

AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION OF

Johnny R. LaLonde for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Counseling presented on August 30, 2018.

Title: *A Qualitative Metasynthesis of Client Experience of Addressing Spirituality and Religion in Counseling and A Grounded Theory Study of How Private Practice Christian Clients Experience Their Spirituality and Religion During the Counseling Process With Similar Faith Counselor*

Abstract approved:

Deborah J. Rubel

The purpose of this dissertation was to contribute to deeper understanding of how client's experience their spirituality and religion during the therapy process. The first manuscript is located in chapter 2 and titled *A Qualitative Metasynthesis of Client Experience of Addressing Spirituality and Religion in Counseling*. This metasynthesis pools together eleven pieces of qualitative research client's spirituality and religion in therapy. Phenomenological analysis methods were utilized for this synthesis and produced four key themes: (a) a context, (b) a fear, (c) a freedom, and (d) a personal expression. The second manuscript is located in chapter 3 and titled *A Grounded Theory Study of How Private Practice Christian Clients Experience Their Spirituality and Religion During the Counseling Process With Similar Faith Counselors*. This theory describes the central priority that spiritual/religious identity takes in the life of these participants. In turn, this central priority enters into therapy with the client and impacts the structure of therapy and experience of the therapy process. Implications for practice and training, limitations,

and areas for future research are explored for each manuscript. The two manuscripts are unified by their common focus on spirituality and religion during the therapeutic process.

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A Qualitative Metasynthesis of Client Experience of Addressing Spirituality and Religion in Counseling and A Grounded Theory Study of How Private Practice Christian Clients Experience Their Spirituality and Religion During the Counseling Process With Similar Faith Counselors

by
Johnny R. LaLonde

A DISSERTATION

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APPROVED:

Major Professor, representing Counseling

Dean of the College of Education

Dean of the Graduate School

I understand that my dissertation will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my dissertation to any reader upon request.

Johnny R. LaLonde, Author

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I want to take a moment and set this space aside to express my deep gratitude for the people who have helped me to complete this work. I had no idea how lonely it would feel to write a dissertation. Each person listed here helped to ease that loneliness in their own way.

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Chapter 1: General Introduction

During the past 20 years, the counseling profession has seen a notable increase in research focused on spirituality and religion (Powers, 2005; Smith, Southern, & Devlin, 2007; Worthington, 2016; Worthington, Kuru, McCollough, & Sandage, 1996). Historically, the counseling profession has had polarized viewpoints on the appropriateness of integrating this aspect of human experience into counseling settings (e.g., Aten & Leach, 2009; Hage, Hopson, Siegel, Payton, & DeFanti, 2006; Sperry, 2012; West, 2000, Worthington 2016). Negative views of spirituality and religion in counseling have been examined by researchers and attributed to several factors. Prior hostility from the profession toward religion and spirituality (e.g., Aten & Leach, 2009; Payne, Bergin, & Loftus, 1992), pathologizing of spiritual or religious experiences (e.g., Allman, De La Rocha, Elkins, & Weathers, 1992; West, 2000), and a lack of training among counseling professionals (e.g., Adams, Puig, Baggs, and Wolf, 2015; Aten & Leach, 2009; Cashwell & Young, 2004; Hage, Hopson, Siegel, Payton, & DeFanti, 2006; Hinterkopf, 2014; Walker, Gorsuch, & Tan, 2004) have all been identified as factors in negative or neglectful attitudes toward spirituality and religion. However, the publication patterns noted by Powers (2005) as well as Smith, Southern, and Devlin (2007) indicate movement toward a more inclusive view of spirituality and religion in counseling.

The increase in research on spirituality and religion in counseling benefited several notable areas. Published literature has contributed to advances in addressing ethical concerns, therapeutic integration, training, and understanding counselor perspective (e.g., Hickson, Housley, & Wages, 2000; Myers & Williard,

2003; Steen, Engels, & Thweatt, 2006; Walker, Gorsuch, & Tan, 2004). Published research has identified spirituality and religion as sources of resilience (e.g., Graham, Flowers, & Burke, 2001; Langer, 2004; Ungureanu & Sandberg, 2010), an important topic to clients (e.g., Knox, Catlin, Casper, & Schlosser, 2005; Post & Wade, 2014), and an aspect of multicultural practice (e.g., Fukuyama & Sevig, 1999). The focus of research up to this point has been largely quantitative (e.g., Graham et al., 2001; Langer, 2004; Ungureanu & Sandberg, 2010) and centered on the practitioner (e.g., Harris et al., 2015; Ocampo Hoogasian & Gloria, 2015; Rosmarin, Forester, Shassian, Webb, & Björgvinsson, 2015; Zahn, Reiser, Baumann, & Riemann, 2015). This focus has been necessary and effective at advocating for the place of spirituality and religion in culturally competent, evidence-based practice.

