracts significant statements from each description.

3. The researcher formulates these statements into meanings and clusters them into themes.

4. The researcher integrates these themes into a narrative description.

Identifying Significant Statements

After transcribing the interviews, the research team generated a loosely structured summary of the essence of the interviews and identified key phrases. The research team met after each member had analyzed the first interview to discuss the significant key statements for collaboration and cohesion. The research team met after reviewing three interviews, and again after reviewing all of them (Creswell, 1997; Van Manen, 1990).

Generating Meaning Units

Beginning with the significant statements, the research team studied the material to identify meaning units, which are chunks of data that describe the essence of the

experience and identify a unique aspect of it from the participants' perspective. Creswell (2007) recommends focusing on the experiences shared by all participants and the underlying structure. The validity of meaning units is measured by their fit and the contribution they make to the essential description of the experience. To ensure against drift of definitions, the meaning units were further checked by recursively comparing them to the whole body of data (Creswell, 2007).

Describing the Essence

The process of reviewing over 200 pages of transcribed interviews and listening to more than 12 hours of interviews was at times difficult and complex. With an eye on the research questions, the team members listened to the recordings while reading the transcripts. They easily identified the interviews' significant statements but had greater difficulty selecting units of meaning. By taking all of the data into consideration, the team members identified clustered meaning units that formulated a process model (Creswell, 1997). The essential description of the experience comes from a synthesis that includes the contextual structure, significant statements, and meaning units. The description is not intended to be generalizable (Creswell, 1997). Rather it tells the combined stories of the supervisors' experiences so that the reader can have a sense of experiencing the phenomenon, something that Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p. 225) describe as an "in-depth reflective description of the experience." To protect anonymity and allow for ease of discussion between the team members, each participant was given a gender-accurate name in alphabetical order according to the sequence of the interview (See Table 1).

Results

The primary selection criterion was whether the supervisor identified him/herself as a supervisor who incorporates spirituality in the supervision. There were no requirements for the number of years a supervisor had practiced or the type of license the supervisor held. They all expressed some uncertainty about feeling they were qualified to participate, but none expressed any uncertainty about the value of incorporating spirituality in supervision. Several supervisors said they didn't know how they could do therapy and not have a spiritual perspective on life. One supervisor, with the assigned name Irving, said that "to act as though spirituality doesn't exist doesn't make a lot of sense to me. People are able to access something bigger in themselves." Even though all of the supervisors described their therapy orientation as including spiritual elements, several expressed concerns that they might not be spiritual "enough." Gary seemed relieved when he said, "Having this conversation really convinces me that I do use spirituality in my supervision". He also said that this study was the first time he had talked about the spiritual elements of his supervision experiences. In spite of some uncertainty about how much was enough, each participant expressed unwavering appreciation and commitment to addressing spirituality in their supervision. No supervisor expressed a desire to discontinue processing spiritual content, and no supervisor expressed annoyance or disdain for any "extra effort" put into the experience of spirituality in supervision.

As an outcome of becoming totally immersed in the interviews, the researchers formulated an interpretation in the form of a metaphor of traveling to represent the process of supervisors beginning a journey with a supervisee and sojourning through an

unknown realm that eventually becomes known to both the supervisee and the supervisor. To be clear, this study looks at how spirituality is involved in supervision, not how spirituality is centered in supervision. The author offers a narrative description of three processes that are part of the supervision experience: a beginning, creating a map of all directions, and sojourning. The interrelated areas fitting together to form a whole picture, but each area also stands as its own rich story.

In the Beginning

There may be no *real* beginning point, but to help our linear minds process this experience, we describe a starting point to describe supervisors' experiences of how they foster the presence of spirituality in the supervisory relationship. In the beginning of their supervisory interaction, the supervisor creates experiences that help the supervisee discover his/her own spiritual orientation. After naming and owning the spiritual orientation, the supervisory duo shares an unfolding of those areas to create a common ground. Carol described how she had tended to her own spiritual journey over years of time to come to an understanding of her own beliefs. She described learning "by trial and error" as her way of being willing to grow. Jeff wanted to find a shared language with his supervisee to describe the "spiritual path" and transformational process. Ann wanted her supervisees to "see with the eyes of love" and attend to the supervisee's need to be seen and told "you are okay,"

