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Spirituality: A Tool for Professional School Counselors Working in an Urban Secondary Setting

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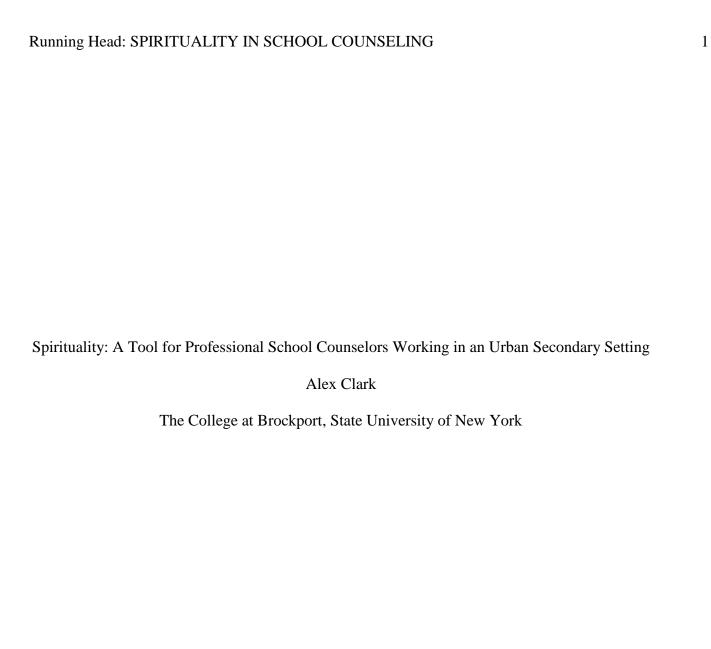Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/edc_theses

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Acknowledgment

I believe that no project is ever completed by a single individual. This belief holds true for this thesis. First of all, I need to acknowledge the role of my own spirituality in the completion of this thesis. Without the guidance, strength, motivation, and sense of peace that I gain through my faith in Jesus Christ, I can do nothing. When the stress piled up, when deadlines came way too fast, and when reaching my goals seemed impossible, I could always return to my constant, my faith and belief that God has my will in His hands.

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Abstract

This study reviews literature concerning the use of spirituality in school counseling. The literature reviewed reveals that spirituality is a school counseling tool that can be used to help students in an urban secondary school setting thrive despite the specific challenges of their setting. Based on this information, an intervention was developed and executed to increase counselors' understanding and use of spirituality in an urban secondary school setting. Results from the intervention suggest that following participation, counselors better understand the meaning and breadth of the word spirituality, how they use spirituality in their work, as well as the importance of using spirituality in their work. This research also discusses implications for future researchers planning to assess spirituality.

Spirituality: A Tool for Professional School Counselors Working in an Urban Setting

According to Gallup and Lindsay (1999), 95% of all Americans believe in a God or a higher power. Of those who believe in a God or a higher power, 69% reported being members of some type of religious institution (e.g., church or synagogue). Further, 60% of those members reported religion as being very important in their everyday lives (Gallup and Lindsay, 1999). With religion as one of the most common expressions of spirituality, it is clear that spirituality is a prominent factor in the lives of many Americans (Hall, Dixon, & Mauzey, 2004). More specifically, 82% of Americans reported having a personal need for spiritual growth in their lives (Gallup & Lindsay, 1999).

Mental health disorders are also prominent in the lives of many Americans. The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) reported that over 18% of Americans received treatment for an anxiety disorder in 2008. Also in 2008, 9.5% of Americans received treatment for a mood disorder. In total, 13.4% of Americans received mental health services in 2008, a number that is consistently growing each year. Furthermore, NIMH (2008) reported that just over half, 58.7%, of the number of individuals with serious mental health disorders actually received treatment.

Spirituality has been used as a counseling tool to help with a variety of mental health issues; it is also a core aspect of an individual's development (Gold, 2010). Furthermore, spirituality and mental health are connected (Cameron, 2010; Cornah, 2006; Miller and Thoresen, 2003; Pargamont and Mahoney, 2005). Addressing spiritual issues with clients and paying attention to the spiritual aspect of clients' lives supports healthy development, mentally and socially (Richards, Bartz, & O'Grady, 2009). Addressing mental health issues with attention to spirituality is particularly helpful for adolescents because of the salience of these formative years (Quinn, 2008). Moreover, addressing spiritual issues has been shown to be particularly

important for vulnerable youth—those in an urban setting (Sink, 2004). Spirituality can be an important tool for school counselors to use when addressing the mental health concerns of students in an urban school setting (Sink, 2004, Quinn, 2008).

Literature Review

This literature review investigates the appropriateness and use of spirituality as a counseling tool by looking into the characteristics that separate the various mental health fields. Various definitions of spirituality and the differences between spirituality and religion are explored as well as research on why and how spirituality can be used in a school setting, specifically when working with adolescents in an urban setting.

Mental Health

The mental health field is composed of various disciplines, each unique in both their training and practice. Four mental health disciplines include psychology, psychiatry, social work, and professional counseling. Although specializations exist within each discipline, general descriptions of each help bring to light the factors that differentiate the disciplines.

Clinical psychology combines the use of science, theory, and practice in understanding, predicting, and alleviating various forms of pathology including maladjustment, disability, and discomfort. Psychologists create and execute interventions designed to prevent, treat, and correct "emotional conflicts, personality disturbances, psychopathology, and the skill deficits underlying human distress or dysfunction" (American Psychological Association, 2011, p.1). Psychologists rely heavily upon the use of tests and assessments when interacting with clients, diagnosing pathology, and designing treatment plans (American Psychological Association, 2011).

As medical doctors, psychiatrists' training differs significantly from than that of other mental health service providers. With training as medical doctors and then specialized training in

psychiatry, psychiatrists focus on the medical treatment of the psyche through the use of differential diagnosis, psychotherapy, and psychopharmacology (American Psychiatric Association, 2011; American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Because a medical degree is required to prescribe medicine, one of the major roles of psychiatry includes medication management—prescription and follow-up.

Social workers help people function to the best of their ability in their individual environments. Social workers use direct therapy and case management to promote individual and social change (National Association of Social Workers, 2011). Unique from psychiatry, psychology, and professional counseling, the Council of Social Work Education (2008) describes the goal of social work as an effort to advance human rights as well as social and educational policy. While including individual, group, and family interventions, social work extends beyond these bounds into systemic change within organizations and communities (Council of Social Work Education, 2008).

20/20: A Vision for the Future of Counseling (2010) defines counseling as "a professional relationship that empowers diverse individuals, families, and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education, and career goals." Composed by delegates from 29 professional counseling organizations, this definition attempts to explain generally what counselors do in an effort to clarify the professional counselor's role in the mental health field. Although other disciplines within the mental health field also address mental health, education, and career goals, the pursuit of wellness sets counseling apart from the other professions. The pursuit of wellness in counseling requires a holistic approach (Myers & Sweeney, 2007).

The American Counseling Association (ACA) supports the counseling role of advocating for optimum health and wellness for every client (ACA, 2005). Wellness is understood as the

integration and optimization of the physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions of an individual (Myers & Sweeney, 2007). Based on values that support prevention, optimum development, and positive functioning, the counseling profession supports a wellness model that approaches treatment holistically (Hettler, 1984; Myers & Sweeney, 2007; Myers, Sweeney, & Witmer, 2000). One of the founding persona's in the field of individual counseling, Alfred Alder, considered the indivisibility of the self, the person as a whole, as an essential perspective for practitioners to take in their approach to working with clients. From this perspective, clients are more than the sum of their parts and treatment cannot occur without interventions designed for the *whole* person (Corey, 2005; Myers & Sweeney, 2007).