The movement toward a more inclusive view of spirituality and religion has been facilitated by widespread recognition of spirituality and religion as an aspect of multicultural identity (Richards, Sanders, Lea, McBride, & Allen, 2015). While multicultural competencies have continued to shape the counseling profession, historically they have neglected the importance of spirituality and religion (Hage, Hopson, Siegel, Payton, & DeFanti, 2006). Locating spirituality and religion as an aspect of multiculturalism has led to a focus on culturally competent, evidence-based practice in this area. As a result, research has focused increasingly on when and how to address spirituality and religion in counseling (Post & Wade, 2009). This question has been informed by a focus on therapist competency (Miller, 1999; Young, Wiggins-Frame, & Cashwell, 2007) as well as the development of the ASERVIC competencies (2009).

The ASERVIC (2009) core competencies are a set of guidelines adopted by the ACA to inform culturally competent, evidence-based practice in the area of spirituality and religion. The purpose of these competencies is to, “recognize diversity and embrace a cross-cultural approach in support of the worth, dignity, potential, and uniqueness of people within their social and cultural contexts” (p. 3). Toward this stated purpose, the qualitative approach utilized in both manuscripts of this dissertation will contribute to evidence-based practice (Kazdin, 2008) as well as contributing to culturally competent, evidence-based practices (Silverstein & Auerbach, 2009). Because spirituality and religion are key elements of multiculturalism, “it is important for the multiculturally aware counselor to be able to understand the client’s worldview, in particular the client’s beliefs around spirituality” (Fukuyama & Sevig, 1999, p. 10). This dissertation will deepen the understanding of the client experience of spirituality and religion in therapy through the use of qualitative research methods. This will occur in both manuscripts of this dissertation.

Manuscript 1 is a metasynthesis of existing qualitative research on the client perspective of spirituality and religion in counseling. The guidelines outlined in Sandelowski and Barroso (2007) were utilized for this metasynthesis. Synthesizing this research adds to existing research by valuing and utilizing the perspectives that have already been documented (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2007). Understanding the experiences of clients will inform counselors to competently engage spirituality and religion.

Manuscript 1 serves to consolidate understanding about the client

experience of addressing spirituality and religion in counseling. However, several layers of the client experience need to be understood. Research is needed to understand how spirituality and religion impact the counseling process and relationship. Kelly (1995) identified client spirituality as being “fundamentally indirect” (p. 96) within the counseling relationship. Whereas qualitative research is generally suitable for understanding experiences, grounded theory research is specifically suitable for illuminating underlying processes.

Manuscript 2 presents a grounded theory study on the experience of private practice Christian clients during their counseling process with similar faith counselors. This grounded theory study will broaden the understanding of how client spirituality and religion are experienced during the therapy process.

Organizational Structure of Dissertation

The organization of this dissertation conforms to the Manuscript Document Dissertation Format as outlined by the Oregon State University Graduate School. Chapter 1 serves as an introduction to the topic of client spirituality and religion in counseling. It provides a general description of the topic as a whole, and establishes the importance of this area of inquiry. Chapter 1 gives a brief overview of Manuscript 1 (Chapter 2) and Manuscript 2 (Chapter 3). Manuscript 1 (Chapter 2) is a systematic metasynthesis of qualitative research on the client experience of addressing spirituality and religion in counseling. Manuscript 2 (Chapter 3) is a qualitative research study using grounded theory methodology to understand how private practice Christian clients experience their spirituality and religion during the counseling process. The purpose of this dissertation is to demonstrate scholarly

work on the topic of spirituality and religion in counseling. Important terms are defined here in order to facilitate effective engagement with the contents of this dissertation.

Spirituality. Within the counseling literature, there is a consensus on the lack of consensus for a definition of spirituality. The construct itself is highly individualized. This individualization impedes universal definitions (Sperry, 2012). In spite of this, a key definition will be reviewed as well as my underlying definition as a researcher. The ASERVIC White Paper (1995) defines spirituality by emphasizing the relevance of meaning, transcendence, and connectedness. For the purposes of this dissertation, spirituality is defined as a belief in transcendence and a search for meaning (May, 1982). It is assumed that the application of this definition will take on deep variance across individual clients. This variance is understood as part of the nature of spirituality and is recognized as meaningful and personal (Sperry, 2012).