While supervisors accomplished holding space in different ways, every supervisor in some way created a setting for the supervisee to experience openness, safety, trust, and support. Some supervisors began the supervisory relationship with a discussion about how each of them sees the world and the human condition with respect to the language

and context they draw upon to describe their perspectives. Kathy reported her supervisee expressed surprise and relief that it was "okay" to talk about spirituality and quickly engaged in dialogue. Dan described wanting to begin the supervisory relationship with an early conversation about who he is and how he sees his clients, including his spiritual perspective. He then asked the supervisee to share his/her own stories and experiences. Dan felt this starting point helped the supervisee feel heard and appreciated. Gary described not designating spirituality as a formal topic to be discussed; rather, he began the supervisory relationship by expressing sensitivity to spirituality and engaging in a "gentle conversation" that allowed the topic to emerge organically. He also described how his gentle approach allowed unconscious material to show up that was relevant to the work.

After forming a shared perspective and connection, the supervisory duo explored the therapeutic material within a spiritually infused relationship. Among the 11 supervisors investigated in this study, two types of relationships emerged: those supervisors who shared the same spiritual path as the supervisee, and those supervisors who had differing spiritual paths.

Of the four supervisors who experienced having the same spiritual practices as their supervisees (Bob, Earl, Irving and Jeff), they all reported being able to dialogue at a deep level because they shared similar views and perspectives. These supervisors spent very little time talking with their supervisees about building trust or safety; it was assumed that by sharing the same spiritual orientation, they could safely speak freely, a foundation that quickly fostered trust and understanding. For Jeff, having the same spiritual orientation meant that he could speak at a deep level about clients because both

he and his supervisee shared the same spiritual perspective and language. He also recognized their tendency to use "pithy comments" and familiar language that lacked special meaning. Bob and other supervisors with matching beliefs began supervision time by centering through prayer, meditation or mindfulness rituals. Bob felt he needed to "be careful" how I talked about my beliefs" and selected people who shared his beliefs to feel that he could share his beliefs freely. In Earl's experience, if a client had a problem with something that the religious college might consider immoral, he would explore the ramifications of a person not being consistent with his/her faith. For Earl, "spirituality is a very inward thing," and he relished talking with others holding a different view.

For the seven supervisors who had supervisees with non-matching spiritual practices, the exploration and getting-acquainted occurred by sharing their personal perspectives and discussing the clients' issues. Non-matching pairs experienced more initial risk-taking as they expressed their personal beliefs, exerted greater effort to be understood and to understand, and expressed more vulnerability and humility. Dan's focus was on identifying any values and beliefs that he and his supervisee held in common and created time and space to talk about the areas that they did not hold in common. When Dan supervised a counselor who had a spiritual orientation different form his own, Dan focused on discussing their shared beliefs in order to give the supervisee the positive experience of bridging differences.

Helen described the experience of forming a common ground from which to share clinical experiences as "holding sacred space." Helen found that if she laid a foundation of love and understanding, she and her supervisee could speak openly and candidly. Jeff extended the notion of informed consent to a sense of "informed presence" that is

mindful and infused with unconditional positive regard. By offering this type of attention, the supervisor, and by extension the supervisee, offers the client a non-ordinary place in which to consider what new thought, behavior, or choice wants to emerge. With an established ease of discussing spirituality, Faith clarified that the supervision was about doing therapy, not about having "a revival." All of these activities supported the intention of creating openness, safety, and trust as well as an atmosphere of mutual respect with the goal of providing a fuller and deeper experience in therapy.

Supervisory duos with either matching or non-matching practices created a "yours, mine and ours" exchange of expressions, languages and processing of spiritual experiences that fostered a mutually informed framework from which to address new material.

Creating a Map of All Directions

The essence of a map in this case speaks to the qualities of interconnection and information from an overlooking perspective. It could as easily be called an *un-map* because of the intent to go in any and all directions that are presented by the supervisees and their clients. Ann described how supervisors looked at their supervisees through eyes of great love and acceptance. She wanted to help her supervisees connect to all parts of themselves so they could approach the work as whole beings. Bob described the need to have not only clinical skills but also a close connection to God. The map that Gary drew guided him to be present as a spiritual being in the session but not to teach spiritual practices. To Gary, the source of spirituality is already within each of us, waiting to emerge as an authentic, present self, vibrant with possibilities. For him, the learning process belongs to the supervisee, not to the supervisor's expectation. Irving expressed

having "a bias toward no agenda: stay curious, compassionate, loving and forgiving" and as a result accessing a capacity for healing.