Myers et al. (2000) described the Wheel of Wellness, a wellness counseling model. The Wheel model depicted wellness as a broad concept ranging from global event to individual self-direction. Spirituality is located at the center of the wheel and is surrounded by 12 spokes related to the idea of self-direction: stress management, gender identity, cultural identity, sense of worth, sense of control, realistic beliefs, emotional awareness and coping, problem solving and creativity, sense of humor, nutrition, exercise, and self-care. As the wheel gets further away from the core, the concepts of wellness become less specific and less individual to include concepts such as work and leisure, love, friendship, education, religion, family, community, government, media, business, and, at the outer most edge of the wheel, global events (Myers et al., 2000).

The concept of wellness, as depicted in the Wheel model, clearly takes into account the aspects of a complete, indivisible, whole person: physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions (Myers et al., 2000). As a mental health field, it is obvious that counselors acknowledge and address the mental health dimensions of their clients' wellness; not as obvious, perhaps, is the counselor's attention to the physical dimension of their clients. Briefly described, counselors'

account for the physical dimensions of their clients' physical wellness can be seen through the

intake interview, a focus on issues related to physical health (eating, sexuality, sleep, and

exercise habits), and interventions that promote physical wellness (Abdo, Afif-Abdo, Otani, &

Machado, 2008; Buboltz, Jenkins, Soper, Woler, Johnson, & Faes, 2009; Choate, 2010; Lin,

O'Connor, Whitlock, & Beil, 2010; Morrison, 2008). In order to best grasp how counselors

account for the spiritual wellness of their clients, it will be helpful to gain clarification on the

definition and meaning of the term spirituality.

Defining Spirituality

Benson and Roehlkepartain (2008) acknowledged that simply hearing the word

spirituality evokes strong emotional reactions for many people. The concept of spirituality has

often been narrowly defined within America based on the Western ideals concerning organized

religion (Miller & Thoresen, 2003). Therefore, there has been an attempt in recent years to create

an operationalized definition for spirituality that broadens its common understanding beyond the

realm of organized religion. In these attempts, however, Ingersoll (2004) found two challenges

that impede on the goal of operationalizing a definition of spirituality: (1) vested groups advocate

for the exclusive use of one definition, limiting its general usefulness; (2) definitions of

spirituality become so broad that they become meaningless, defeating the purpose of creating a

definition.

Often vague and frequently confused with the term religion, the concept of spirituality

tends to elude operational definitions because of its close tie to unique human experience

(ASERVIC, 2005; Miller & Thoresen, 2003). Some researchers believe that spirituality is innate,

unique to each individual, personally defined, and part of a worldview (MacDonald, 2004;

Apante, 1998; Miller & Thorensen, 2003). Seen as a multi-dimensional concept that can be

formal or informal, organized or unorganized, and rational or irrational, spirituality is both a

cognitive and an emotional experience that is difficult to summarize given its diversity of

meaning, personalized nature, and the constraints of language (Apante, 1998; MacDonald, 2004;

Ruddock & Cameron, 2010; Sink, 2004; Lonborg; 2004).

      In attempting to define spirituality, it can be helpful to begin by clarifying the global

concepts that are generally concerned or associated with spirituality. Sink (2004) explained that

spirituality concerns seeking out meaning in life's events, looking for purpose, and having

unique thoughts and feelings. Rayburn (2004) considered spirituality to be concerned with loving

concern and care for others, forgiveness, cooperation, peace, and goodness. Lonborg (2004) saw

an intimate connection between spirituality and the concepts of love, hope, evil, loneliness, guilt,

interconnectedness, individuality, centeredness, and intimacy. Duff (2003) attempted to explain

spirituality by breaking it down into three interdependent concepts: awareness, self-knowledge,

and transcendence.

      Awareness, one of three essential elements in an individual's spirituality, includes a

consciousness of something beyond one's everyday experiences (Duff, 2003). Awareness refers

to knowing the dynamics between one's relationship with the world, ideas, and other people.

Awareness is gained through self-observation and evaluating one's motivations. Self-knowledge,

the second of Duff's (2003) elements, is the result of inspecting one's own values and attitudes

towards the world, society, and other people. The two aforementioned elements make way for

the third and most essential quality of spirituality—transcendence. Transcendence is an

awareness, experience, and understanding of a much larger, multi-dimensional reality that

extends beyond our individual existence (Duff, 2003).

Although definitions of spirituality differ, common themes can be found within the explanations of what spirituality *is* and what spirituality *does*. Spirituality is a force (Apante, 1998; ASERVIC, 2005; MacDonald, 2004; Miller & Thoresen, 2003; Parker, 2011; Sink, 2004). Although not all researchers agree as to the direction of this force, spirituality is defined as energizing (Sink, 2004), motivating (Ruddock & Cameron, 2010), and life-giving (Miller & Thoresen, 2003). ASERVIC (2005) explained that the word spirituality refers to the word spirit, which derives from the Latin word *spirare*—to breathe. This force transcends the physical, worldly limits of space, time, matter, and energy, moving people towards meaning, hope, love, and knowledge (Apante, 1998; Cacioppo, 2005; Miller & Thoresen, 2003). It is through spirituality that people explore and discover life's meaning, bring meaning to events in life, and gain a sense of being a part of something greater then themselves (Cacioppo, 2005; Richards et al., 2009; Ruddock & Cameron, 2010). Spirituality is an active and passive force that goes beyond culture, intimately connecting the self to the world (Parker, 2011). While suggesting that any definition of spirituality is incomplete if not followed by qualifications, ASERVIC (2005) offered a definition of spirit that seems to sum up the aforementioned ideas regarding spirituality: "the animating life force" (p. 1).

This life force can be seen through a seemingly infinite number of individual expressions. Some people express their spirituality through journaling, studying sacred texts, enjoying nature, or going for walks. Others express their search for meaning and purpose in less socially accepted manners, through drugs and altered states (Sink, 2004). Many people express their spirituality through religion; however, it is important to acknowledge that religion is only *one* expression of spirituality (ASERVIC, 2005; Parker, 2011).

When teasing out the differences between religion and spirituality, it is important to realize that religion is defined by its boundaries, unlike the boundless nature of spirituality (ASERVIC, 2005). Spirituality is personal; religion is social (Miller & Thoresen, 2003). Although spirituality may often incorporate religious beliefs, it does not necessarily have to. Spiritual people can be unreligious; religious people can be unspiritual (Wolf, 2004). It greatly limits the understanding of spirituality to describe it as interchangeable with religion (Wolf, 2004).

Hall, Dixon, and Mauzey (2004) viewed religion and spirituality as distinct yet overlapping. Whereas spirituality relates to a deep sense of wholeness and connectedness with the world, religion is limited by cultural and social boundaries. Religion points people towards a specific higher power, whereas spirituality moves them to understand purpose and meaning in life (Hall et al., 2004). In a survey designed to more clearly understand the differences between religion and spirituality, Hall et al. (2004) found that those who describe themselves as religious viewed God as judgmental; those who describe themselves as spiritual viewed God as loving, forgiving, and nonjudgmental. To broadly summarize the differences between religion and spirituality, Miller and Thoresen (2003) suggested that religion is to spirituality as medicine is to health; although the two concepts may be closely intertwined for many people, religion is only one expression of spirituality (ASERVIC, 2005; Miller & Thoresen, 2003).