Religion. Religion is understood as being unique from spirituality. Religion has been defined as an adherence to an organized church or institution. While this definition is accurate, some clients will experience spirituality and religion as interchangeable or intertwined with one another (Sperry, 2012). For the purposes of this dissertation, religion is seen as an organized, ritualized, or institutionalized set of beliefs that are shared by a people group or culture (ASERVIC, 1995).

Therapeutic Process. This dissertation aims to identify the experience of spirituality and religion throughout the counseling process. Therefore, the focus of this research is not limited to the “counseling room.” While here-and-now dynamics

in the counseling room are of interest to the field, the experience of spirituality extends beyond the counseling room. Therefore, this dissertation will target research relevant to spirituality throughout the therapeutic process. The term 'process' is utilized to illuminate the stages and settings of therapy. This will encompass the client experience of spirituality and religion from start to finish in the counseling relationship. Counseling and therapy are used interchangeably.

Manuscript 1 Overview: A Qualitative Metasynthesis of Client Experience of Addressing Spirituality and Religion in Counseling

The first manuscript, Chapter 2, of this dissertation is a metasynthesis of qualitative research on the client experience of addressing spirituality and religion in counseling. A metasynthesis of qualitative research was chosen because of the need to emphasize client voices for informing practice and future research. As noted by other researchers (e.g., Gockel, 2009; Miller & Kelley, 2005; Ocampo Hoogasian & Gloria, 2015; Post & Wade, 2014), more qualitative research is needed on spirituality and religion in counseling. The personal and experiential nature of spirituality and religion benefit from the strengths of qualitative research (Creswell, 2012). The included articles in this metasynthesis consist of 11 studies conducted between 2000 and 2014.

The purpose of this systematic qualitative metasynthesis is to synthesize the "cross-case generalizations from case-bound generalization in individual studies" (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2007, p. 5) regarding the experience of addressing spirituality and religion in counseling. Therefore, this metasynthesis is organized around the question, "How do clients describe their experience of addressing

spirituality and religion as a part of their counseling process?" A qualitative metasynthesis refers "to a process and product of scientific inquiry aimed at systematically reviewing and formally integrating the findings in reports of completed qualitative studies" (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2007, pf. 17). This metasynthesis included studies that utilized qualitative methods to research the client experience of addressing spirituality and religion in counseling.

Through the systematic evaluation and synthesis of the included articles, this synthesis will add to existing research by valuing and utilizing the perspectives that have already been documented (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2007). To this end, the evaluation of each study was done to determine a clear research question, the methodological appropriateness for the question being posed, and the overall quality of the included studies. The criteria for evaluation established by Hoyt and Bhati (2007) was utilized. Their criteria in conjunction with the concept of coherence identified by Kline (2008) were used in the systematic evaluation of each study. See Appendix B for documentation of the evaluation criteria for each included study.

This manuscript fills a gap in the literature as there has not been a metasynthesis of qualitative research on this topic. Through this qualitative metasynthesis process, the identification of the key elements of the experience across each study serves to contribute to the current body of knowledge of client spirituality and religion. This synthesis will also serve in the production of new or deeper understandings of the constructs being examined. Finally, the results of this synthesis impact clinical practice, counselor education, and future research.

Manuscript 2 Overview: A Grounded Theory Study of How Private Practice Christian Clients Experience Their Spirituality and Religion During the Counseling Process With Similar Faith Counselors

The second manuscript is a qualitative grounded theory study that was conducted to deepen knowledge and awareness of the experience of spiritual and religious clients in counseling. Because of an underrepresentation of client experiences regarding spirituality and religion in counseling, more research is needed in this area. Furthermore, this study serves to understand the intersection between spiritual and religious experiences with the therapeutic process.

Research on spirituality and religion in the counseling profession has increased in recent years (Powers, 2005). Still, there is a need for more qualitative research focused on the experience of clients. There are several reasons that justify the use of qualitative methodology. First, there has been a consistent call for more qualitative research in the area of spirituality and religion in counseling (e.g., Gockel, 2009; Miller & Kelley, 2005; Ocampo Hoogasian & Gloria, 2015; Post & Wade, 2014). Second, the nature of spirituality and religion is highly conducive to qualitative methodology. Third, qualitative research emphasizes the words, descriptions, and experiences of the research participants. As already noted, this emphasis is important to promote culturally competent, evidence-based practice (Kazdin, 2008; Silverstein & Auerbach, 2009).

