

CHAPTER ONE

PSYCHOLOGY, THEOLOGY, SPIRITUALITY AND THE COUNSELING PROCESS

In order to examine the relationships between psychology, theology, and spirituality and their respective interactions within the counseling process, one must first clearly delineate a working definition of these terms. What is psychology? What is theology? What is spirituality? What is the counseling process? McMinn (1996, p.p. 9-10) explains: “For Christian counselors doing interdisciplinary integration, two areas of competence are necessary and sufficient: psychology and theology.” But if “we are to bring religious issues out of the scholarly journals into the Christian counseling office,” we must also “understand spirituality and the process of spiritual formation.”

Definition of Psychology

Vande Kempe’s (1996, p. 72) revelation that “psychology and religion have historically been inextricably intertwined” may surprise many 20th and 21st century psychologists who were taught “a complex of origin myths concocted to bolster the view that psychology was a science unfettered by the bonds of philosophy and theology.” But in reality, the Latin origin of the word, *psychologia*, first used by Maruic in 1524, “referred to one of the subdivisions of pneumatology that emphasized “the human spirit” and later referred to the “doctrine of the human mind.” Furthermore, Bridger and Atkinson (1998, p. 56) cite evidence that the origin of psychology can be traced to the “metaphysical speculations of Greek science in which there was no rigid distinction between philosophical questions of meaning and purpose and scientific study of matters of fact.” In fact, despite the rise of modern science in the 17th and 18th centuries that

shifted emphasis in psychology to the “mechanical operation of the mind” and its scientific study, 19th century students of psychology still found it difficult to make “a clear distinction between the pneuma (the spirit, or religious aspect of the person) and the psyche (the soul, or the psychological).” They still continued to struggle with the study of the mind through introspection.

The first two decades of the 20th century, however, witnessed a major paradigm shift in psychology. The focus of psychology moved away from the study of the mind through introspection and asking questions about meaning and purpose to a science that focused solely on behavior. Spearheaded by the strong influence of John B. Watson at Hopkins University, by 1913, psychology was being transformed into a subject entirely defined in behavioral terms. Watson was claiming that the goal of psychology was the “prediction and control of behavior.” By the early 1930’s, the subject of introspection and reference to “mind” and “consciousness” had ceased in most psychological textbooks and theoretical discussions. What was to be known as experimental psychology had emerged to the forefront.

Although remnants of “mind” and “consciousness” notions could be uncovered in some sources, for the most part, by the early 1960’s, behaviorism, in the form of Skinnerian psychology, prevailed. Most textbooks were defining psychology solely in behavioral terms. Even as late as 1979, Morgan, King, and Robinson’s text, *Introduction to Psychology*, defined psychology as “the science of human and animal behavior” (Morgan, et. al., 1979, p. 4).

The last two decades of the 20th century have witnessed yet another paradigm shift. Attempts to reintroduce the notions of “mind and consciousness” have regained a foothold in academic circles. Today psychology is most often defined as “the study of behavior and underlying mental phenomena.” Gleitman (1995, p. 1) in the fourth edition of his text on

psychology writes: “What is psychology? It is a field of inquiry that is sometimes defined as the science of the mind, sometimes as the science of behavior. It concerns itself with how and why organisms do what they do.” “The scope of psychology”, he elaborates, “covers an enormous range.” Psychological phenomena “border on biology, ... touch on social sciences such as anthropology and sociology, ... concern behavior in animals, ... pertain to behavior in humans, ... are about conscious experience, ... what people do regardless of what they may feel or think inside.”

In reality, however, “psychology is more and more meaningfully defined in terms of the particular field under study rather than as a whole, making it less of a unified discipline and more an umbrella for a loose confederation of sub-disciplines” (APA, 1999). This is particularly evidenced by the fact that the American Psychological Association now serves as host to fifty-five (55) divisions ranging from experimental, clinical, counseling, and school psychology to theoretical and philosophical psychology and psychology and religion.

