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## Psycho-spiritual aspects of mental health counseling

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## Psycho-spiritual aspects of mental health counseling

### Abstract

With the growing demand for holistic therapy, interest in the psycho-spiritual dimension as it relates to clients' concerns has increased within the last decades. Many crises that lead people to counseling could hopefully be avoided if more attention were given to prevention. In this paper, the necessity of seeking harmony between body, mind and soul with certain practices such as yoga, relaxation, deep breathing, prayer, and meditation will be explored. These spiritual tools are supported by clinical practice and empirical research on holistic approaches to counseling.

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Master of Arts in Mental Health Counseling

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By

Sahibou Oumarou

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## Abstract

With the growing demand for holistic therapy, interest in the psycho-spiritual dimension as it relates to clients' concerns has increased within the last decades. Many crises that lead people to counseling could hopefully be avoided if more attention were given to prevention. In this paper, the necessity of seeking harmony between body, mind and soul with certain practices such as yoga, relaxation, deep breathing, prayer, and meditation will be explored. These spiritual tools are supported by clinical practice and empirical research on holistic approaches to counseling.

D'Andrea & Arredondo (2003) argued that because people today live in a rapidly changing and complex world, clients seeking therapy face too many stressors that have a negative impact on their lives. Because of the lack of spirituality, Westgate (1996) contended that there is an increase in feelings of hopelessness, meaninglessness, and depression. Therefore, integrating psycho-spirituality into therapy might help clients deal with tension, crisis, and more importantly, promote individual growth and well-being. Psycho-spirituality can have a relaxing and mind quieting effect on people, which is therapeutic and holistic in itself.

Counseling is one of the leading healing professions that deals with human mental, emotional, and spiritual health. Body, mind and soul constitute three aspects of a person and should function in harmony for an individual to feel congruent. Because holistic therapy considers and treats all aspects of human concerns, the domain of psycho-spirituality, which is holistic in itself, is increasingly becoming the focus of many contemporary therapists (Geller, 2001). Many of them understand that their clients' belief systems, attitudes toward life, and mindset play important roles in their mental health and well-being (Robbins, 1991).

At this time of spiritual freedom, many people are stuck in old belief systems (such as God's punishment or God's revenge) that limit their growth and well-being. Some of these beliefs are fear-based and, in most of the cases, support the clients' mental and emotional disturbance. For example, clients who have an issue with depression believe that they can do nothing to turn their lives around and experience joy and fulfillment.

Shwack (as cited in Pennington, 2003), a mind/body therapist, supported that "each level (body, mind, soul) speaks a different language, with a different culture and different

agenda...but when you place trauma into the mixture, each level of the body experiences grief from traumatic loss" (p. 5). From the spiritual standpoint, even though physical health is very important, the journey toward growth and self-actualization is incomplete without the spiritual dimension.

The purpose of this paper is to describe the importance of client feelings and the influence of on-going inner conflicts as opposed to the influence of outer events, conditions, and circumstances on clients' mental health. Mental health counselors understand that when clients react to internal conflict, this often affects their ability to deal with outside stimuli. Therefore, the external stimuli do not represent the problem; rather, it is the way the client handles his or her resulting feelings. Psycho-spirituality embraces human life in its totality. This paper will address the holistic aspects of the therapy and focus on harmony between body, mind, and soul.

#### A Journey Toward a Healthy Life is Worth Planning

In order to achieve good mental health, harmony, and spiritual growth, clients need to consider some important factors, the backbone of which is organizational skills. A 2000 - year-old Chinese proverb explains that, "a journey of a thousand miles begins with one step." However, before a journey even starts, the traveler needs a road map that will indicate the direction, the stops, possible unexpected events, and the final destination. Therefore, establishing a healthy environment or the psychological conditions for such a metaphorical journey are necessary steps toward the desired goal. These psychological conditions include goal setting, establishing the time frame, and, for future reference, the recording of the trials, errors, and learning that occur during the undertaking. Such conditions specifically target normal individuals' functioning, as opposed to those who

are seriously dysfunctional.