This research is focused on illuminating a particular, deep experience of spirituality and religion in the therapy process. Therefore, in order to target this particular, deep experience, this study was designed to focus on a specific set of participants. Participants were included if they identified as Christian, sought

therapy from a Christian counselor, and saw their spirituality and religion having a significant impact on their life. This intentional selection of participants was designed to produce results capable of capturing the depth and richness of the experience being studied. The grounded theory methods outlined in Corbin and Strauss (2014) were utilized to construct a grounded theory based on semi-structured interviews with study participants.

The purpose of this grounded theory study is to understand how Christian private practice clients experience spirituality and religion within the counseling process. At this stage in the research, the experience of spirituality and religion will be generally defined as the contributions made by the spiritual and religious experiences of the client to the therapy process. Openness to the experiences of clients is necessary to deepen cultural understanding (Fowers & Davidov, 2006). Understanding this process will deepen the professional understanding of the worldview of spiritual and religious clients in general and Christian clients in particular.

Thematic Relevance

The two manuscripts presented here are linked thematically by the topic of the client's experience of spirituality and religion in counseling. Manuscript 1 presents a systematic qualitative metasynthesis of research regarding the client experience of addressing spirituality and religion in counseling. The results of Manuscript 1 serve as a backdrop for Manuscript 2. Manuscript 2 was designed to move beyond the experience of addressing spirituality and religion in counseling. This manuscript progressed into identifying the underlying process occurring

between client spirituality and religion and the client's therapeutic process.

Grounded theory methods were selected because of their suitability in identifying this underlying process.

Chapter 2

A Qualitative Metasynthesis of the Client Experience of Addressing
Spirituality and Religion in Counseling

Johnny LaLonde

Oregon State University

Deborah J. Rubel

Oregon State University

Abstract

Research on spirituality and religion in counseling has increased during the last 20 years. In order to add to existing knowledge, this qualitative metasynthesis synthesized 11 pieces of qualitative research. Qualitative research was selected that focused on the client experience of addressing spirituality and religion in counseling. Analysis and synthesis of the selected studies produced descriptions of spirituality in counseling representative of clients. This representation is important to inform culturally competent practice. Phenomenological analysis methods were utilized for this synthesis and produced four key results: (a) a context, (b) a fear, (c) a freedom, and (d) a personal expression. The discussion of this synthesis contains implications for practice, counselor education, and research.

Keywords: spirituality, religion, counseling

During the past 20 years, the counseling profession has seen a notable increase in research focused on spirituality and religion (Powers, 2005; Smith, Southern, & Devlin, 2007; Worthington, 2016; Worthington, Kurusu, McCollough & Sandage, 1996). Historically, the counseling profession has had polarized viewpoints on the appropriateness of integrating this aspect of human experience into counseling settings (e.g., Aten & Leach, 2009; Hage, Hopson, Siegel, Payton, & DeFanti, 2006; Sperry, 2012; West, 2000; Worthington 2016). Negative views of spirituality and religion in counseling have been examined by researchers and attributed to several factors. Prior hostility from the profession toward religion and spirituality (e.g., Aten & Leach, 2009; Payne, Bergin, & Loftus, 1992), pathologizing of spiritual or religious experiences (e.g., Allman, De La Rocha, Elkins, & Weathers, 1992; West, 2000), and a lack of training among counseling professionals (e.g., Adams, Puig, Baggs, & Wolf, 2015; Aten & Leach, 2009; Cashwell & Young, 2004; Hage, Hopson, Siegel, Payton, & DeFranti, 2006; Hinterkopf, 2014; Walker, Gorsuch, & Tan, 2004) have all been identified as factors in negative or neglectful attitudes toward spirituality and religion. However, the publication patterns noted by Powers (2005) as well as Smith, Southern, and Devlin (2007) indicate movement toward a more inclusive view of spirituality and religion in counseling.

The movement toward a more inclusive view of spirituality and religion has been facilitated by widespread recognition of spirituality and religion as an aspect of multicultural identity (Richards, Sanders, Lea, McBride, & Allen, 2015). Locating spirituality and religion as an aspect of multiculturalism has facilitated a focus on culturally competent practice. As a result, research has focused increasingly on

when and how to address spirituality and religion in counseling (Post & Wade, 2009). Furthermore, this focus has included how spirituality and religion can be addressed in a culturally competent manner. This question has been informed by a focus on therapist competency (Miller, 1999; Young, Wiggins-Frame, & Cashwell, 2007) as well as the development of the ASERVIC competencies (2009).