For purposes of this discussion, the more recent conceptualizations of psychology, that of being defined as “the study of behavior and underlying mental phenomena,” will be adopted. In addition, the focus of this discussion will be limited to the psychological sub-branches of clinical and counseling psychology. Inquiry will center on the application of the findings of clinical and counseling psychology as applied to the assessment, diagnosis, prediction, prevention, and treatment of psychopathology, mental disorders, and other individual or group problems. Examination will spotlight the use and application of psychological procedures developed specifically to improve behavior adjustment, adaptation, personal effectiveness and satisfaction. Psychological principles that foster sound mental, emotional and behavioral health will also be addressed. These include psychological principles that help people improve their well-being,

alleviate stress or maladjustment, resolve crisis, and increase their abilities to live a more highly functional life (APA, 2001, p.p. 1-3).

Contemporary Psychotherapies

Jones and Butman (1991) categorize modern psychotherapies into four classifications: dynamic psychologies, behavioral psychologies, humanistic psychologies, and family systems psychologies. **Dynamic psychologies** include classical psychoanalysis, contemporary psychodynamic psychotherapies, and Jungian therapy. **Behavioral psychologies** include behavioral, rational-emotive, cognitive-behavioral, Adlerian, and reality therapy. **Humanistic psychologies** include transactional analysis, person-centered, existential, and gestalt therapy. **Family systems psychologies** include various forms of family therapy.

It is important to note that as essential tools for clinical and counseling psychologists, the modern psychotherapies “are deeply imbedded in certain world views and control beliefs, especially about the nature of persons and the way good science proceeds” (p. 31). For example, cognitive-behavioral therapies are rooted in Greek stoic philosophy, classical empiricism, American pragmatism, and functionalism. In contrast, humanistic therapies are embedded in existentialism and romanticism. Family systems and dynamic therapies are heavily influenced by classical empiricism and European Freudian psychology.

Definition of Theology

The *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms* (1996, p.p. 279-280) defines theology as “language or discourse about God.” Elaborating, it explains that theology “can be a scientific, methodological attempt to understand God’s divine revelation.” Classically, it has been defined

as “faith seeking understanding.” Macon (1997, p. 1) contends that “everyone has a theology. Theology simply describes that body of doctrines/concepts which one has surrounding the subject of Deity.” Macon further explains that “atheists have a God-less theology. Agnostics have a God-uncertain theology. Theological liberals have a man-centered theology.” Bridger and Atkinson (1998, p. 123) view theology as “a systematic way of expressing our knowledge of God and God’s way,” stressing that, “as with all human knowing – there is a constant conversation between experience and theory, between belief and practice.” Infoplease.com (2001, p. 1) defines the use of the term theology in Christianity as “the systematic study of the nature of God and God’s relationship with humanity and with the world.”

Thomas Oden (1987, p.p. 3-6) in his definitive work, *The Living God*, explains that theology, from the Latin word *theologia*, “comes from two crucial Greek root words: *theos*, God, and *logos*, discourse, language study.” Therefore, Oden explains, theology is “reasoned discourse about God gained either by rational reflection or by response to God’s self-disclosure in history.” Christian theology, Oden clarifies, “is the orderly exposition of Christian teaching. It sets forth that understanding of God that is made known in Jesus Christ.” It seeks to provide a coherent reflection on the living God as understood in the community whose life is “in Christ.” Emphasizing that Christian theology “presupposes the study of Scripture and of the history of the community’s reflection upon Scripture,” Oden spells out that the essential purpose of Christian theology “is to study and bring into a fitting, consistent expression the Christian faith” as it seeks “to provide a fit ordering of scriptural teachings and of central themes of the history of Scriptural interpretation.” Oden further emphasizes that the object in theology is “God as known in the faith of a living community.” Theology’s task, then, he explicates, “is neither logical demonstration nor normative proclamation of established truth, nor the refining of rigorous

proofs of faith,” but the task is “clarification of faith’s understanding of itself and its ground.” This clarification, Oden explains, “asks for fair-minded analysis, critical reasoning, tolerance, and logical coherence, as well as active listening to Scripture and tradition.”