Helen's map invites the supervisee to tap his/her own inner guidance and expand by connecting to what she calls a "universal energy field" or "higher self." Faith also considered a person's "inner world" to be the source for understanding of personal truths. When Ann spoke of the sense of connection to what she calls the "source within," she described her supervisees as "hardly knowing they need it," but "starved for it" nonetheless. Faith doesn't want spirituality to be seen as a separate thing because it is always with her, but she may not even mention the word "spirituality" in her supervisory meetings. For her, a spiritual orientation helps her reach a plane with a supervisee "where there are no words." The notion of a map considers not only the relationship of the supervisor to the supervisee but also how the supervisor relates to him/herself. Gary described the "huge implicit power" that informs who he is and how he presents in the supervisory session. This power allows him to feel connected during the supervision and to risk being transparent and seen by the supervisee. He also said that being present protects him from burnout and cynicism. Kathy feels connected to her supervisees through something she calls the "Great Unknown." It is through this vast unknown that she feels free to be who she truly is. Jeff has learned to listen to the quality of his connection with his supervisees to guide him. He is not invested in turning out "great machinists" who treat clients mechanistically; instead he seeks to have a "genuine, heart-centered connection" that contributes to his supervisees' growth as therapists.

Whether the supervisory duo shared a spiritual perspective or formed a new, mutually-derived perspective, all of the supervisors were led less by an external map or

protocol than by an inner sense of knowing and connecting to their supervisees to foster

an expanding presence, acceptance, and relatedness. Even the supervisors whose

spirituality is Bible-based described building relationship that, as Bob said, "permeates

everything that we do." The supervisors reported that they and the supervisees were

encouraged to "be themselves." The goal of all of the supervisors was for the supervisory

relationship to have the same qualities of attention, expectation, and reverence that a

counselor has with a client. Dan helps the supervisee identify their philosophy and

universal truths, which ultimately shapes who the supervisee works with clients. Carol's

explanation focused on supporting the supervisee's exploration. She wanted the

supervisee to "have room to understand why they did what they did" in a "growthful

way." Earl described continually growing in his work as a supervisor by receiving

supervision of his own clinical work. For these supervisors, the map was living,

changing, caring and without limitations. By providing this experience for the supervisee,

the supervisor was teaching, experientially, the value of the sacred connection that

extends in all directions to support the therapeutic growth.

The Sojourn

The idea of sojourning represents a sense of sharing a journey—an effortlessness

movement that allows the authentic self to emerge. All of the supervisors described a

process of coming to know themselves as ongoing and never-ending and wanting to pass

this way of knowing to their supervisees by sharing their own experiences. Indeed, it was

this on-going process that was mentioned when supervisors spoke of spirituality in

supervision as having a sustainable and life-enriching quality. The experience of getting

to know oneself in relationship both to one's spiritual orientation and to the

supervisor/supervisee relationship was the most consistently expressed benefit. But more than simply knowing oneself, the supervisors emphasized the importance of applying self-awareness to be themselves authentically. Dan spoke of a certain kind of delight he feels about the prospect of learning for the rest of his life and developing an ongoing trust in himself. He encourages his supervisees to come to understand their "therapeutic faith" in ways that inform what works for them with their clients.

According to all of the supervisors in this study, the counselor's authentic self becomes a major aspect of the transformation process for their clients. Supervisors talked about their years of coming to understand their beliefs by trial and error (Carol), as well as noticing biases (Earl) and blind spots (Bob). As they matured in the profession, they found that the effort to work from behind a mask was not only cumbersome and contributed to burnout but also lessened the effectiveness of therapy. Bob expressed not being able to separate who his is spiritually from any other aspect of his life. In place of working from behind a professional mask, Jeff described learning to be willing to be humble, vulnerable, and relatable as a way of fostering the therapeutic relationship. Gary, who described letting his supervisees know of his own struggles and strengths, has a similar vision. Ann noted that she has become who she is as a result of being transparent and authentic and described having a sense of freedom as a result of being this way. Gary's authentic presence contributed to his sense of credibility with his supervisee. He noted that in spite of working in an environment of evidence-based approaches and outcome-based expectations, he does not see himself as rigid or dogmatic.