The increase in research on spirituality and religion within the counseling profession has included an increase in qualitative research. This increase in qualitative research has been noted across many professions (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2007). As the amount of qualitative research has increased, there has been a focus on deepening the value and applicability of existing qualitative research. Sandelowski and Barroso note that, "Qualitative research synthesis, thus, emerged in response to the proliferation but relative undervaluation and underutilization of the findings of qualitative studies" (2007, Pg. 3). Spirituality and religion in counseling demonstrates the pattern noted by Sandelowski and Barroso (2007). There has been an increase in research and an interest in utilizing that research toward evidenced-based practice. A qualitative metasynthesis is suitable in order to combine the existing pieces of research into an original synthesized study that will further the contributions of these separate individual pieces of research.

Research Problem

The increase in research on spirituality and religion in counseling benefited several notable areas. Published literature has contributed to advances in addressing ethical concerns, therapeutic integration, training, and understanding counselor perspective (e.g., Hickson, Housley, & Wages, 2000; Myers & Williard,

2003; Steen, Engels, & Thweatt, 2006; Walker, Gorsuch, & Tan, 2004). Published research has identified spirituality and religion as sources of resilience (e.g., Graham, Flowers, & Burke, 2001; Langer, 2004; Ungureanu & Sandberg, 2010), an important topic to clients (e.g., Knox, Catlin, Casper, & Schlosser, 2005; Post & Wade, 2014), and an aspect of multicultural practice (e.g., Fukuyama & Sevig, 1999). The focus of research up to this point has been largely quantitative (e.g., Graham et al., 2001; Langer, 2004; Ungureanu & Sandberg, 2010) and centered on the practitioner (e.g., Harris et al., 2015; Ocampo Hoogasian & Gloria, 2015; Rosmarin, Forester, Shassian, Webb, & Björgvinsson, 2015; Zahn, Reiser, Baumann, & Riemann, 2015). This focus has been necessary and effective at advocating for the place of spirituality in culturally competent practice.

The research on spirituality and religion in counseling has included both quantitative and qualitative research. Within qualitative research on the topic, there is a small but substantive pool of research that specifically focuses on client experiences of addressing spirituality and religion in the therapy process. To date, there are eight pieces of qualitative research conducted on client perspectives of addressing spirituality and religion in the counseling process (Beitel et al., 2007; Buser, Goodrich, Luke, & Buser, 2011; Gockel, 2011; Goedde, 2000; Knox et al., 2005; Koslander & Arvidsson, 2007; Macmin & Foskett, 2004; Puckett, 2012). Additionally, there is published research that further contributes to the client perspective. While not specifically focused on the client experience, the nature of the research includes data related to the client perspective (Cragun & Friedlander, 2012; Lietz & Hodge, 2013; Starnino, 2014).

Synthesizing the perspectives contained within this pool of research can be utilized to inform multicultural counseling practice. While multicultural competencies have continued to shape the counseling profession, historically they have neglected the importance of spirituality and religion (Hage, Hopson, Siegel, Payton, & DeFanti, 2006). However, spirituality and religion are now consistently included as part of multiculturally competent practice. A metasynthesis of existing research will add to the literature by valuing and utilizing the perspectives that have already been documented (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2007). Utilizing qualitative research to understand the experiences of clients will inform counselors in understanding how and when spirituality and religion are competently engaged (Silverstein & Auerbach, 2009).

This qualitative metasynthesis of existing research will help to inform multicultural practice and direct future research by pulling together the collected voices and examining the whole picture. This larger picture will integrate the voices in a manner that will create a whole greater than the sum of its parts (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2007). Sandelowski and Barroso (2007) have noted that qualitative research synthesis emerged to examine existing qualitative research in order to increase the value and utilization. Consistent with this increase in value and utilization, this research will add to existing research by systematically evaluating and synthesizing the perspectives that have already been documented regarding the experience of addressing spirituality and religion in counseling (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2007).