Spirituality in Counseling

Now that spirituality has been defined, described, explained, and differentiated from religion, it may be helpful to consider why professional counselors should acknowledge and utilize spirituality as a counseling tool. Spirituality is a multicultural issue (Richards et al., 2009). Acknowledging clients' diversity and their individual and cultural worldview is an essential

aspect of the counselor's role (American Counselors Association, 2005). With spirituality in the center of many people's worldview, it is essential that counselors acknowledge the role that spirituality and religious traditions play in their clients' lives (Lonborg, 2004). MacDonald (2004) explained that spirituality is a part of worldview; worldviews are the conceptual schemas by which individuals organize and make sense out of life. Because these schemas often impact one's life subconsciously, counseling can be a place where awareness is gained through self-reflection and self-searching to grasp a better understanding of the role that one's worldview, spirituality included, plays in one's life (MacDonald, 2004).

On a similar note, Richards et al. (2009) suggested that avoiding the topic of spirituality in counseling could have negative effects on the counseling goals and outcomes. Being aware of clients' worldviews allows counselors to better empathically understand their clients. This understanding can be used as a resource for promoting healing; however, when counselors misunderstand clients' worldviews, having not taken the time to acknowledge or assess this aspect of their lives, the therapeutic relationship can be undermined and the facilitation of positive counseling can be hindered (Richards et al., 2009).

Beyond the advantages of acknowledging clients' worldviews in counseling, the importance of spirituality in counseling can also be seen by looking at the curriculum of counselor education programs. Many graduate programs acknowledge a place for addressing the spiritual issues of clients in the training of professional counselors (MacDonald, 2004). Hall et al. (2004) explained that the importance of counselor training in spirituality is continually increasing as more and more research shows the connection between spirituality and mental health. As an example, Curtis and Glass' (2002) study looked at the impact of spirituality training in counselor education programs. This pilot study used a graduate counselor education

class as the intervention. The class addressed how spirituality is helpful for clients, increasing self-awareness around reactions to spirituality, the importance of not imposing values, and specific techniques for addressing spiritual issues. The study revealed that students who took part in the intervention had significantly increased confidence and ability in addressing spiritual issues with their clients.

The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), the accreditation of counselor education programs, also pointed towards the importance of spirituality in counseling. In Section II, Professional Identity, of the CACREP (2009) standards, competence in diversity was emphasized; understanding multicultural and pluralistic trends, culturally diverse clients, and multi-cultural counseling theories were a few of the standards related to competence in understanding and using spirituality in counseling. Furthermore, CACREP (2009) stated that counselors should "promote optimal wellness and growth of the human spirit…" (p. 11).

CACREP (2009) also required that professional counselors receive training in (1) the effects of crises and trauma, (2) development theories, (3) resilience theories, (4) addiction interventions and treatment, and (5) facilitation of optimal development and wellness over the life-span. All of these sections relate to spirituality; (1) crises and trauma often deal with end of life and loss issues (Jackson-Cherry & Erford, 2010); (2) spiritual development is a major genre of developmental theories (Cashwell & Young, 2005; Gold, 2010); (3) spirituality has been closely linked with the topic of resilience (Dobmeier, 2011); (4) CACREP (2009) stated that counselors should understand the role of spirituality in recovery; spirituality is well-accepted and prominent tool in addiction treatment and interventions (Hagedorn & Morehead, 2010; Miller & Bogenschutz, 2007; Morgan, 2009); (5) spirituality, as previously mentioned, is central to the

concept of wellness (Myers et al., 2000). CACREP clearly values spirituality as a topic that

counselor educators should receive training in as all of these sections of the CACREP (2009)

standards are related to the topic of spirituality. Further, CACREP (2009) took the time to define

the term spirituality in the glossary of the standards; it is defined in terms of acknowledgment of

a higher power as well as the search for wholeness and harmony.

The American Counseling Association (ACA) Code of Ethics also acknowledged the role

of spirituality in professional counseling (ACA, 2005). In section A.9.a, the ACA (2005) Code of

Ethics addressed the role of counselors in assisting terminally ill clients with their spiritual

needs. Also in the section on Professional Responsibility, the Code of Ethics outlined the need

for counselors to explore their own spiritual beliefs (ACA, 2005). Further, ACA has an entire

division dedicated to the study and promotion of spirituality in counseling—The Association for

Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling (ASERVIC). ASERVIC, with ACA's

endorsement, compiled a list of 14 competencies for addressing spiritual and religious issues in

counseling, broken down into six categories: Culture and Worldview, Counselor Self-

Awareness, Human and Spiritual Development, Communication, Assessment, and Diagnosis and

Treatment (ASERVIC, 2009). As seen through the support of CACREP, ACA, and ASERVIC,

spirituality clearly has an established role in the work of professional counselors.

The importance of spirituality as a counseling tool is also evident in the issues that are

often closely linked with spirituality. Ignoring spiritual and religious traditions of clients not only

hinders the formation of a healthy therapeutic relationship, it also restricts a counselor from

utilizing numerous helpful interventions (Burke et al., 1999). If the desire to be strong and to

strive for wellness comes from the soul, as Kessler and Fink (2008) claimed, than to ignore a

client's spirituality is to ignore his or her greatest motivating factor. Sink (2004) explained that

spirituality is central to human functioning, assisting with both physical and mental health.

In one study, two findings pointed towards the connection between spirituality and

health; (1) the majority of patients receiving health care reported preferring their caregivers to

ask about and discuss their spirituality and its connection to their health issues; (2) health is

strongly influenced by a sense of purpose and meaning in life, along with the existence of quality

personal relationships (Miller & Thoresen, 2003). More specifically, it is believed that the

spiritual values of love, hope, contentment, and forgiveness have a positive influence on neural

pathways that connect to the endocrinal and immune systems—impacting both hormones and

physical health (Cornah, 2006). Ironson et al. (2002) found a connection between spirituality and

health in a study conducted with HIV/AIDS survivors; surviving HIV/AIDS was significantly

related to the existence of religious values. Researchers also found a connection between

spirituality and mental health (Burke et al., 1999; Cameron, 2010; Cornah, 2006; Miller and

Thoresen, 2003; Pargamont and Mahoney, 2005).

By providing an alternative route for reframing and reinterpreting life events that seem

uncontrollable, spirituality can serve to positively impact mental health (Cameron, 2010). Cornah

(2006) explained that spirituality is connected with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD); it

helps people deal with the aftermath of trauma by providing an alternative, hopeful perspective

of the traumatic experience. Further, spirituality has been shown to provide people suffering

from schizophrenia with hope, meaning, and comfort (Cornah, 2006).

With spirituality listed as one of the most significant components of a person called upon

when dealing with the stresses of life, it can also be a helpful tool when dealing with a variety of

other common mental health concerns (Miller & Thoresen, 2003). Spirituality is strongly

connected to issues of loss: divorce, death, job displacement or cuts, aging of self and others, illness, personal and social developmental changes (puberty, empty nest, midlife crisis), accidents, etc. (Burke et al., 1999; Pargamont & Mahoney, 2005). Clearly, spirituality has its place in professional counseling. Not only does a strong connection exist between spirituality and physical health, there also exists a significant amount of research that connects spirituality to positive mental health.