Harmony and self-actualization are the optimal goals in this life journey, and life-travelers can use certain tools to make the journey possible, including ageless techniques such as relaxation, visualization, prayer, meditation, and dream-work. Due to an increasing need for mental health and self-actualization, many counselors turn to spirituality for their own growth, and to gain insight in their efforts to help clients deal with unresolved issues. Westgate (1996), one of the outspoken pioneers in spiritual counseling, firmly supports the importance of spirituality in counseling. Westgate noted that unlike Freud, who believed that spirituality is nothing but an illusion that keeps people from facing reality, Jung (1958) contended that without an "inner transcendent experience" humans lack the resources to withstand the blandishments of the world" (p.24). For Jung, neither intellectual nor moral insight alone could resolve his patients' problems unless some spiritual perspectives were considered. Psycho-spiritual counseling deserves more attention than it receives currently because it addresses core issues and embraces all aspects of the clients' concerns and growth.

### *Harmonizing Body, Mind, and Soul*

Therapists using a holistic paradigm consider all aspects of body, mind, and soul, as well as environmental impact on the client to determine their approach to treatment (Geller, 2001). This method is like taking a step back to get a broader view of a person instead of isolating individual parts of the body for healing. Body, mind and soul are interconnected, interdependent, and function as a unit. When one aspect is affected, so are the rest. A popular American saying, "a house divided within itself cannot stand," illustrates how these aspects of mind, body and soul should function in accord with one



another in order for the whole being to function optimally. The body is known to be the vehicle of the soul and the mind the byproduct of the interaction of both. To exclusively attend to one or another is like trying to run an engine that has empty tank. When body and soul are in harmony, that harmony contributes to individual health and well-being. Their synchronicity reflects good and vibrant physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health.

### *Physical Health.*

Usually when a physical body can eat, move, and accomplish tasks, people take it for granted. They forget that the body is like a vehicle that needs constant care in order to keep it running. A car is a good metaphor to clearly convey this message. A car can run for a certain time, even if the owner is not taking care of it, but sooner or later it will end up with the mechanic for a large or small problem. It may be that the owner does not know the needs of the car, or simply that he or she is just careless and does not pay any attention to the small warnings. However, it shouldn't be a surprise when something goes wrong and it doesn't work properly. The human body functions in the same way. It is a vehicle through which the soul gains experience to enhance its growth (Chopra, 1993). Therefore, an individual's body plays an important role in life because it makes one conscious of his or her existence and the joy or pain of his or her experiences.

Metaphorically, the human body should operate as a well-conditioned car. It certainly will wear out if the owner does not take good care of it. It makes sense that to be physically healthy, a body needs good food, a certain quantity of water daily, and some regular exercise. Naturally, a muscle will weaken with no use, just as musicians will lose their talent if they haven't practiced for a long time. The point is that many people do not

follow this simple rule but expect to have a perfect body, perfect health, and a perfect life without planning or taking appropriate care of it. They overlook the fact that they need to maintain health by being aware of their body's short and long term needs and how their care of it affects their level of health.

Chopra (1991), an expert on body, mind, and soul, stated, "the human body has no definite beginning or end. It is creating itself, again and again, every day... an entirely new body is created every seven years... If we are to create ourselves all the time, then it is never too late to begin to create the bodies we want instead of the one we mistakenly assume we are stuck with" (p. 309). People can shape the look of their bodies at will and maintain their health and vibrancy if they continually take good care of themselves with healthy life style habits such as exercise, proper diet, and intellectual stimulation.

### *Emotional Health*

According to Robbins (1991), everything people do, they do either to avoid pain or to gain pleasure. The ways people deal with them are different. Some people will not seek help until they are in massive pain, and some will seek help as soon as possible. It is when people are unable to avoid pain and pursue pleasure that a multiplicity of emotional conditions develop (Chopra, 1991). Lack of pleasure creates tension in the body, so tension is a signal of a disturbed, inharmonious, or unhealthy body. The body will always claim its needs through the expression of pain.

On the other hand, a normal feeling of pleasure results from a body that is in harmony with the mind. The physical body represents a guidepost or a radar that provides messages about what is going on in someone's life. Chopra (1993) noted that the experience of pain depends on whether it is coming from the past, the present, or the

future. Hurt is the pain of a current situation or experience. Anxiety is the pain of anticipating a future event. And anger is the pain carried from ones' past. It is this pain from anger, which, if unresolved, causes guilt, anxiety or depression. In order to transcend the unwanted feelings and turn them into pleasure, Chopra (1993) suggested that one cultivate positive thinking. He encouraged people to be more authentic, assertive, and move on with their lives rather than becoming passive or aggressive. In fact, if negative emotions such as grief, anxiety or anger are not taken care of appropriately, their effect on the body can be devastating. Benson (1975) noted that emotional stress is the basis of many ailments such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, insomnia, and even death.