Oden (1987, p.p. 366-370) explains that four primary divisions of theological study earmark our discourse about God. Theological divisions of reflection include biblical, historical, systematic, and pastoral theology. **Biblical (or exegetical) theology** “confines itself primarily to the Scriptures for its textual materials ... biblical theology ... seeks to relate and combine the teaching of various Scriptures and bring them into a cohesive doctrinal formulation.” **Historical theology** “studies the development of reflection upon biblical teachings from the time of the apostles to the present.” Historical theology embraces “not only the thought of the Christian community but also its institutions, ethos, social life, ethics, law, and liturgies in their development.” It also traces “the development of Christian teaching through controversies and through challenging historical conditions.” Historical theology remains “essentially a multigenerational commentary and debate on texts of Scripture.” **Systematic theology** “uses the resources of exegetical and historical theology in seeking to build a consistent view of God, utilizing both general human knowledge and the witness to revelation.” Systematic theology may embrace constructive theology, apologetics, polemical theology, comparative theology, symbolic theology, ecumenical theology, and irenic theology. It also encompasses moral theology, theological ethics, and Christian social ethics. Systematic theology involves the development of a doctrine of God (theology proper), a doctrine of the universe (cosmology), a doctrine of Christ (Christology), a doctrine of the Holy Spirit (pneumatology), a doctrine of the church (ecclesiology), a doctrine of man (anthropology), a doctrine of sin (harmartiology), a doctrine of salvation (soteriology), and a doctrine of last things (eschatology). **Pastoral**

theology “builds upon the exegetical, historical, and systematic theology to provide an understanding of the practice of ministry and of the practical application of the fruits of theology to the work of ministry.” It includes homiletics, catechetical theology, liturgics, pastoral care, and church administration.

For the purposes of this discussion, theology will be defined as “reasoned discourse about God gained either by rational reflection or by response to God’s self-disclosure in history.” It “is the orderly exposition of Christian teaching.” It sets forth an understanding of God that is “made known in Jesus Christ.” In addition, the focus of this discussion will be limited to the theological sub-branches of systematic and pastoral theology. Inquiry will center on the application of the findings of these theologies as applied to the assessment, diagnosis, prediction, prevention, and treatment of psychopathology, mental disorders, and other individual or group problems. Examination will spotlight the application of theological procedures developed to improve behavior adjustment, adaptation, personal effectiveness and satisfaction. Theological principles that foster sound mental, emotional and behavioral health will also be discussed. These include principles that help people improve their well-being, alleviate stress or maladjustment, resolve crisis, and increase their abilities to live a more highly functional life.

Contemporary Theologies

Smith (1992) divides modern theologies into three major classifications. One grouping he labels **basic contemporary theologies**. These “foundational theologies” include: fundamentalism, neo-orthodoxy, Pentecostalism, evangelicalism, neo-liberalism, post-Vatican II Catholicism, Eastern orthodox theology, and the charismatic movement. His second major category he identifies as **contemporary world trends**. These more “esoteric theologies”

include: the theology of hope, process theology, secular theology, theologies of success, liberation theology, third wave theology, feminist theology, reconstructionist theology, the new age movement, and creation spirituality. His third major classification he tags **third world theologies**. These theologies include: John S. Mbiti's and E. Bolaji Idowu's African theologies and the water buffalo and yin-yang theologies of Asia.

It is important to note that each of these three categories of theology can be traced to specific historical campgrounds of theological thought. Each theology examined also contains different underlying doctrinal tenets especially with regards to a doctrine of God, cosmology, Christology, pneumatology, ecclesiology, anthropology, hamartiology, soteriology, and eschatology. For example, fundamentalism was an early 20th century Christian movement to “preserve and promote conservative, biblical Christian orthodoxy” (p. 11). It emphasized the inerrancy and infallibility of scripture, the virgin birth and deity of Jesus, substitutionary atonement, the literal, physical resurrection of Jesus, and the literal, physical return of Christ.