Spiritual Development

Professional counselors approach their work with clients from a developmental perspective (Corey, 2005). Among the different types of life development is spiritual/faith development (Sink, 2004). Burke et al. (1999) saw spiritual development as so central to an individual that life development could not be understood without giving notice to the process of spiritual development; similarly, Benson (2004) explained that spiritual development is a crucial factor in other dimensions of a person's development—cognitive, social, and moral.

Spiritual Development impacts how an individual views the world, their place in the world, and how they choose to live (Benson & Roehlkepartain, 2008). Benson and Roehlkepartain (2008) made note of the dynamic interplay of spiritual development on awareness/awakening (how people view themselves, others, and the universe), interconnection and belonging (a sense of being part of something that transcends individuality), and how people express their identity, passions, values, and creativity. Although the spiritual development process can seem vague and intangible, Duff (2003) explained that it is a process that can be fostered and encouraged by trying to understand the conditions that promote it: peace, silence, self-searching, and growth in self-knowledge. Also helpful in understanding the importance of

spiritual development to counselors are the various models of religious, faith, and spiritual

development (Gold, 2010).

Several popular models of spiritual development include James Fowler's Faith

Development, Fritz Oser's Development of Religious Judgment, Vicky Genia's Development of

Growth, Ana-Maria Rizzuto's Development of Representations of God, and Mosh Spero's

Development of Religious Transformations (Gold, 2010). Although each model offers a unique

perspective on spiritual development, Parker (2011) suggested that counselors can use Fowler's

model, in particular, to gain an understanding of their own and their clients' spiritual journeys.

Fowler's model includes 5 different stages of faith development: (1) Intuitive-projective,

(2) Mythic-literal, (3) Synthetic-conventional, (4) Individuative-reflective, and (5) Conjunctive

(Fowler, 1981). In stage one, a child has an egocentric perspective of the world, begins to form

values through stories, and experiences fantasy and reality as tightly interwoven concepts. In

stage two, children are generally impacted by different forms of drama and self-generated

stories, and children have developed a more concrete grasp on reality as well as cause and effect

relationships. Beginning to understand the concept of justice is also an indicator of stage two

development. Stage three is characterized by the early signs of forming a personal identity, the

idea that self-worth is determined by the approval of others, and basing one's identity on values,

commitments, and relationships. In stage three, it is common to over-internalize the judgments of

others. Stage four begins the process of individualizing one's own spirituality; values are

challenged, independence in choosing and expressing beliefs is apparent, distancing from

previously assumed values occurs, and tension exists between individuality and group

membership. Finally, stage five includes the processes of revisiting and restructuring the beliefs

of the past, achieving deeper spiritual convictions, coming to grips with the relativity of values

and beliefs, and perceiving truth as multidimensional (Fowler, 1981).

Fowler's (1981) model is one of several models that counselors can use to better

understand their clients' spiritual journeys, which allows counselors to better empathize with

their clients and also provides them with the information necessary to help clients as they

transition from one stage to the next (Parker, 2011). When counselors are aware of a client's

spiritual journey, they are better prepared to use the client's spirituality as a tool for growth,

recovery, coping, grief, and other counseling issues (Parker, 2011).

With the onset of formal-logical thinking during adolescence, it is particularly important

for counselors to be aware of their clients' spirituality during this developmental stage (Sink,

2004). Adolescents take part in self-analysis, reflection of feelings, and consideration of their

place in the world; they search for meaning, purpose, and transcendence as they progress through

the process of identity formation (Sink, 2004). This age is a time of value formation, meaning-

making, identity formation, and gaining a sense of belonging (Benson & Roehlkepartain, 2008;

Burke et al., 1999). In adolescence, teens search for personal truth (Murgatroyd, 2003). Spiritual

development is a core construct of identity formation and one of the central tasks of adolescence,

which requires nurturance, attention, and support (MacDonald, 2004; Quinn, 2008). Not

addressing or acknowledging spiritual development hinders healthy growth and can interfere

negatively with the other developmental tasks of adolescents (Benson & Roehlkepartain, 2008).

Spiritual development is particularly salient for adolescents, in general; however,

researchers agree that attention to spiritual development may be even more essential for

vulnerable, urban youth (Benson & Roehlkepartain, 2008; Quinn, 2008). Urban youth often lack

support from home or experience inconsistent support from home, school, and the community

(Quinn, 2008). In an urban environment where the dangers of abuse, homelessness, hunger, drugs, gangs, and rape are prevalent, the benefits of spiritual development—value formation, establishing a sense of purpose, giving meaning to life events—can be especially helpful in protecting this population from harm (Benson & Roehlkepartain, 2008; Quinn, 2008). Spiritual development has been linked to the concepts of moral development, civic development, identity formation, coping, resilience, well-being, and thriving: all concepts that are particularly relevant for the vulnerable youth in urban settings (Benson & Roehlkepartain, 2008; Dobmeier, 2011; Quinn, 2008).

Spirituality in School Counseling

Thinking developmentally is essential for school counselors because of the formative developmental stages of children and adolescents, as previously discussed (Sink, 2004). Numerous researchers advocated for the use of spirituality in school counseling (Dobmeier; 2011; Ingersoll & Bauer, 2004; Sink, 2004; Sink & Richmond, 2004; Ruddock & Cameron, 2010; Wolf, 2004). Ingersol and Bauer (2004) argued that spirituality should naturally be a part of schools because optimum integration, attending to all aspects of an individual's development, leads to optimum functioning, which is the goal of public education. Chin (2006) further advocated for spirituality in schools by suggesting that a relationship between spirituality and formal education creates a global perspective that aids society, rather than an egocentric social outlook. As one of the major components of value-formation in our students, it is essential that school counselors assess and attend to the religious and spiritual dimensions of their students (Richards et al., 2009).

Schools, urban schools in particular, lend themselves naturally to discussions surrounding spirituality, due to the diverse nature of the student population: ethic, cultural, racial, socio-

economic, etc. With students' ethics, thinking, and perspectives influenced by their spirituality, school counselors need to be familiar and comfortable with their own religious and spiritual beliefs as well as those of their students (Wolf, 2004). Not only does diversity lend itself to discussions of spirituality, but discussions of spirituality can lead to further discussions of diversity and its impact on students, a relevant and important discussion in urban school settings (MacDonald, 2004).

Other than diversity, there are numerous topics that are common in school counseling that closely relate to student spirituality. When students deal with a crisis situation after a disaster, they encounter the spiritual concepts of loss, hope, perseverance, and coping (Sink & Richmond, 2004). When students lose a classmate they ask God, "why?" Furthermore, students discuss sex and child-bearing, abortion, break-ups, divorce, and many other issues that elicit spiritual topics (Sink & Richmond, 2004).

Spirituality is also apparent in students' lives through its many avenues of expression. Some students express their spirituality through the clothes they wear, their assignments for class (poetry, acting, etc.), or through symbols, such as tattoos, accessories, or jewelry (Sink, 2004). Other students express their spirituality through physical activities like sports or hiking. Some students pray, sing, or listen to music as spiritual expressions (Sink, 2004). Spirituality can be seen in schools if counselors choose to acknowledge that aspect of their students' lives.