Psychological distress and mental problems that derive from unhealthy emotions are the main reasons why many people seek counseling and, in some instances, hospitalization. In order to help clients deal with grief, Swack (as cited in Pennington, 2003) suggested that therapists first neutralize clients' negative memories, and then replace those memories with positive ones. Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) practitioners believe that all memory has a structure. When the structure is altered the memory changes too. Therefore, by using techniques such as "running a backward movie," or "mental scrambling," people can weaken the influence memories have on them, and even neutralize any negative impact they have on them (Andreas & Faulkner, 1994, p.191).

### *Mental Health*

The brain is the seat of our mental and emotional activities. These activities are located in different parts of the brain. The brain has two hemispheres, the right and the

left. These hemispheres intercommunicate with each other. Open and balanced communication between the two hemispheres is necessary to better emotional and physical health. Research indicates the two hemispheres are specialized in their functioning. The right hemisphere seems to control the more creative function such as, imagination, artistic expression of all forms, intuition, and metaphorical thinking. Logical and mathematical thinking as well as language seem to have their locus in the left brain. When these parts of the brain assume their roles properly, an individual enjoys a healthy and harmonious life (Barrett, 1992).

Embedded within the brain are other functions. Gamon and Bragdon (1998) reported that, "the locus of mood is in the brain, and the precise substances implicated in mood fluctuation, as well as in states of chronic depression and mania, are chemicals called biogenic amines-otherwise known as neurotransmitters" (p.161). The brain is significantly more complex than people usually think of it being. The middle brain, called the limbic system, is the regulator of emotions. There are also glands in the midst of the brain that play master roles in people's state of mind and spiritual well-being. Khalsa and Stauth (1997) supported the same idea, noting that the limbic system has a major influence on emotion as well as on memory.

Emotion and memory function in tandem; what affects one affects the other as well. Located within the limbic system is the pituitary gland, which affects the production of neurotransmitters. It receives most of its impulses from the hypothalamus, and stimulates hormone production throughout the body so it can respond to a variety of situations. The limbic system, and particularly the pituitary gland, influences people's thinking processes and their mental clarity, as well as psychological and emotional function (Gannon and

Bragdon, 1998). This system, in the midst of the brain, is the center of intuitive perception and the autonomic nervous system. Its malfunction affects people's mood because the limbic system and the neocortex work in connection. They form thoughts and emotions and determine people's physical responses. This might explain why people who have issues with substance abuse may develop psychotic syndromes.

According to Amen (1998), physical exercise affects the limbic system and can be very healing. Exercise releases endorphins and induces a sense of well-being. Exercise also supplies the brain with an increased blood flow to nourish it so that it can function properly and effectively. These behaviors, supported by a proper mindset, may help prevent serious forms of mental illness and increase positive emotional and mental health.

### *Spiritual Health*

Even though many sources provide clear ideas about the differences between religion and spirituality, many people are still confused as to what makes them distinct. Murphy (2000) contended that to be religious may not mean that one is spiritual. Religion is a business of a group, while spirituality is an individual concern. Religion is supported by creeds and dogma, and involves a group of people belonging to the same denomination, as in Judeo-Christian religions such as Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. In contrast, spirituality is an individual journey toward self-actualization. Because of its corporate nature, religion may have some variations in its rituals, which are performed by a group, as opposed to rituals found in personal spiritualities. In contrast to religion, spirituality allows individuals more freedom of choice. It allows for free exploration of other spiritual traditions and practices that fit one's needs. Ganje-Fling and MacCarthy (1996)

hold that the meaning of spirituality is broad enough to incorporate religious, existential, and unstructured orientations. It also includes concepts such as God, Higher Power, and spiritual source.

There is another marked difference between religion and spirituality. Spirituality in essence is positive and promotes individual growth, while religion can be both positive, such as the concept of salvation, and negative, such as the concept of divine punishment or revenge in response to an individual wrong doing (Mandelbaum, Oldcorn & Ross, 1998). According to D'Andrea and Arreondo (2003), Zen Buddhism, for example, is a Japanese philosophy of balance and harmony. This philosophy is based on the belief that if people freed themselves from the dualism of objectivity and subjectivity, they can become aware of who they truly are. However, to have balance and harmony will not be possible without techniques that develop concentration, self-regulation, and self-discipline. This is an effort that can, in reality, be properly undertaken by an individual who embraces spirituality.