In contrast, neo-liberalism was a 20th century outgrowth that challenged the traditional liberalism fathered by Friedrich Schleiermacher and the Enlightenment intellectuals. It hoped “to apply the Gospel practically in everyday life, to make it what it was intended to be – not an academic exercise, but a way of life” (p. 84). But at the same time, neo-liberalism continued to cling to Enlightenment thinking with an ever increasing tendency to embrace natural theology. This resulted in a suspiciousness of the supernatural claims of scripture, thereby challenging, and in many instances, abandoning Christian conservative and orthodox proclamations.

Definition of Spirituality

The *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms* (1996, p. 268) defines spirituality as “the quality of being spiritual (pertaining to the spirit or nonmaterial).” “Historically,” it explains, “varieties of spiritualities have emerged relating to different religious traditions. They take place through rituals and practices.” Miller and Thoresen (1999, p.p. 5-9) point out that “for at least as long as history has been recorded, humankind has assumed that reality is not limited to the material, sensory world.” And in the people we counsel, Miller and Thoresen emphasize, spiritual reality, “be it belief in a supreme being or order, life after physical death, an ultimate reality, or supernatural beings like angels or demons,” is an important factor and often serves as an important source of strength and direction in their lives.

Further elaborating, Miller and Thoresen explain that spirituality is complex. “It is not,” they contend, “adequately defined by any single continuum or by dichotomous classifications,” but is better explained “as multidimensional space in which every individual can be located.” Differentiating spirituality from religion, Miller and Thoresen clarify that spirituality is an attribute of individuals where as religion is an organized entity. He explains: “religious factors focus more on prescribed beliefs, rituals, and practices as well as institutional features.” In contrast, spiritual factors “are concerned more with individual subjective experiences, sometimes shared with others.” Religion, Miller and Thoresen explain, “is characterized in many ways by its boundaries and spirituality by a difficulty in defining its boundaries.” Religion is an organized social institution with specific beliefs about “how one relates to that which is sacred or divine.” Spirituality, in contrast, is often “a highly personal and private matter, focusing on intangible elements that provide vitality and meaning” to life. In short, Miller and Thoresen

conclude: “clearly, spirituality and religion are not the same.” Also, they caution, “words are unquestionably inadequate to fully describe so complex a phenomenon, and, being defined in distinction from material reality, spirituality is particularly difficult to define.”

Kurtz (1999, p.p. 19-21) reports that Wulff’s (1996, p. 47) notion of spirituality as a term to denote “certain positive inward qualities and perceptions” while avoiding the implications of “narrow, dogmatic beliefs and obligatory religious observances,” seems to summarize the current thinking about how to define spirituality. Kurtz elaborates: “The goal of spirituality is the alleviation of mental, emotional, and spiritual distress thought to be at least in part caused by a lack of an appropriate relationship with ultimate reality, most often signaled by and reflected in inappropriate relationships with other people or things.” Kurtz emphasizes that “any spirituality is a lived theology, a posture that positions one within total reality,” for spirituality embraces “sanity, sanctity, serenity, health, wholeness, and holiness.” Spirituality therefore is “an attitude, a posture of one’s very being that allows seeing not different things but everything differently.” Simply stated, spirituality is that “for which all persons strive.”

Eisendrath and Miller (2000, p.p. 1-7) define spirituality in the broadest sense as “anything that seems to enhance the sense of the sacred in human life.” They explain that spiritual answers are required to questions such as: “Who are we as humans? What is our purpose here? What is the meaning of death in our lives? Can we develop an enduring sense of meaning?”

Mature spirituality, they elaborate, develops when a person develops the components of integrity, wisdom, and transcendence. *Integrity* involves “an ethical commitment and an integration of diverse states,” developing “a complex, multifaceted perspective on life and humanity.” *Wisdom* entails qualities “associated with spiritual leaders” that may require the

study of both ancient Western philosophical teaching and Eastern philosophies of Buddhism, or may simply “take on an appearance that fits with our experiences of contemporary people.”