Although it is obvious that student spirituality is present in schools, it can be a challenge to incorporate spirituality into the school counselor role (Sink, 2004); however, the American School Counseling Association (ASCA), character education programs, the Search Institute's Developmental Assets (SIDA), and the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) are

examples of educational organizations or structures that support the use of spirituality in the

school counseling role (Dobmeier, 2011; Ruddock & Cameron, 2010; Sink, 2004).

SIDA was created to promote healthy children and attempts to represent the different

needs of students in school (Dobmeier, 2011). One popularly accepted model of character

education, Josephson Institute's 6 Pillars of Character, includes the character traits of caring,

respect, responsibility, honesty, trustworthiness, and citizenship (The Josephine Institute of

Ethics, 2010). The ASCA (2005) National Standards outline how counselor responsibilities

should be carried out in order to meet the needs of all students (Dobmeier, 2011). Dobmeier

(2011) explored the goals of SIDA, the 6 Pillars of Character Education, and the ASCA National

Model Competency Indicators and found that all three programs support spirituality as a resource

that enhances student resiliency. Dobmeier (2011) further concluded that these three programs

support spirituality in general as well as permitting school counselors to work with students at a

cognitive, emotional, social, moral, and spiritual level. In summarizing his findings, Dobmeier

(2011) found common emphases between these three educational programs and the ASERVIC

(2009) competency indicators for spirituality in counseling: compassion, value systems,

wellness, connectedness, value of others, meaning, community, wholeness, and trust.

In the National Model for School Counseling, ASCA (2005) implied the importance of

spirituality in school counseling: "What we believe about students, families, teachers and the

educational process is crucial in supporting success for every student. Our beliefs are derived

from our own background and experiences, and our beliefs drive our behavior" (p. 27). Although

this statement is about school counselors, it says something larger about human nature: people's

background, experiences, and beliefs drive their behavior. This general belief applied to students

suggests the need for school counselors to understand their student's spiritual beliefs and motivating factors.

In another document, the Ethical Guidelines for School Counselors, ASCA (2010) indicated support for spirituality in school counseling. ASCA (2010) stated: "Each person has the right to be respected, be treated with dignity and have access to a comprehensive school counseling program that advocates for and affirms all students from diverse populations including…religious/spiritual identity" (p. 1). This statement opens the door for school counselors to explore the role of religion and spirituality in their students' lives. The ASCA (2010) Ethical Guidelines also stated that school counselors should receive training in religious and spiritual traditions (E.2.c).

Sink (2004) drew connections between ASCA and the school counselor's use of spirituality. School counselors are encouraged by ASCA to foster development in areas peripheral to academics (Sink, 2004). With spirituality as part of the framework through which students make sense out of life events, Sink (2004) concluded that within the ASCA (2005) National Model, as a comprehensive and preventative program, spirituality is inherently included. The National Model instructs counselors to function from a systemic perspective; counselors with this perspective will value the spiritual and religious traditions of their students and the families they are a part of (Sink, 2004).

Specifically, ASCA's (2005) Personal/Social competencies A1 (Acquire self-knowledge), A2 (Acquire Interpersonal Skills), B1 (Apply Self-Knowledge), and C1 (Acquire Personal Safety Skills) relate to spirituality in that all four emphasize finding meaning and purpose in life issues (Sink, 2004). Sink (2004) also noted that spirituality can be sensitively infused in counseling and group guidance lessons designed to meet the three standards of the

ASCA's (2005) Personal/Social Domain: Standard A (respect of self and others), B (decision

making, setting goals, and achieving goals), and C (safety and survival skills).

Another educational organization, The Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED,

2004), outlined specific indicators of spiritual expressions in students: values, principals, respect

for self and others, awareness of self and others beliefs, empathy, concern, care, courage, defense

of values and beliefs, acknowledgment of intangible concepts (love, beauty, truth, goodness),

creativity, and understanding emotions and feelings. Beyond this outline of spiritual expressions,

OFSTED (2004) made suggestions for how school counselors can encourage their students along

their spiritual journeys (Ruddock and Cameron, 2010).

OFSTED (2004) suggested that school professionals foster spiritual development and

growth by giving students the opportunity to explore values and beliefs. School professionals are

also encouraged to support students in exploring what animates themselves and others. OFSTED

(2004) recommended creating a climate of nonjudgment and openness, and encouraging

discussions of feelings, emotions, respect, and diversity. These techniques can occur in

individual counseling, group counseling sessions, or classroom guidance lessons (Sink, 2004).

Researchers suggested several means through which counselors can encourage discussions of

spirituality; vignettes, drama, literature, journaling, and case studies can aid in bringing up topics

of spirituality (Burke et al., 1999; Rayburn, 2004; Sink, 2004). Also, simply creating a safe

environment and listening attentively for undertones of spirituality are basic counseling skills

that foster spiritual discussions, development, and growth (MacDonald, 2004; Richards et al.,

2009; Sink, 2004). Finally, Wolf (2004) explained that Choice Theory, Reality Therapy, and

Person-Centered Counseling all lend themselves to the use of spirituality in counseling because

of their concern for the human needs of love and belonging, as well as the concepts of values, and personal worth and dignity.

Although in support of spirituality as a counseling tool, Wolf (2004) warned school counselors to always remain neutral in their discussion of spiritual and religious issues with their students, ensuring that they do not impart their own values on their clients. Counselors must pay attention to the impressions they are making on their students in how they react to spiritual discussions in counseling (Richards et al., 2009). Along the same lines, the issue of separating church and state comes into play when considering the use of spirituality in schools (Benson & Roehlkepartain, 2008; Ingersol & Bauer, 2004; Longborg & Bowen, 2004; MacDonald, 2004; Miller & Thoresen, 2003) The United States Constitution prohibits the use of public funds for the endorsement of a particular religious phenomena (Miller & Thoresen, 2003); however, openness to student spirituality does not break this code or the ethical codes of ACA (2005) or ASCA (2010) (MacDonald, 2004).

Professional counseling differs from other mental health professions in its holistic, wellness-focused approach, with includes attending to client's spiritual and religious beliefs and development (Myers et al., 2005). Although it is difficult to concretely define spirituality, it can be understood as an animating life force that can be seen in people and expressed by people in a variety of ways (ASERVIC, 2005). As a central component of a person and a person's healthy development, spirituality is a tool that counselors can use when working with clients (Gold, 2010). Spirituality is particularly salient in the work of school counselors because of the formative developmental stages of their students (Sink, 2004). Despite the challenges that come with bringing the use of spirituality into school counseling, there are numerous methods suggested for fostering, encouraging, and attending to the spiritual needs of students (Ruddock &

Cameron, 2010). Secondary school counselors in an urban setting should be especially adept at using spirituality in their work—research indicates the need for attention to spirituality among adolescents and vulnerable youth (Benson & Roehlkepartain, 2008; Quinn, 2008).

This literature review explains how and why spirituality can be used as a counseling tool by school counselors working in an urban secondary setting. However, the current research lacks empirical evidence. The following research study attempts to add empirical data to this topic by answering the question below:

1. Will a one hour intervention that introduces what spirituality in school counseling is, why it is used, and how it can be utilized impact secondary school counselors and school counseling interns use of spirituality as a school counseling tool?