Therapists often face situations in which clients have serious concerns in relation to their core beliefs and their crises may spring from their maladaptive belief systems; beliefs that can be limiting, dis-empowering, or unrealistic. Helping clients challenge faulty beliefs and restore in them a healthy spiritual outlook is a goal of counseling from a holistic perspective.

### Psychological and Environmental Aspects

It is impossible to overlook the psychological aspects when discussing psycho-spiritual counseling because they play the role of a guidepost in the human journey of life. Psychology bridges all endeavors in regard to people's search for success, well-

being, and happiness. Often, people seeking counseling are psychologically confused and directionless. They want to go from one point to another but have no idea how to proceed. Sometimes their confusion causes other problems such as stress, depression, and anxiety. Unfortunately, these psychological problems can result in a spiritual crisis.

People are the product of their environment. All influences begin with the family of origin (individual upbringing), and then from people they associate with, as well as their community and the society at large. One's cultural background plays a key role in their social life and belief system. During childhood, an individual lacks the ability to choose. Most choices are dictated by parents or close relatives. Therefore, individuals generally accept the values and principles passed on to them by the immediate family environment. Usually problems within one's living conditions accompany a spiritual crisis (Zukav & Francis 2002).

Sadly enough, many individuals come from dysfunctional environments and are forced to carry with them the misfortune they inherited in their early development. For example, in the case of severe trauma caused by abuse of any kind, the damage can remain throughout life if no help is provided. Fortunately, it is never too late for individuals to change their lives. They may have to break free from old dysfunctional beliefs or mind sets that are at the core of their misfortune if a better life is the target. To make this possible one might follow particular step- by- step actions to achieve the desired change. Individual effort is necessary to turn around undesired influences inherited from childhood. This is possible through prayer, meditation, auto-suggestion and numerous tools available to mankind today (Murphy, 2000). Moreover, learning to set goals and manage time can make life better and easier.

### *Goal Setting and Time Management*

Before an individual travels to an unfamiliar country, he or she will first try to understand the direction and learn about that part of the world. In an effort to save time, a short cut is often considered as an option. One even anticipates the many destinations, the road blocks, the risks, the financial cost, and the timing. The same concept can be applied to mankind in its journey through life. People who fail to plan are also planning to fail. Experience shows that those who are more organized succeed the most and have more time for leisure activities. They know how to manage their time, and consequently have less stress in life than the ones who do have stress (Robbins, 1991).

### *Journaling*

A life worth living is also worth documenting. One cannot always rely on memory to preserve everything that may deserve special attention in the future. Life itself is a book of stories, full of successes and failures, of happy and unhappy moments, as well as problems and solutions. These constitute the building blocks of a person's past and present experiences.

A journal can be an important source of reference that will save a person valuable time often lost in confusion and lack of organization. When people do not take time to record what is going on in their lives, they can not help but repeat the same mistakes. They end up being like a soldier who continuously steps in the same place but does not move an inch with the march. Toy (2000) suggested that everybody should keep a journal close at hand to write down thoughts, daydreams, and even fears and reflect on them at the end of the week. Doing this, one "will make connections between seemingly isolated incidents that occur during the weeks. 'Aha' moments, where you will understand a pattern of



behavior you were previously unaware of, often come through this process of writing" (p.61).

### *The Goal of Spiritual Practices*

Spirituality deals with self-discipline and consciousness expansion. Jung (as cited in Westgate, 1996) called this process "inner transcendent experience," or "individuation" (p. 26). The process requires persistence and effort to transcend unhealthy desires of the lower self or the ego. To go on a spiritual journey is to try to put oneself in the driver's seat for a pursuit of happiness, which is the ultimate goal on earth. Maslow (as cited in Westgate, 1996) described this integrative process as transcendent self-actualizer. He believed that transcendent self-actualization has meaningful spiritual significance that includes an appreciation of beauty, truth, unity and a recognition of the sacred in life.