Transcendence encompasses “extending or expanding the limits of our ordinary consciousness or experience in ways that connect us with a symbolic or phenomenal reality beyond the ordinary,” going “beyond our common world reality.” Spiritual development therefore involves “a lifetime of engagement with a transcendent source that is intimate and Other.” Mature spirituality is the “honing of integrity, wisdom, and transcendence in the service of the question of what it means to be human in the Otherness of our universe.”

Emmons (1999, p. 178) stresses the importance of life outcomes as he grapples with “a psychology of spiritual possibilities of what makes life meaningful, valuable, and purposeful.”

“Spirituality,” he explains, “is typically defined broadly, with the term encompassing a search for meaning, for unity, connectedness, for transcendence, for the highest human potential” (p. 92).

He elaborates:

Religion and spirituality have generally been defined as that realm of life which is concerned with ultimate purpose and meaning in life, a set of principles and ethics to live by, commitment to God or a higher power, a recognition of transcendence in everyday experience, a selfless focus, and a set of beliefs and practices that is designed to facilitate a relationship with the transcendent.

Emmons emphasizes that a “common core meaning of spirituality” embraces “the recognition of a transcendent meta empirical dimension of reality.” Or as Martin and Carlson (1988) point out:

“Spirituality is a process by which individuals recognize the importance of orienting their lives to something nonmaterial that is beyond or larger than themselves ... so that there is an

acknowledgement of and at least some dependence upon a higher power” (p. 59). Emmons (p.

94) concludes that spirituality manifests itself in our *spiritual strivings*, or what he describes as our attempts “to identify what is sacred or worthy to be committed to.” *Spiritual strivings* “can

be conceptualized as *ultimate concerns* ... that in which maximal value is invested, which possesses the power to center one's life, and which demands total surrender."

For the purposes of this discussion, spirituality will be viewed as the "search for the sacred" as especially demonstrated in our *spiritual strivings* to discover and embrace ultimate concerns in our lives. Inquiry will center on the discovery of *ultimate concerns* and their application to the assessment, diagnosis, prediction, prevention, and treatment of psychopathology, mental disorders, and other individual or group problems. Examination will spotlight the application of *ultimate concerns* to improve behavior adjustment, adaptation, personal effectiveness and satisfaction. Spiritual principles that foster sound mental, emotional and behavioral health will also be discussed. These include principles that help people improve their well-being, alleviate stress or maladjustment, resolve crisis, and increase their abilities to live a more highly functional life.

Spiritual Intelligence

Emmons (1999, p.p. 163-176) introduces the notion of *spiritual intelligence* defining it as "a framework for identifying and organizing the skills and abilities needed for adaptive use of spirituality." Elaborating, Emmons explains:

At a minimum, spiritually intelligent individuals are characterized by (1) the capacity for transcendence, (2) the ability to enter into heightened spiritual states of consciousness, (3) the ability to invest everyday activities, events, and relationships with a sense of the sacred or the divine, (4) the ability to utilize spiritual resources to solve problems in living, and (5) the capacity to be virtuous (to show forgiveness, to express gratitude, to be humble, to display compassion).

The first two components, Emmons explains, "deal with the capacity for a person to engage in heightened or extraordinary forms of consciousness", whereas sanctification, setting apart for a special, holy, or godly purpose, encapsulates the third component. The fourth characteristic, the

ability to utilize spiritual resources to solve life problems, often involves a conversion experience and the ability to reprioritize goals. The fifth characteristic, the capacity to develop virtues or character traits, comes close to defining who we really are. Collectively, these five components of *spiritual intelligence*, enable spirituality to be viewed “as a set of skills, resources, capacities, or abilities” and provides an “interpretative context for addressing important concerns in daily life.”

For the purposes of this discussion, emphasis will center on the fourth and fifth characteristics of spiritual intelligence. Spiritual resources will include prayer, meditation, scripture, solitude, service, confession, sanctification, worship, surrender, acceptance and forgiveness, hope, serenity, the love of God, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Virtues or character traits will include gratitude, humility, surrender, forgiveness, serenity, faith, hope, and love.