Irving described having concerns at one time that a topic might be "too religious" and said that some supervisors feel uncertain about trusting their sense of self that guides

and informs them therapeutically. Kathy and Jeff both expressed wanting to understand the person in front of them before sharing personal beliefs in order not to convince or proselytize. Likewise, when Helen shares an experience, she doesn't offer it persuasively; rather she presents an idea or a story by saying something like "maybe you'll like it and maybe you won't. Either way is okay with me." In this way, she maintains her sense of who she is and respects that her client will do the same for him/herself.

Regardless of whether the supervisor and supervisees had different or spiritual beliefs, all of the supervisors described the awareness of a boundary between their beliefs and those of their supervisees. Carol spoke of learning that a supervisee should be cautious not to over identify with a client who has similar spiritual beliefs in order to avoid the risk of prescribing meaning or introducing counter-transference. As a supervisor with multiple spiritual practices, she could see several possible ways to relate meaning to a client. To her, each belief was simply one of many possible beliefs. She released ownership of a spiritually therapeutic interject and deferred to her supervisee's understanding and awareness. With this dynamic, the supervisor and the supervisee, journey together, modeling and creating language and experiences of sharing their beliefs and perspectives. At the same time they are learning to navigate their connection with one another, to traverse differences, to negotiate blind spots, and to share the road to understanding and insight. The experience of sojourning extends the qualities of the therapeutic milieu to the supervisory duo in ways that allow transparent and genuine connection to take place. In the practice of being open to one another, both the supervisor and the supervisee can become transformed by the experiences.

Discussion

A phenomenological study of supervisors who infuse spirituality in their supervision offers a rich description of how supervisors create and express their experiences. Without exception, the supervisors endorse and value the meaningful context that spirituality brings to their relationships with their supervisees. Describing this process with three steps—a beginning, creating a map of all directions, and sojourning—offers a metaphor that captures the process of developing a shared language and a creating a way to navigate the domain of spirituality in supervision. The ongoing journey that the supervisor makes with the supervisee creates a spiritually infused clinical setting. The presence of spirituality in supervision that participants reported contained a cluster of recurrent ideas, including being authentic and genuine with each other and creating a relationship that was accepting, caring, and expansive. The potential of this relationship was realized in the creation of sharing experiences about spiritual phenomena in a supportive, confirming relationship. Indeed, the essence of this way of being seemed to be the most central quality that supervisors created on behalf of making spirituality part of the supervision. Such a way of being is an expansive, dynamic way for supervisors and their supervisees to engage in becoming more fully present in their professional roles and by extension be better able to support their clients.

The birthplace of this study was a meta-analysis of literature (Ross, Suprina, & Brack, 2013) that addressed spirituality in supervision. It is noteworthy to draw comparison of the present study's results to the SACRED model (Ross, Suprina, & Brack, 2013) that came from a meta-analysis. The SACRED model names stages of

forming a spiritually-oriented supervisory alliance as safety, assessment, conceptualization, reflection, emerging congruence, and development.

To varying degrees and in various sequences, the supervisors in this study described each of these stages. The first step of the model, Safety, would correlate with the notion of creating a space for being authentically present. Only one supervisor, Earl, described using a formal assessment; at his college counseling center every student completed a "spiritual giftedness questionnaire." Other supervisors described making informal assessments in non-judgmental ways. Conceptualizing corresponded to creating a shared language in the supervisory dyad from a variety of perspectives. Reflection, emerging congruence, and development align with Sojourning. The SACRED model provides concrete descriptions and stages that correspond with the lived experiences of the study's participants and can facilitate the learning process for supervisors and supervisees.

Implications and Limitations

When professional organizations (CACREP, 2009, p. 62; ASERVIC, 2007) call for spirituality to become part of the therapeutic process, the academy directs the field to develop the needed competencies. Roughly half (46%) of the supervisors and supervisees reported feeling *prepared or very prepared* (Young et al., 2002) with the skills they need in order to address spirituality in their therapeutic work.