Throughout the literature review, no research studies were found containing quantified data regarding the impact of interventions on the awareness and use of spirituality as a school counseling tool. This researcher expects that the intervention explained below will increase awareness and use of spirituality as a counseling tool in secondary school counselors.

Method

Because research was not found on the impact of interventions designed to make school counselors aware of how and why to use spirituality as counseling tool, this research is a pilot study designed to begin the exploration of spirituality as a school counseling tool. The methods of the study are explained through descriptions of the research design and approach, the participants, the setting and sample, the instruments and materials, the data analysis process, as well as the measures taken to protect participants' rights.

Participants

Participants included 9 school counselors and school counselor interns currently working with students grades seven to 12 in an urban school district in Western New York State. The group was composed of black, white, and biracial individuals ranging from 20 to 50 years of age. The group of participants included 11% males and 89% females. Participants varied from less than a year to 20 years of experience working as a school counselor or school counselor intern. All participants were graduates of a Master Degree Programs in school counseling or were in the final semester of their school counseling program.

Sampling Procedures

A convenience sampling method was used in this study. An email was sent to all secondary school counselors and interns within this specific school, 20 in total, inviting them to participate in a workshop on spirituality as a school counseling tool. No incentive to participate was offered. Just under 50% of the school counselors invited to the workshop participated. Ethical standards of confidentiality and informed consent were met and the described methods were approved by the school districts internal review board. Participants received a Statement of Informed Consent (Appendix A) outlining the purpose of the research and the participants' rights. The participants' confidentiality was kept through the creation of a secret code known only to each individual participant. This code was used to match pre-tests with post-tests while maintaining the participants' anonymity.

Measures

Data was collected on each participant's understanding and use of spirituality as a school counseling tool prior to beginning the workshop. This data was collected using a 26-question survey titled Spirituality in School Counseling – Pre/Post-Test (Appendix B). This survey was

created by this researcher and was based on up-to-date, peer-reviewed research about the use of spirituality in school counseling (please refer to Literature Review). This same instrument was used to collect data after the workshop.

Research Design

Participants were given an explanation of why the research was being conducted—in order to complete graduate research requirements. Participants were then given a Statement of Informed Consent (Appendix A) attached to a copy of the survey (Appendix B). Participants were instructed to remove the statement of informed consent and fill in the code at the top of the survey before answering the questions. Once the surveys were all completed, they were collected and the 1 hour workshop began.

The workshop was composed of information from up-to-date, peer-reviewed research regarding spirituality in school counseling and followed the Workshop Outline (Appendix C). Following the workshop, participants were given another copy of the survey in a sealed envelope with instructions written on it:

Please open this envelope and then complete and return the survey during of the week of April 9th. After filling in the code at the top of the survey and completing the questions that follow, please return surveys to Alex Clark at [address excluded to protect the school districts confidentiality].

Envelopes containing surveys were collected and opened by the school secretary and surveys were placed in a folder then locked in a desk drawer in order to protect the confidentiality of the participants. A reminder email was sent to all school secondary counselors/interns reminding them to complete and return the post-test survey if they participated in the workshop.

Pre-test and post-test surveys were matched using the code on top of the surveys and the data was used to evaluate the impact of the one hour workshop on the use and understanding of spirituality in school counseling.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using a Paired T-Test to determine the impact of the intervention on school counselors' understanding and use of spirituality as a school counseling tool. Each variable was measured using a 4-point Likert scale.

Results

This research aimed to understand the impact of a 1 hour workshop designed to increase school counselors' use and understanding of spirituality as a school counseling tool in an urban secondary setting. Briefly described, the results clearly indicate through mean comparison that scores increased on the majority of items surveyed following the intervention.

All nine of the participants that completed the pre-test and were present at the workshop also completed the post-test. Comparison of pre-tests and post-tests reveals that scores on 23 of the 26 survey items increased following the workshop. Three items did not show increases in the mean from pre-test to post-test. Of these three items, two items, item 14 and 16, did not change in either direction and item 6 showed a decrease in mean from pre-test to post-test. In order to determine the validity of the findings, a paired t-test was used to calculate statistical significance. Of the 23 items that showed increases in the mean, seven items received a p-value of .05 or less following analysis through a paired t-test (Table 1).

The survey included items regarding counselors' use of spirituality as a counseling tool and counselors' understanding of how to use spirituality as a counseling tool. Of the seven items

that received a p-value of .05 or less, considered statistically significant findings, four items

referred to the use of spirituality in counseling and three referred to understanding spirituality as

a counseling tool. Effect size, measured by calculating Cohen's D, ranged from .08 to 2.0 for the

seven statistically significant findings (Table 2).

Table 1

Changes in Mean Scores for the Seven Statistically Significant Items

Note: The y-axis refers to mean scores on a Likert scale, ranging from 1 to 4.

Table 2

Paired T-test results for items with p-value of .05 or less

Item	Label	X_1	X_2	sd	t	df	p	Cohen's d (effect size)
1	*Understand How to use spirituality*	2.667	3.667	0.5	6	8	0	2
2	*Understand Term spirituality*	3.444	3.889	0.52705	2.53	8	0.035	0.8
3	*Understand Difference b/w rel. and spirituality*	3.444	4	0.52705	3.162	8	0.013	1.05
11	*Comfort with Interconnectedness*	3.222	3.778	0.52705	3.162	8	0.013	1.05
24	*Comfortable Using Spirituality*	2.667	3.556	0.60093	4.438	8	0.002	1.48
25	*It is important to use spirituality*	3.222	3.778	0.52705	3.162	8	0.013	1.05
26	*I use spirituality in school counseling*	2.667	3.444	0.44096	5.292	8	0.001	1.76

Note: X_1 refers to mean scores from the pre-test. X_2 refers to mean scores from the post-test. SD stands for standard deviation. t stands for t-score. Df equals degrees of freedom. P refers to p-value. Cohen's d refers to the effect size.

Discussion

Due to the lack of a validity and reliability tested survey, the results are inconclusive. Although the results clearly indicate that change occurred after the intervention, it is not clear what exactly changed.

At face value, these results seem to suggest that the intervention was successful in increasing school counselors' use and understanding of spirituality in school counseling; however, different conclusions may arise after reviewing the data in more depth. Of the 26 items on the survey, 9 items measure use and understanding of spirituality in counseling through phrasing that specifically uses the word spirituality; 16 of the other items used words related to spirituality, but not the word spirituality directly: meaning, purpose, love, forgiveness, etc. Only one of the 16 items that referred to spirituality indirectly was among the statistically significant findings. Further, of the seven items with p-values less than .05, six directly mentioned spirituality on the survey through use of the word spirituality. This relationship between significant findings and the use of the word spirituality seems to suggest that participants answered questions differently based on whether or not the word spirituality was in the question.

In taking a deeper look at what the data may reflect, item one reads, **I understand how to use spirituality as a counseling tool.** This item increased by two standard deviations following the intervention, the largest effect size present in the data. This effect size seems to suggest that the intervention either successfully provided new approaches for counselors to use when addressing spirituality with their students or gave the counselors insights that allowed them to see more clearly how they are already using spirituality in their work; it is not clear which impact was made on the counselors. Similarly, in items 24 and 26, which measured counselors' comfort using spirituality in their work and actual use of spirituality in their work, respectively, effect sizes of 1.48 and 1.76 reflect that something in the intervention impacted how counselors responded to the questions. But again, what is not clear is if counselors' comfort using and actual use of spirituality in counseling increased or whether their understanding of what spirituality

means and how they are already using it in their work increased, or a combination of both possibilities.