Definition of the Counseling Process

Oden (1966, p. 17) concludes that the counseling process “is a process of conversation with a congruent human brother who mediates empathetic understanding and unconditional positive regard with a view toward resolving destructive inner conflict.” Shertzer and Stone (1968, p.p. 22- 26) define the counseling process as “an interaction process which facilitates meaningful understanding of self and environment and results in the establishment and or clarification of goals and values for future behavior.” Truax and Carkhuff (1967, p. 25) contend that the counseling process is earmarked by “three sets of characteristics,” “accurate empathy, non-possessive warmth, and genuineness.” They explain:

Several common threads weave their way through almost every major theory of psychotherapy and counseling. ... In one way or another, all have emphasized the

importance of the therapist's ability to be integrated, mature, genuine, authentic or congruent in his relationship to the patient. They all have stressed also the importance of the therapist's ability to provide a non-threatening, trusting, safe or secure atmosphere by his acceptance, non possessive warmth, unconditional positive regard, or love. Finally, virtually all theories of psychotherapy emphasize that for the therapist to be helpful he must be accurately empathic, be 'with' the client, be understanding, or grasp the patient's meaning.

Eisenberg and Delaney (1977, p. 72) in their classic work, *The Counseling Process*, contend that "counseling may be seen as a process of a series of stages which include the initial meeting, exploration of client concern and relationship development, goal achievement, development and implementation of an approach to goal achievement, evaluation of results, and termination and follow up." The counseling process is an effort by the counselor to help people "make important decisions, ... deal and cope with crisis situations, ... reduce counter productive behaviors, ... stimulate healthy individual growth, ... and help in making vocational choices " (p. 14). In short, the counseling process is a growth and enhancement procedure designed to produce "fully functioning" individuals that demonstrate qualities of consistency, commitment, self-control, competence, creativity, and self-awareness. Individuals are fully functioning when they are *consistent*, that is, when they "behave and make decisions that are reasonably consistent both within social roles, through time, and across social roles" demonstrating "a well-integrated sense of personal identity." Individuals are fully functioning when they demonstrate the quality of *commitment*, that is, when they are "able to commit self to goals and purposes that are enhancing and helpful to self, others, and various groups and organizations ... and to self-transcending values that give meaning and purpose to life and thus protect from hopelessness, obsessive fear of death, and existential despair."

Individuals are fully functioning when *self-control* is demonstrated, that is, when emotions that are expressed are "reasonable in proportion to the situation related to them."

Individuals are fully functioning when *competence* is evidenced, as demonstrated when individuals can act “pro-actively rather than re-actively on the environment ... oriented more towards anticipatory problem solving than a crisis coping base.” Individuals are fully functioning when they can act with *creativity*. This is evidenced when individuals are able to “produce something new ... think divergently, ... develop unusual and effective solutions to difficult problems.” Individuals are fully functioning when *self-awareness* exist, that is, when individuals are “aware of talents, abilities, and limitations, ... of the motivations, beliefs, and values, feelings, and assumptions that affect personal behavior and decisions” (p.p. 15-16).

Bandler and Grinder (1975, p.p. 35-38) stress that critical to defining the counseling process is grasping an understanding of the client’s language structure. They explain: “When humans wish to communicate their representation, their experience of the world, they form a linguistic representation of the experience ... they make a series of choices (transformations) about the form in which they will communicate the experience.” Therefore, for Bandler and Grinder, the counseling process is about “transformational grammar ... the mechanisms ... in which we represent our experience.” The semantic meaning, they explain, “which these processes represent, is existential, infinitely rich and varied,” and “the meta model is an explicit representation of our unconscious, rule governed behavior.” The counseling process is about what linguists have described as the “representational system called language.” It is about *deletion*, when we “selectively pay attention to certain dimensions of our experience and exclude others.” It is about *distortion*, when we “make shifts in our experience of sensory data,” e.g. using fantasy. It is about *generalization*, when “elements or pieces of a person’s model become detached from their original experience and come to represent the entire category of which the experience is an example” (p.p. 14-16). Bandler and Grinder (1976, p. 195) conclude that:

All the techniques of every form of therapy are techniques which affect the processes of representation, the creation and organization of a client's model of the world. To the degree that techniques induce change in a client's modeling of the world is the degree to which they will be effective in assisting the client to change. As a client's model of the world changes, his perceptions change and so, too, does his behavior. The processes by which a person's model of the world becomes impoverished are the same processes by which it can be enriched – the processes of Deletion, Distortion, and Generalization. All forms of therapy, all the techniques of the different forms of therapy – in fact, all learning – can be understood in terms of the process of representation.