In addition, spiritual work and holistic therapy go hand in hand. That is why Westgate (1996) supported the notion that spirituality is not merely a subjective matter. It has a holistic nature because everything that makes up the human constitution, be it physical, mental or emotional, works together as inseparable, equally important units. In India, for instance, a spiritual journey is comprised of many practices in what is commonly called Yoga. The most familiar to the western world is Hatha Yoga or Physical Yoga with its numerous postures. The postures can have a great impact on an individual's health, to the point that many of their discomforts and even illnesses may be partially, if not totally, resolved. There are other yogic practices that advanced students may undertake, such as Raja Yoga or Royal Yoga. This particular yoga includes any practices that are currently part of counseling practices and include relaxation, breathing techniques, meditation and dream-work.

Spiritual practice could possibly be the answer to some of the issues people take to counseling because it emphasizes the here and now, which is so dear to the humanistic theorists. Moreover, spirituality seeks harmony of body, mind, and soul, and includes practices that lead to perfectly balanced living (Chopra, 1991).

### Breathing and Relaxation, Imagination and Visualization,

#### Prayer and Meditation

Problems, stress, and anxiety are constants in life. They accompany all aspects of human endeavors and provide a basis for learning and change. A popular old French adage said that "A life without problems has no charm." Problems seem to be like body builders for the character. However, when they are ignored, they rapidly grow and become out of control. Counseling techniques, such as breathing and relaxation, prayer, meditation, imagination, and visualization, can facilitate problem resolution.

#### *Breathing and Relaxation:*

According to Khalsa and Stauth (1997), the relaxation response creates physical and mental conditions opposite to the stress response. It creates conditions that decrease the metabolic rate and calm the mind. The presence of the stress response indicates that a person is not relaxed and the mind is not still. This explains why a stressed person is unable to concentrate on tasks and becomes susceptible to some mental illnesses, such as depression or anxiety. The person's breathing may become shallow; therefore, proper breathing help achieve better relaxation, which is why all relaxation and meditation originate from breathing. Yogis from India believe that with the technique called Pranayama, or breathing yoga, a person can attain a deep relaxation state or an altered state of consciousness where all healing takes place.

Khalsa and Strauth (1997) believed that a relaxation response can positively affect brain function and the body in general. They contended that the relaxation response occurs when the thinking neo-cortex tells the amygdala and hippocampus to relax. When people are emotionally exhausted, they cannot relax at all. These authors noted that the interaction between the amygdala and hippocampus sends a message to the hypothalamus which orchestrates the release of a flood of calming neurotransmitters and hormones. In response, the entire body and the brain shift into a relaxed state. For those struggling with depression, for example, relaxation may be one of the best answers because it regulates brain function and stimulates the glands to create healthier brain activity (Benson, 1975).

### *Imagination and Visualization*

Imagination and visualization are techniques that have been used by mystics and spiritualists for centuries. It has only been decades ago that health care professionals began to understand the importance of these techniques and are now using them with excitement. Barrett (1992) quoting Einstein, stated that "imagination is more important than knowledge" (p.64) because he believed that knowledge is like a finite product, and imagination is like a tool used to take one beyond the limits of existing knowledge. In fact, he said, Einstein used imagination to discover the theory of relativity.

Imagination and visualization are very similar. Both use mental pictures, but the only difference seems to be the way they are used. Imagination can be guided; it is a process called guided imagery. However, visualization, on the other hand, uses pictures and is more concerned with the end result. Imagination is concerned with the how question, and visualization with the what. Barrett (1992) argued that with imagination people can make up characters and anticipate what the future will be like, as opposed to visualization,

which simply pictures the desired goal as if it is already achieved in the present moment.

This later technique calls upon all the senses in order to tap into the power of the subconscious mind which leads to the fulfillment of a dream.

For the purpose of therapy, some counselors use guided-imagery to help clients with their concerns. Murphy (2000) claimed that guided-imagery and visualization are more effective than the use of affirmation because the subconscious is more sensitive to pictures than words. Perhaps mental health professionals might consider these techniques in their practices.

### *Prayer and Meditation*

Dorsey (1999) focused most of his research on the effectiveness of prayer and meditation. His book, *Reinventing Medicine*, discussed the astonishing results made at different medical schools. His research demonstrated that prayers heal patients, no matter what the distance separating the one praying and the one receiving the prayer, even when the recipient is unaware he or she is being prayed for. The reason for this is still not clear. Quantum physics researchers like Chopra (1993) supported the notion that thoughts produce some vibrational frequencies which through intention can be directed to a specific person for healing purpose.