Metasynthesis Framework

The purpose of this systematic qualitative metasynthesis is to synthesize the “cross-case generalizations from case-bound generalization in individual studies” (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2007, Pg. 5) regarding the experience of addressing spirituality and religion in counseling. Therefore, this metasynthesis is organized around the question: “How do clients describe their experience of addressing spirituality and religion as a part of their counseling process?” A qualitative metasynthesis refers, “to a process and product of scientific inquiry aimed at systematically reviewing and formally integrating the findings in reports of completed qualitative studies” (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2007, Pg. 17). This metasynthesis included studies that utilized qualitative methods to research the client experience of addressing spirituality and religion in counseling.

There are two motivating factors for conducting this qualitative metasynthesis. First, a metasynthesis will help to inform multicultural practice and direct future research as it relates to the client experience of addressing spirituality and religion in counseling. Second, a qualitative metasynthesis will add to the published research by acting as a place marker in the process. As already noted, there has been a sharp increase in publications that address spirituality and religion in counseling. Along with this increase there has been a growing number of qualitative research articles. Sandelowski and Barroso (2007) have noted that qualitative research synthesis emerged to examine existing qualitative research in order to increase the value and utilization.

In analyzing and synthesizing the results of the selected articles, descriptions

of spirituality in counseling can be provided by those whose voices matter most- the clients who are actually having the experience. In addition to advocating for client voices, this metasynthesis aims to inform practice through the goal of metasynthesis, which “is to produce a new and integrative interpretation of findings that is more substantive than those resulting from individual investigations” (Finfgeld, 2003, p. 894). This combined representation will add to the work of future qualitative researchers on this topic.

Key Definitions

Before moving further, key definitions relevant to the organizing question of this metasynthesis will be examined.

Spirituality. Within the counseling literature, there is a consensus on the lack of consensus for a definition of spirituality. The construct itself is highly individualized. This individualization impedes universal definitions (Sperry, 2012). In spite of this, key definitions will be reviewed as well as my underlying definition as a researcher. The ASERVIC White Paper (ASERVIC, 1995) defines spirituality by emphasizing the relevance of meaning, transcendence, and connectedness. For the purposes of this paper, spirituality is defined as a belief in transcendence and a search for meaning (May, 1982). It is assumed that the application of this definition will take on a deep variance across individual clients. This variance is understood as part of the nature of spirituality and is recognized as meaningful and personal (Sperry, 2012).

Religion. Religion is understood as being unique from spirituality. Religion has been defined as an adherence to an organized church or institution. While this

definition is accurate, some clients will experience spirituality and religion as interchangeable or intertwined with one another (Sperry, 2012). For the purposes of this paper, religion is seen as an organized, ritualized, or institutionalized set of beliefs that are shared by a people group or culture (ASERVIC, 1995).

Therapeutic Process. This metasynthesis aims to identify the experience of spirituality throughout the counseling process. Therefore, the focus of this research is not limited to the “counseling room.” While here-and-now dynamics in the counseling room are of interest to the field, the experience of spirituality extends beyond the counseling room. Therefore, this synthesis will target research relevant to spirituality throughout the therapeutic process. The term process is utilized to illuminate the stages and settings of therapy. This will encompass the client experience of spirituality and religion from start to finish in the counseling relationship. Counseling and therapy are used interchangeably.

Methods

The following section will outline the methods used in conducting this qualitative metasynthesis. In order to execute this metasynthesis, the methods described in Sandelowski and Barroso (2007) were utilized. These methods include three key pieces. First, the existing literature was reviewed to locate relevant articles. Second, the appropriate articles for the metasynthesis were identified through a series of inclusion and exclusion criteria. Finally, the smaller pool of identified articles was analyzed and synthesized.

Location, Selection and Screening of Research

Articles were located by an Internet search that utilized Google Scholar.

Search terms included spiritual, spirituality, religious, religion, client, qualitative, counseling, and therapy. Any articles that contained qualitative methods were initially retained. Other relevant resources were identified through an iterative process based on the retained journal articles. This process led to the exploration of literature, books, book chapters and conference proceedings.

During the initial collection of articles, all articles were retained that had the potential for qualitative descriptions of the client experience of addressing spirituality as a part of the counseling process. These retained studies were reviewed to confirm that they reported qualitative methods as well as client experiences of spirituality in the counseling process. In addition, the reference section of the articles was reviewed in order to identify any articles that had not been captured through the initial search.