The responses from items two and three, which measured understanding of the term spirituality and understanding of the differences between spirituality and religion, may shed light on the inconclusive results mentioned above. With these two items showing that counselors more clearly understand the breadth and meaning of the word spirituality, these results suggest that it is more likely that what changed after the intervention was counselors' perception of their use of spirituality in their work rather than actual change in their practice.

Of the seven significant findings, item four and 25 have yet to be discussed. Item four was the one item of the 16 that did not directly mention spirituality that increased significantly from pre-test to post-test. This outlier suggests that the intervention clarified the connection between interconnectedness and spirituality in counseling. Following the intervention, counselors felt more comfortable talking with students about issues related to interconnectedness. Item 25 measured how important school counselors viewed the use of spirituality as a counseling tool in urban secondary settings. This item increased by 1 standard deviation following the intervention, suggesting that the intervention successfully emphasized the importance of fostering spiritual development among adolescents in an urban high school.

Conclusions

The results show that the intervention was successful in increasing counselors' use and understanding of spirituality in school counseling; however the limitations of the research, detailed below, reflect lack of strength in this conclusion. It is conclusive, however, that participants have a clearer understanding of what the term spirituality means, what spirituality in

counseling looks like, the differences between religion and spirituality, and why counselors should include the use of spirituality in their work.

Conclusions are limited by both the sample used in this research as well as the method of assessment. With only nine participants, all from the same school, this research cannot be generalized to all secondary school counselors working in an urban setting. Future research might include replicating this research with a greater number of participants in order to increase generalizability of the results. Further, this research is limited by the assessment tool used. The survey used was created by the researcher and was not tested for reliability or validity. The results suggest that the survey does not accurately differentiate between increased understanding of what spirituality in counseling means and actual increases in the use of spirituality in school counseling. Future research might include the development of a reliability- and validity-tested instrument that will more effectively differentiate between changes in perception and practice.

It seems that this research may be best utilized when considering how spirituality should be assessed in the future. Assessment items that use the word spirituality in them yield different results than similar questions that refer to spirituality less directly. It is suggested that when assessing spirituality in future research, researchers either clearly define the meaning and breadth of the word spirituality prior to assessing participants or assess spirituality in a way that does not specifically use the word spirituality.

Although this research has considerable limitations, school counselors in an urban secondary setting can still benefit from paying attention to the results. The intervention, based on information gathered through a thorough review of the literature, increased counselors perception of the importance of using spirituality in their work. Spirituality is a powerful tool that can be used to foster successful development in vulnerable youth, especially adolescents, whose civic,

moral, social, and individual identities are greatly impacted during these formative years (Benson

& Reohlkepartain, 2008; Burke et al, 1999; Quinn, 2008).

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Appendix A

STATEMENT OF INFORMED CONSENT

The purpose of this research project is to examine impact of a 45 minute workshop regarding the use of spirituality in the school setting on counselors use, perception, and understanding of spirituality in the school setting. This research project is also being conducted in order for me to complete my master's thesis for the Department of Counselor Education at the College at Brockport, SUNY.

In order to participate in this study, your informed consent is required. You are being asked to make a decision whether or not to participate in the project. If you want to participate in the project, and agree with the statements below, your completion of the Pre-Test signifies your consent. You may change your mind at any time and leave the study without penalty, even after the study has begun.

I understand that:

1. My participation is voluntary and I have the right to refuse to answer any questions.
2. My confidentiality is guaranteed. My name will not be written on the survey. There will be no way to connect me to my written survey. If any publication results from this research, I would not be identified by name.
3. There will be no anticipated personal risks or benefits because of my participation in this project.
4. My participation involves completing an eight question pre-test, listening to a 30 minute presentation, and completing an eight question post-test several months following the presentation.
5. Approximately 8 people will take part in this study. The results will be used for the completion of a master's thesis by the primary researcher.
6. Data will be kept in a locked filing cabinet by the investigator. Data and consent forms will be destroyed by shredding when the research has been accepted and approved.

I am 18 years of age or older. I have read and understand the above statements. All my questions about my participation in this study have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in the study realizing I may withdraw without penalty at any time during the survey process. Returning the survey indicates my consent to participate.

If you have any questions you may contact:

Primary researcher	Faculty Advisor
Alex Clark	Summer Reiner, The College at Brockport, SUNY
585-469-1121	585-395-2258
aclar4@brockport.edu	sreiner@brocport.edu

Appendix B

Spirituality Workshop Outline

A: Introduction

1. *Introduction (pre-test, workshop, one month later, post-test)*
- Confidentiality
- Informed Consent
- Trying to find the impact of this intervention
2. *Pre Test*

B: Spirituality vs Religion

1. *Activity*
    a. In groups of two or three, spend a few minutes coming up with definitions/explanations for spirituality and religion. How are they similar? How are they different?
    b. Briefly share answers with group
2. *Informational Session*
    a. Religion and Spirituality are different and yet closely related
    b. Spirituality is understood in more general terms than religion as "the animating life force" (ASERVIC, 2005)
    c. Spirituality gives you a sense that you are a part of something greater than yourself, brings meaning to your life, gives you purpose, gives you motivation; it is a force that transcends physical, limits of space, time, and matter (Cacioppo, 2005; Richards et al., 2009; Ruddock & Cameron, 2010).
    d. Spirituality can be seen through a seemingly infinite number of individual expressions: journaling, nature, playing sports, yoga, meditation, reading, going for walks, exercise, religion (Sink, 2004)
    e. Religion is ONE expression of the larger concept of spirituality
    f. Religion is defined by its boundaries (rules, commandments, traditions, expectations, etc.); spirituality is boundless. Religion is social; spirituality is personal. Spirituality often incorporates religious beliefs, but it does not have to. Spiritual people can be unreligious; religious people can be unspiritual (ASERVIC, 2005; Miller & Thoresen, 2003; Wolf, 2004).
    g. SPIRITUALITY AND RELIGION ARE NOT INTERCHANGABLE TOPICS (Wolf, 2004)
3. *Discussion*
    a. Research indicates that counselors must dedicate time to understanding their own spirituality if they are to effectively recognize their clients' spirituality and use it as a tool when working with them (Wolf, 2004)

b. After hearing these words—transcendence, awareness of something greater, peace, meaning, motivation, life-force, etc.—how do you view your own spirituality?

c. Can you see a difference between spirituality and religion?

d. What are three ways that you express your own spirituality?

e. Comments

f. Questions

C: Spirituality in Schools

1. *The realm of Spirituality*

    a. Topics covered under the umbrella of spirituality

        i. Meaning, purpose, unique thoughts and feelings (Sink, 2004)

            1. Have you ever heard a student say something resembling: "Sometimes I wonder what's it's all about;" or

            2. "I know I'm here for a reason, I just don't know why;" or

            3. "Nobody understands the way I see things."

        ii. Love, care, and concern for others (Rayburn, 2004)

