

Therapists' integration of religion and spirituality in counseling: a meta- analysis...

[Religion](#)



Summary

Given the religious culture in America, religion and spirituality are core aspects of multicultural competency that therapists should consider. In this journal, after conducting a 26-study meta-analysis of 5, 759 therapists, the author found out that despite most therapists considering the relevance of spirituality in their lives, they less often engage in spiritual practices (Walker, Gorsuch & Tan 2011). The author also found out that just a few therapists participate in organized religion.

Additionally, the author found out that family and marriage therapists participate in organized religion. They also consider the relevance of spirituality than those from other professions (Walker, Gorsuch & Tan 2011). He also found out from the survey that most of the therapists seldom discuss religious or spiritual issues in training. In the survey, the author sampled the therapists as religious and secular therapist, from which he discovered that the religious faith of the former was associated with the frequent use of religious and spiritual counseling techniques. He also attributed this to their willingness to discuss religion in therapy and theoretical orientation.

The literature that was majorly researched by this journal article majorly sampled therapists from social work, psychiatry, pastoral counseling, and clinical and counseling psychology fields (Walker, Gorsuch & Tan 2011). The meta-analysis is based on the results of the research conducted on these therapists. This journal article had several aims in conducting the meta-analysis: first, it was to examine the religious and spiritual culture and values of counselors (Walker, Gorsuch & Tan 2011). It used the information to suggest the different ways in which the religious cultures of the therapists

could differ from that of their clients and explore how these differences could be approached during counseling. The other aim of this meta-analysis was to analyze the relationships between the personal religiousness of therapists and clients and other variables related to counseling. It used the information to ascertain how the differences between the therapists and their clients helped in their counseling styles in varied religious and spiritual backgrounds.

Reflection

The fact that this journal article compares samples identified to contain precisely religious therapists and a sample containing a mix of religious and secular therapists also caught my attention. Additionally, in understanding multicultural competency differences across several professions, the analysis considered a study that compared therapist from different professional backgrounds.

In my opinion, the meta-analysis successfully determined the religious and spiritual cultural values of the therapists from different professional backgrounds that they studied. Additionally, the inferences from this meta-analysis showed that the relationships between the therapists and their client were affected by their spiritual and religious background differences.

Through the searches of literature in the PsycINFO and Dissertation Abstracts International database, the meta-analysis gathered sufficient information relating to the relationships between therapists' religious and spiritual culture and values. In my opinion, the researchers employed the best methodology in seeking information related to the subject of the study.

Finally, after reading this journal article, I would wish to read additional

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articles that compare the family and marriage therapists to other secular therapist since I am more interested in the family and marriage therapists and how they implement their styles in counseling, considering that they possess almost the same religious and cultural values with their clients.

Application

In this final section of this paper, I have assumed the position of a Catholic priest in a church setting. In this application of the paper, I have developed a situation where one the choir members in the parish where I am the head parish priest and head of counseling department. The problem that I have hypothesized in this case is spouse infidelity, and the method that I have decided to use in this situation is prayer since I share the same religious and spiritual culture and values with my client.

The case

Mary, who is one of the choir members in the diocese, had booked an appointment with me for counseling on one of the Friday afternoons, which was designated for this purpose. Since my schedule was free and had no other pressing issues to attend to on that day, I accepted to help her go through her problem. In her booking, she informed me that her main problem is the infidelity of her husband.

When she came on the scheduled day, she informed me that she had been suspecting her husband to be going out with her best friend, whom she had introduced to him three years ago. She added that even though she had not had the confidence to face her husband because she was afraid he would ask for a divorce, which he had threatened her with for a long time, she once

asked her friend, who denied these as false accusations.

Finally, she explained to me that her husband has been keeping late nights and giving lame excuses such as working late, even after she confirmed behind his back that he left work earlier. She explained to me that she loved him and would never wish to lose him.

Solution

Since we share the same religious belief with my client and her husband, who had stopped coming to church for about six months, I deduced that he has been using the church days to find time for such extra marital affairs as she earlier explained to me. Therefore, as part of the solution, I decided to initiate a prayer program that would help her bring back her husband to church.

I advised her to join the prayer groups in church and organized for home visits, where members of her prayer groups would visit her home occasionally to help the in prayer, since we believe that with God, all things are possible. We believe that God can transform a cheating husband to right thinking family man.

My client joined a prayer group who demanded that they meet her husband at home during their visits. I decided to accompany this prayer group every time they visited Mary's home and encouraged her husband to attend confessions. It took quite some time for him to regularly attend these prayer sessions, but after about three months, he had accepted the prayers and later submitted himself for a confession and accepted being guilty of infidelity, which he willingly promised to abolish that day henceforth.

About two weeks after the confession, Mary reported that her husband was a

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responsible family man and never kept late nights anymore. She also declared that she had realized that her husband was no longer cheating on her. It has been about two years and Mary and her family have become staunch church members and have never again complained of infidelity. This is because we believed in the power of prayer in our counseling.

Reference

Walker F. D., Gorsuch L. R. & Tan S. (2011, 23 DEC). Therapists' Integration of Religion and Spirituality in Counseling: A Meta-Analysis. Wiley Online Library. Volume 49, Issue 1, page 1-13 doi: 10. 1002/j. 2161-007X. 2004. tb00254. x