Sandelowski and Barroso (2007) name a failure to conduct an exhaustive search as the most important threat to the validity of a research synthesis. Internet searches were performed by systematically combining the included search terms. Repetitive variations were utilized until redundancy was established. This redundancy, along with the use of alternate methods for searching allowed for confidence in the saturation point. These alternate methods included citation searching, journal runs, author searching, and subject searches (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2007). In the end, 19 studies were ready to be evaluated for inclusion in this metasynthesis. The result of the evaluation process was retention of 11 research items and the exclusion of eight items from this metasynthesis. The following sections describe the inclusion and exclusion criteria applied to the 19

pieces of research.

In order to be included in this qualitative metasynthesis, the research had to be peer-reviewed. Further, the research had to contain a specific focus on the client experience of addressing spirituality and religion in counseling. This focus had to be addressed through identifiable qualitative methods. The included research had to contain a focus on spirituality, religion, or both. Finally, the research had to focus on the experience in the counseling or therapeutic process. Articles were retained from multiple disciplines including couple's counseling, psychotherapy, and substance abuse counseling. Research was included in this metasynthesis as long as the research was part of a mental health discipline. Because of the limited number of suitable articles, no timetable of publication was utilized. This proved inconsequential as all research that was considered was published after the year 2000.

The primary exclusion criteria related to the focus of the research. All of the items reviewed addressed spirituality or religion. However, some of the research focused on a specific aspect of spirituality and did not address client descriptions of addressing spirituality in counseling. Examples of these other areas of focus included client spirituality prior to counseling, client spirituality in general, and client spirituality in relation to the presenting problem. Research was excluded if the qualitative data was not substantive in contributing to the present metasynthesis.

Once the scope of the metasynthesis was established, nine published studies, one Master's thesis, and one doctoral dissertation were included. Next, the quality of

the included research was appraised. This appraisal was conducted to deepen the rigor of evaluation for the included articles. In order to conduct the appraisal of the research in a uniform manner, an appraisal guide was created. This guide utilized the work of Hoyt and Bhati (2007) and the work of Kline (2008). This appraisal procedure served to increase the validity of the inclusion of each article.

Furthermore, application of the appraisal procedure set the stage for conducting the metasynthesis (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2007). A copy of the article evaluation protocol can be found in Appendix A. Completed appraisals for each article can be found in Appendix B.

Following the inclusion and appraisal of the research, sample information was collected from the included work and compiled into a visual display in order to effectively summarize and present the information (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2007). This information is displayed in Table 1. In addition, a profile of the reports was compiled to represent relevant information regarding the methods, location and purpose of the included research. This information is displayed in Table 2.

Synthesis

In order to conduct the metasynthesis, a synthesis method was selected and a protocol was developed. Sandelowski and Barroso (2007) define a metasynthesis as “an interpretive integration of qualitative findings in primary research reports” (p. 199). The methods for phenomenological research outlined by Moustakas (1994) were utilized to create a protocol to conduct this metasynthesis. This protocol was originally taken directly from Moustakas’ text and was later adapted in order to accommodate the metasynthesis application.

Table 1

Research Sample Demographics

Article	Participants	Ages	Spiritual Identification
Beitel, et al., 2007	24 women; 15 men	28-54	41% Catholic; 39% Protestant
Buser, et al., 2011	4 female; 2 male; 1 transgender	N/A	N/A
Cragun & Friedlander, 2012	9 women; 2 men	20-62	All Christian
Gockel, 2011	10 men; 2 women	30-55	11 Spiritual/Not Religious and practiced Zen-Buddhism
Goedde, 2000	4 men; 2 women	30-78	1 Greek-Orthodox, Buddhism and Taoism; 2 No Affiliation; 1 Presbyterian; 1 Spirituality/Energy Worker; 1 Unitarian Universalist
Knox, et al., 2005	1 man; 11 women	21-56	6 Religiously/spiritually active with no specific affiliation; 3 Roman Catholic; 3 A Variety of Experience
Koslander & Arvidsson, 2007	6 men; 6 women	20-59	N/A
Lietz & Hodge, 2013	20 total	N/A	“More spiritual than religious”
Macmin & Foskett, 2004	17 women; 10 men	20-70	22 Christian 7 Roman Catholic 5 Anglicans 5 Methodists 3 Baptists 2 Quakers 7 Spiritual not religious 6 Pagans 1 Buddhist
Puckett, 2012	4 couples	N/A	N/A
Starnino, 2014	12 women; 6 men	20-62	8 Spiritual but not religious; 7 Christian; 2 Native American Spirituality; 1 “Exploring”