Counselor educators may be surprised to see the lack of importance "to do" that is involved in this supervisory process and the importance given to "being." The presence and acceptance that the supervisor brings to the process is the growth media for fostering self-awareness and acceptance of many ways of knowing. By modeling how to "be"

whole and in harmony with expansive diversity, the supervisor fosters both personal and professional development of the supervisee that carries over to the therapeutic process for clients. Without having supervision that focuses on making the process intentional and supportive, the counselor may or may not have this growth experience. In order to be a healer for others, the counselor need also learn to heal her own self. This supervisory process is distinctively different from meeting the client's own spiritual and religious material when it is brought into session. The supervisory process pro-actively and intentionally brings the quest for wholeness and harmony into a safe and nurturing engagement. In provides a setting to examine one's embedded spiritual assumptions for awareness and capacity to support the client's emerging autonomy and self-determination.

While there are limitations to this study discussed below, the supervisors' collective experiences do provide a noteworthy perspective on the conversation about spirituality in therapy. The supervisors in this study do not represent all supervisors, nor do they necessarily represent the best practices of supervisors incorporating spirituality in their supervision; however, they self-identify as having the expertise to speak of their experiences in the educational forum. The voices not represented in this study have important messages and further study should seek their contributions to this topic. While some demographic descriptors were collected from participants, the selection of participants did not include a large enough sample to create a diverse representation of supervisors. The intent of a phenomenological study is not to produce findings that can be broadly generalized but to describe the essential essence (Patton, 2001) of experienced participants and to "understand how participants view their world" (Rossman & Rallis, p. 180). The researcher clarified and confirmed an understanding from the supervisors

during the interview; however, member-checking of the significant statements and meaning units for validation and triangulation (Rossman & Rallis, 2003) would strengthen this study. A group dialogue among experienced and insightful professionals would likely have generated rich descriptions and added clarity to the subject. Another limitation of a phenomenological study is the influence of the researcher. Even with bracketing assumptions as they occur (Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985), there is still an inherent influence of the researcher on the research process, and so "phenomenological truth is not equivalent to natural science truth" (Kendler, 2005).

Future Research

In the most general of terms, mental health care and spiritual care both seek to reduce human suffering. As the profession of counseling advances, research is needed to expand the "how to" conversation regarding spirituality in supervision. From the edges of this study, it appears there is variety in the ways that supervisors share from their own spiritual practices. We need to observe and study the significance of sharing from our own closely held personal beliefs in a professional setting that respects boundaries, but still allows authenticity and genuine connection to occur.

A dialogue with supervisory pairs would not only illuminate the interplay between the supervision partners that fosters or limits the experience of spirituality but also provide a forum for exploring many more questions. How do we manage our biases when processing material about spirituality? As a matter of diversity, we are called to respect the other's free will and choice. Is a supervisor's capacity to supervise enhanced or diminished by holding more than one spiritual and religious practice? The process of exploring these and other questions will enhance our collective efforts to provide

supervision that is affirming, transformative and enriching for supervisors and supervisees alike.

Conclusions

What sets this study apart is its attempt to examine the lived experience of spirituality in supervision. The data is not dissected, quantified, or t-scored. It is studied in its most vibrant form in a way that aims to capture the essence of the experiences. Phenomenology, the process of learning to think objectively, is the way we can both approach the issue of spirituality in the supervision of counseling and focus on supervisors' experiences of providing spiritually-oriented supervision. In particular, this study asked how supervisors understand their therapeutic perspective on spirituality. Furthermore, supervisors were asked how they teach their supervisees to conceptualize and process spiritual content. The irony is that the profession is calling for inclusion of spirituality in therapy, and the sum gain is an effect on the personal growth of the therapist and the supervisor.

As the field continues to develop our ways of operating with regard to spirituality, the need to think phenomenologically increases. As Wilberg (2008) describes, this involves "empathically enter[ing] the world of the other, rather than knowing about it from an analytical or medical model." Providing a setting that includes spirituality allows discussion of one's innermost attitudes to occur without judgment and provides opportunities for counselors to engage with self to generate self-awareness and self-determination - the truest sense of diversity.