Therefore, the counseling process encompasses our representational systems, our differing ways “of representing our experiences of the world” (p. 6). Consequently, having understood how a client “organizes his experience, which representational system is used and which is the client's most highly valued one,” strategies can be employed to expand a “client's model of the world in a way which will allow him more choices, greater freedom in living, and a richer life overall” (p. 25).

Brammer (1973, p.p. 55-79) in his classic work, *The Helping Relationship: Process and Skills*, identifies the counseling process as a helping affiliation for the express purpose of assisting someone to understand a problem, being supportive in the midst of the problem and or aiding the person in developing a positive action in response to the identified problem or problems. He explains that “from a generalist helper point of view, there are eight stages in the helping process.” They include: *entry* – “opening the relationship,” *clarification* – “stating the problem or concern and reason for seeking help,” *structure* – “formulating the contract,” *relationship* – “building the helping relationship,” *exploration* – “exploring problems, formulating goals, planning strategies, gathering facts, expressing deeper feelings, learning new skills,” *consolidation* – “exploring alternatives, working through feelings, practicing new skills,” *planning* – “developing a plan of action, using strategies to resolve conflicts, reducing painful

feelings, and consolidating and generalizing new skills or behaviors to continue self-directed activities,” and *termination* – evaluating outcomes and terminating the relationship.

Therefore, the counseling process incorporates models of “problem solving, skill development, and life planning.” The counseling process also requires the development and employment of special skills. Essential skills needed for promoting “understanding” in the counseling process include skills of listening, leading, reflecting, summarizing, confronting, interpreting, and informing. Essential skills needed for promoting “comfort and crisis utilization” in the counseling process include the skills of supporting, crisis intervening, centering, and referring. Essential skills needed for promoting “positive action” in the counseling process include skills of problem solving, decision making and behavior modification.

Dyer and Vriend (1975, p.p. 17-20) regard the counseling process as “an interpersonal helping procedure which begins with client exploration for purposes of identifying thinking, feeling and doing processes which are in any way self-defeating or require upgrading.” The process involves the counselor helping the client “determine and declare counter productive behaviors, ... set goals, ... identify significant self-logic and self-performance wherein thinking, feeling, and doing are evidently self-defeating.” The counseling process involves moving “the client toward self-understanding, ... to explore possible alternatives to the self-defeating thinking, feeling, and doing” helping the client “incorporate new thinking” with “total emphasis on the acquisition and incorporation into the self-system of productive new behaviors.” At the core of their understanding of the counseling process is the assumption that “each client’s data are unique, personally owned, and of a particular character having personal meaning and value.” They also assume that in the context of the counseling process the “counselor is the skilled and

competent person in the relationship and the interpersonal helping activity, and to the extent the counselor is less skilled or competent than the client in a given behavior dimension, counseling will be unproductive, even abusive to the client.”

Adams (1979, p. ix) defines the counseling process in terms of change. He explains: “As diverse as the various counseling systems may be – and they are quite distinct fundamentally – they all (1) see a need for change and (2) use verbal means to bring about change, which (3) is purported to be for the benefit of the counselee.”

Ivey and Downing (1980, p.p. 4-13) explain that the counseling process is “a process of interpersonal influence ... concerned with assisting normal people to achieve their goals or function more effectively.” It is a process of helping people achieve goals of “self-actualization, development of an increased ability to respond and cope, the ability to love and work, to do one’s own thing, or to be truly oneself.”