People have options all around them, but because they are distracted by their past misfortunes or concerns, the present moment escapes their awareness. It is in the present moment that all possibilities exist and can be accessed. Meditation involves learning to be in the present moment. Even though there are many ways to meditate, the results meditators get from their practices are basically the same. These include greater peace of mind, improved mental clarity, ability to solve problems more readily, and an overall

feeling of well-being (Zukav and Francis 2002). Meditation can provide all of these, and even more for those who decide to undertake a spiritual journey. Meditation is a valuable tool to promote spiritual growth or self-actualization (Maslow, 1973).

### *Dream-work and Spiritual Well-being*

According to Miller, Stinson and Soper (as cited in Clark, 1994), dreams serve as a catalyst to resolve unfinished business, to deal with difficulties and challenge, and to clarify issues that block the achievement of goals. For many people life is stressful and can cause emotional problems. People are so busy that they barely pay attention to the piled up concerns that lay deep in their subconscious mind. Their only reminder of the unfinished businesses is through dreams because their objective consciousness is so busy that there is no chance of reminding them. Therefore, dreams seem to be the only alternative to have a glance at the inner aspect of life.

Gestaltists support the idea that conflict or anxiety arises when there is inconsistency between an individual's inner and outer realities. This conflict can in the long range interfere with growth and well-being. The goal of Gestalt therapists is to help clients become fully aware of themselves and the world around them. They also help clients mature enough to recognize that they are in the driver's seat and are responsible for their own lives. This belief lead the Gestaltists to focus on dreams as messengers of their clients' inner world and to help them act upon the dream as if it were occurring in the present moment . This method is used to increase the clients' awareness of their own feeling. Perls (1969) also supported dream work is a "royal road to integration" (p. 66).

A dream that is not analyzed is like a book that stays unread. Ancient people of different traditions used dreams as references to their life experiences, and saw in them

the clues to anticipating future problems for a better and fulfilling life. Some people interested in spirituality use dreams as guideposts to their spiritual journey. This practice is known today as dream-work, or "oneiromancy" (Lewis, 1995, p. 66). For example, in pre-Islamic and present Islamic tradition, oneiromancy is practiced to get advice from Allah. Dreams occupy a respectable position in many cultures around the world, as well as in psychoanalytic and gestalt theories of counseling.

Clark (1994) argued that people think dreams are mystifying and meaningless, maybe because they confront the dreamer with unfamiliar or unfinished perspective. Dreams are the voice of one's unconscious that remind people of their lives events, discarded situations, or problems in need of solutions. From the unconscious to the conscious awareness, dreams serve as reminders of situations or events people are not giving enough attention to in their daily life.

Both Freud's and Jung's efforts highlight the importance of dreams to the scientific world. Jung hypothesized that dreams are cultural bound. He called the images in dreams archetypes and they derive from the dreamer's ancestral collective consciousness. That's why he believed that the symbols seen in dreams differ from one another. Therefore, to analyze a client's dream a therapist should take into account the person's cultural background and experiences. To some extent, dreams are to an individual what a therapist is to a client.

### Conclusion

Everybody desires to achieve happiness in life. Experience shows that happiness is a progressive effort toward some worthy ideals. Physical health, mental health, emotional health, and spiritual health are worthy of serious attention for those who truly understand

the purpose of their lives and want to make a difference in the way they live. These aspects are the cornerstones of happy living.

There is a popular metaphor that says, "dig your well before you're thirsty," which means that one should anticipate and prevent problems before they strike; one should be proactive as opposed to reactive. Today, spirituality is offering proactive tools such as physical yoga, breathing exercises, meditation, relaxation, prayer, guided imagery, visualization techniques, and dream work in an effort to help individuals maintain good health and experience a true well-being in life.

In support of spirituality in counseling practice, Westgate (1996) argued that a truly spiritual person is the one who finds meaning and purpose in life, and whose life and decisions are based on an intrinsic value system. Many people looking for help are not totally satisfied with the medical model of therapy. They turn to religion or spirituality for answers, not only because religion and spirituality are holistic by nature but because both help give meaning to people and help them find comfort from the higher power. Psycho-spiritual approaches are less costly and effectively promotes harmony between body, mind, and soul. Even though the role of the counselor is not that of a theologian, ordained minister, or a pastoral counselor, the counselor can help clients integrate spirituality in their lives in such a way as to promote consciousness expansion, growth, and well being.

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