            1. Have you ever heard students talk about a sense of responsibility towards caring for others

            2. Think about young boys feeling to need to "be the man in the family"

        iii. Forgiveness, cooperation, peace, goodness (Rayburn, 2004)

        iv. Love, hope, evil, loneliness, guilt, interconnectedness, individuality, centeredness, intimacy (Longborg, 2004)

        v. Awareness, self-knowledge, transcendence (Duff, 2003)

    b. All of these ideas are closely related to the idea of spirituality

    c. These concepts are doors that let us view aspects of our students' spirituality (Sink, 2004)

2. *Expressions of Student Spirituality* (Sink, 2004)

    a. Clothes

    b. Class assignments (poetry, writing, college essay, history courses, acting, reading, etc.)

    c. Symbols

        i. Accessories

        ii. Jewelry

        iii. Tattoos

        iv. Sports

        v. Hiking

        vi. Listening to music

3. *Why Spirituality is Important in Secondary Urban Schools*

a. Adolescent Development
   i. Spiritual development is central in adolescent development because it impacts cognitive, social, and moral development (Benson, 2004)
   ii. The onset of formal-logical thinking occurs during adolescence (Benson & Roehlkepartain, 2008; Burke et al., 1999; MacDonald, 2004; Murgatroyd, 2003; Quinn, 2008)
      1. Students partake in self-analysis
      2. Reflection of feelings
      3. Consideration of place in the world
      4. Search for meaning
      5. Search for personal truth
      6. Search for sense of belonging
      7. Identity formation
   iii. Spiritual development is a core construct of identity formation (Benson & Roehlkepartain, 2008)
      1. This aspect requires nurturance, attention, and support
      2. Ignoring spiritual development hinders healthy growth
      3. Not acknowledging spirituality in adolescence negatively impacts the other developmental tasks of adolescents
b. Urban Setting (Benson & Roehlkepartain, 2008; Quinn, 2008)
   i. Research suggests that spiritual development is even more essential for vulnerable, urban youth
   ii. Lack support from home
   iii. Inconsistent support from home, school, and community
   iv. Abuse, homelessness, hunger, drugs, gangs, rape, etc. more prevalent in urban environment
      1. Fostering spiritual development can protect students from harm
         a. Value formation
         b. Establishing sense of purpose
         c. Finding meaning in life events
         d. An understanding of the concept of hope
   v. Spiritual development linked to concepts that are particularly relevant for vulnerable youth in urban settings
      1. Moral development
      2. Civic development
      3. Identity formation
      4. Coping
      5. Resilience
      6. Well-being
      7. Thriving

4. *Practical suggestions for how to use spirituality as a counseling tool*
   a. Crisis situations elicit discussions of spiritual topics (Sink & Richmond, 2004)
      i. Loss
      ii. Hope
      iii. Perseverance
      iv. Coping
      v. Asking God "Why?"
   b. Other common issues are often closely linked to student spirituality
      i. Child-bearing
      ii. Abortion
      iii. Break-ups
      iv. Divorce
   c. Ask students about meaning (Sink, 2004)
      i. Symbols
      ii. Tatoos
      iii. Music
      iv. Jewelry
      v. Sports
      vi. Nature
      vii. Prayer
   d. Environment (OFSTED, 2004)
      i. Nonjudgment
      ii. Openness
      iii. Discussion of feelings, emotions, respect, diversity
   e. Listen attentively for undertones of spirituality and then explore this aspect of students' lives (MacDonald, 2004; Sink, 2004)
      i. Groups
      ii. Individual counseling
      iii. Classroom Presentations
5. *Challenges/Things to Be Careful* Of (Benson & Roehlkepartain, 2008; Ingersol & Bauer, 2004; Longborg & Bowen, 2004; MacDonald, 2004; Miller & Thoresen, 2003; Richards et al., 2009; Wolf, 2004)
   a. Remain neutral
   b. Do not impart own values
   c. Pay attention to how you react to your students discussions of spirituality
   d. Adopt a position of openness to encouraging students' spiritual journeys

Appendix C

_____ _____ _____ _____
Favorite Number   Street you Grew up On   Favorite Color   Number of Pets you Have

Spirituality in School Counseling – Pre/Post-Test

Please fill in the blanks above as your unique code. This code will be used to match pre-tests with post-tests while protecting your confidentiality. Please circle the number (1, 2, 3, or 4) that most accurately represents your experience for each of the following questions.

1. I understand how to use spirituality as a counseling tool.

1	2	3	4
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree

2. I understand what the term spirituality means.

1	2	3	4
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree

3. I understand the difference between spirituality and religion.

1	2	3	4
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree

4. I have a clear understanding of the ways that I express my own spirituality.

1	2	3	4
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree

How comfortable are you talking with your students about the concept of:

5. Meaning

1	2	3	4
Very Uncomfortable	Somewhat Uncomfortable	Somewhat Comfortable	Very Comfortable

6. Purpose

1	2	3	4
Very Uncomfortable	Somewhat Uncomfortable	Somewhat Comfortable	Very Comfortable

7. Peace

1	2	3	4
Very Uncomfortable	Somewhat Uncomfortable	Somewhat Comfortable	Very Comfortable

8. Cooperation

1	2	3	4
Very Uncomfortable	Somewhat Uncomfortable	Somewhat Comfortable	Very Comfortable

9. Love

1	2	3	4
Very Uncomfortable	Somewhat Uncomfortable	Somewhat Comfortable	Very Comfortable

10. Hope

1	2	3	4
Very Uncomfortable	Somewhat Uncomfortable	Somewhat Comfortable	Very Comfortable

11. Interconnectedness

1	2	3	4
Very Uncomfortable	Somewhat Uncomfortable	Somewhat Comfortable	Very Comfortable

12. Self-awareness

1	2	3	4
Very Uncomfortable	Somewhat Uncomfortable	Somewhat Comfortable	Very Comfortable

How important do you think it is for students to discuss their experience with and understanding of the concepts of:

13. Meaning

1	2	3	4
Very Unimportant	Somewhat Unimportant	Somewhat Important	Very Important

14. Purpose

1	2	3	4
Very Unimportant	Somewhat Unimportant	Somewhat Important	Very Important

15. Peace

1	2	3	4
Very Unimportant	Somewhat Unimportant	Somewhat Important	Very Important

16. Cooperation

1	2	3	4
Very Unimportant	Somewhat Unimportant	Somewhat Important	Very Important

17. Love

1	2	3	4
Very Unimportant	Somewhat Unimportant	Somewhat Important	Very Important

18. Hope

1	2	3	4
Very Unimportant	Somewhat Unimportant	Somewhat Important	Very Important

19. Interconnectedness

1	2	3	4
Very Unimportant	Somewhat Unimportant	Somewhat Important	Very Important

20. Self-awareness

1	2	3	4
Very Unimportant	Somewhat Unimportant	Somewhat Important	Very Important

21. I pay attention to the spiritual undertones of what my students say, do, and express.

1	2	3	4
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree

22. I explore the spiritual undertones of what my students say, do, and express.

1	2	3	4
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree

23. I would like to learn more about what it means to use spirituality as a counseling tool.

1	2	3	4
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree

24. I feel comfortable using spirituality as a counseling tool in school.

1	2	3	4
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree

25. I think it is important for school counselors in an urban setting to use spirituality as a counseling tool.

1	2	3	4
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree

26. I use spirituality as a counseling tool in school.

1	2	3	4
Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Often