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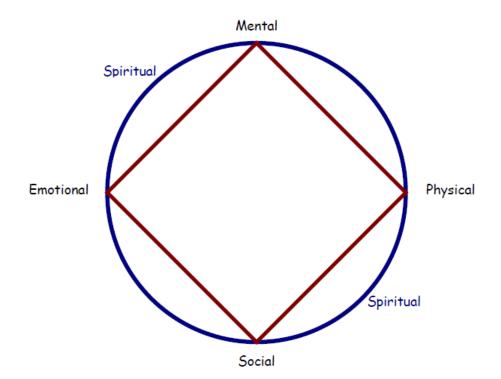competence: A national survey of American Counseling Association members.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Figure A1 Model of Spirituality (Eick, 2000).

APPENDIX B

RECRUITING CLINICAL SUPERVISORS FOR STUDY

If you are a supervisor who incorporates spirituality in your supervision, you are invited to participate in a study. This study has been reviewed by Georgia State University's Institutional Review Board.

This qualitative study is looking for 10-15 supervisors who currently provide supervision to therapists and incorporate spirituality in their supervision.

If you are currently licensed by the state where you practice, you are eligible to participate. You will be invited to one 60-90 minute telephone interview and asked about your supervision practice.

To discuss the informed consent and arrange for a telephone interview, please respond to: deb_ross2003@yahoo.com.

Ms. Deb Ross, M.Ed.
Doctoral Candidate
Georgia State University
Atlanta GA

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Introduction: Today we will be discussing spirituality in supervision. Please think about specific examples and try to put it into context as we go along so you can draw on them with specific details.

1. Please tell me about your experiences in relation to spirituality in your supervision of others.

2. How do you determine how much or how little attention you bring to spirituality during the supervision process?

3. How has your spiritual orientation influenced your supervision?

4. What conflict or compatibility might exist between your professional training and practicing of spirituality in supervision?

5. How does a supervisor address gaps or conflicts between your own spiritual map of therapy and the map used by your supervisees?

6. How competent do you feel to incorporate spirituality into your supervision? What promotes a feeling of competence or incompetence?

7. Tell me about how the topic of spirituality enters into your conversations with your supervisees.

8. Can you think of a specific supervisee with whom you have discussed spirituality: who brought it up? How did the process go? Describe that experience.

9. What else about being a supervisor who incorporates spirituality would you like to share?

APPENDIX D

Participant	License	Degree	Theoretical Orientation	Spiritual Practice	Clinical Setting
Ann	Licensed Counseling Psychologist	PhD, Counseling Psychology	Eclectic, Humanistic, Person-Centered	Holistic, mind, body, spirit approach	Private practice
Bob	LMSW	MSW	Cognitive Behavioral, Motivational Interviewing	Evangelical, non-denominational, Pentecostal	Bible College
Carol	Licensed Psychologist	PhD, Counseling Psychology	Psychodynamic, Interpersonal	Christian, Spiritual more than religious	Public University
Dan	Licensed Psychologist	PhD, Counseling Psychology	Eclectic, humanistic, self-psychology	Liberal Christian	Public University
Earl	LPC, NCC	M.S. Counseling	Adlerian, Psychoanalytic, Behavioral	Christian	Bible College

Faith	LPC, NCC	PhD, Counselor Education	Neuro-imaging, Humanistic, Gestalt/TA, Experiential	Third Order of the Society of Saint Fran, Formation Director	Private Practice
Gary	Licensed Psychologist	PhD, Psychology	Client-centered Solution-Focused Brief therapy	Daily Centering Prayer, meditation and Bible study	Private University
Helen	LPC, NCC	PhD, Counselor Education	Neuro-imaging, Experiential, Gestalt, Humanistic	Holistic	Private Practice
Irving	Licensed Psychologist	Ed.D, Counseling Psychology	Systems, Mindfulness,	Christian Church, Buddhist	Private Practice
Jeff	Licensed Mental Health Counselor	Masters, Counseling Psychology	Person-Centered, Brief-Solution focused	Spiritual Seeker, Prayer, Native American Spirituality	Community College

Kathy	LPC	Ed.S.	Addiction models, "Whatever is Useful"	Christian Benedictine, Buddhist, Sitting Meditation	Community Agency.