Collins (1988, p.p. 38-48) explains that counseling is “not a step-by-step process like baking a cake or changing a tire,” but none the less, he contends, several steps are involved in helping people deal with “problems, attitudes, values, expectations, and experiences.” He has identified five phases in the counseling process that include: *connecting* – “initiating, building and maintaining a relationship,” *exploring* – “enabling the client to “tell their stories,” *planning* – “goals and actions that can be taken to find solutions,” *progressing* – “start moving toward their goals,” and *stopping* – “summarizing what has been learned and accomplished” as the counseling comes to an end. Conducted in an environment that emphasizes “warmth, genuineness, and empathy” Collins suggests that counseling is a process used to help clients gain self-understanding, learn effective patterns of communication, discover more effective ways of

responding, learn to achieve one's "optimal potential," and perhaps most importantly, realize "spiritual wholeness."

Jones and Butman (1991, p. 12) describe the counseling process "as a dyadic (two-way) interaction between a client who is distressed, and perhaps confused and frightened, and a professional helper whose helping skills are recognized and accepted by the client." They explain that the process is a "private, collaborative encounter" that relies "heavily on verbal communication of the client's thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and behaviors." Hope is fostered by the therapist's ability to understand, explain and apply techniques that reduce the client's distress. These techniques include "offering reassurance and support, desensitizing the client to distress, encouraging adaptive functioning, and offering understanding and insight."

Bufford (1997, p.p. 111-112) argues that the counseling process needs to address "biological factors, including diseases, and endocrinological, anatomical, biochemical, and genetic causes." In addition it should address "psychological factors, including personal, developmental, and family history, and relationships with others." Furthermore, "social factors such as societal and cultural norms and standards" need to be considered. And finally, "spiritual factors, including personal sin, ethical and moral responsibilities, relationship to God, and spiritual growth and development" are essential factors in need of consideration. However, Bufford is careful to distinguish between mental health counseling and spiritual counseling, explaining that mental health counseling "seeks to alleviate conditions which make intervention medically necessary—typically as reflected by DSM-IV diagnoses, where as spiritual counseling is "centrally concerned with evangelism and discipleship."

Bridger and Atkinson (1998, p.p. 21-22) understand the counseling process "as a one-to-one exercise in which the purpose of the counselor is to relieve mental and emotional distress by

restoring internal psychological equilibrium.” They further contend that the counseling process “must take account of the differing but related context in which human beings find themselves” in addition to the counselee’s inner world. Both the social contexts and the psychological contexts are interwoven. In addition, they argue that “neither psychological nor social contexts can be divorced from philosophy and theology.” The counseling process must equip the counselee “to face critical questions with theological as well as psychological resources.” They conclude their discussion by emphasizing that the counseling process consists of four levels. They range from a “kind of help given by caring persons” to a “deeper analysis and understanding” where “some degree of technical training is required,” to where considerable training and expertise is required as “understanding the realm of the unconscious” is undertaken, or in-depth therapy is utilized to achieve “thorough ongoing behavioral change.”

For the purposes of this discussion, the counseling process will be defined as a growth and enhancement process, whereby a highly skilled professional assists individuals in implementing changes in thoughts, feelings and behaviors, for the purpose of improving one’s well-being, alleviating stress or maladjustment, resolving crisis, and increasing one’s abilities to live a more highly functional life. Key to the process is the ability of the trained helper to exhibit empathy, warmth, and genuineness toward the individual seeking help as well as the skill to introduce paradigm(s) that will help the counselee identify, understand, and change dysfunctional patterns of thought, that is, linguistic representations of life that significantly interfere with the healthy physical, emotional, and spiritual functioning of the individual.

Summary

In this first chapter definitions of psychology, theology, and spirituality have been introduced. In addition, an explanation of the counseling process has been established. Schools

of thought within each division of inquiry have also been outlined. In chapter two, psychology will be compared with theology and spirituality in order to assess compatibility of each discipline and in order to explore the question: How and in what ways does each discipline contribute to or distract from the enhancement of a client's well-being within the context of the counseling process?

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