Table 2

Research Methods Summary

Author	Method	Location	Purpose
Beitel, et al., 2007	Grounded Theory	Not Reported	Client experience reports regarding a manualized spiritually focused intervention.
Buser, et al., 2011	Narratology	Continental USA	Examine LGBT client's experiences of addressing religious and spiritual issues.
Cragun & Friedlander, 2012	Consensual Qualitative Research	USA	Explore the experience of Christian clients in secular psychotherapy.
Gockel, 2011	Narrative	Vancouver, BC	Explore client experience of spirituality in the therapeutic relationship.
Goedde, 2000	Qualitative Research	Not Reported	To study how clients perceive that their spirituality/religion was addressed in the context of individual psychotherapy.
Knox, et al., 2005	Consensual Qualitative Research	USA; Mid-West Mid-Atlantic	To explore client preferences regarding the experience of addressing religion/spirituality.
Koslander & Arvidsson, 2007	Phenomenography	Sweden	To study client experiences regarding how spirituality is addressed in mental health care.
Lietz & Hodge, 2013	Qualitative	Arizona, USA	Examine client's experiences of spirituality in substance abuse counseling.
Macmin & Foskett, 2004	Grounded Theory	Somerset, UK	Assess service users experience of mental health problems in relation to religion/spirituality.
Puckett, 2012	Phenomenology	Kentucky, USA	Explore client experiences of spirituality in couple's therapy.
Starnino, 2014	Phenomenology	Midwest, USA	To explore the role of spirituality in the recovery process of people with psychiatric disabilities.

For the purposes of this metasynthesis, each piece of research was treated as an individual participant (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2007). The protocol went through three iterations. The initial version can be found in Appendix C and the final version can be found in Appendix D. This version of the protocol was applied to all eleven pieces of included research.

Sandelowski and Barroso (2007) note that the techniques utilized in qualitative metasynthesis are widely varied. As with other forms of qualitative research, it is up to the discretion of the researcher to select an appropriate method and to justify the selection. Because a justification for the suitability of qualitative research has already been addressed, this section will limit itself to a justification for the applicability of a phenomenological approach. The purpose of this metasynthesis is aimed at the voice of clients regarding their experience of addressing spirituality as a part of counseling. The essence of this experience will be targeted through this synthesis.

Phenomenology targets the essence of a lived experience (Creswell, 2012). This synthesis was conducted to amplify the voices of clients regarding their experience of addressing spirituality and religion in counseling. Phenomenological methods are congruent with this purpose. Moustakas (1994) states that, “phenomenology is committed to descriptions of experiences, not explanations or analyses” (p. 58). As noted earlier, research on spirituality in counseling needs increased representation of the voices of clients.

Procedure. To conduct this qualitative metasynthesis, each article was treated as a participant. Bracketing was utilized prior to engaging each article.

Bracketing was engaged by identifying areas for potential bias through the use of reflection and researcher dialogue. This bracketing was revisited throughout the phenomenological reduction process. Horizontalization was applied to the results and discussion sections in order to construct an individual textural description for each article. Imaginative variation was applied to the results and discussion sections in order to construct an individual structural description.

These individual descriptions were then combined to create composite textural and composite structural descriptions. Descriptions were combined by listing and grouping expressions relevant to the experience. These expressions were then reduced to the invariant constituents of the experience. Next, the invariant constituents were clustered and thematized. Last, the article was read again in order to apply and validate the identified themes. These individual descriptions were then combined to form a composite description. Each article was evaluated through the composite description in order to check for the applicability to all of the included articles.

Trustworthiness. Several strategies were utilized in order to address trustworthiness. Sandelowski and Barroso (2007) identify types of validity and strategies for increasing trustworthiness. Descriptive validity was reinforced through consistent research team meetings, exhaustive searches which utilized multiple search methods, and the application of reference manager software. Interpretive validity was promoted through consistent research team meetings. Theoretical validity was promoted by utilizing the qualitative methodology expertise of a member of the research team. Additionally, negotiated consensual

validity was utilized during research team meetings. Finally, pragmatic validity was addressed through maintaining an audit trail, memoeing throughout the research process, and documentation of team meetings. A record of memos can be found in Appendix F.

Researcher Disclosure

Disclosure of the vantage point of the researcher is consistent with qualitative research and with the social constructivist worldview of this researcher. Furthermore, disclosure is important in qualitative metasynthesis because the reviewer impacts the synthesis just like the researcher impacts the original research (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2007). Therefore, I hope to identify the relevant biases that I bring to this metasynthesis. I bring a rich personal history with spirituality as well as specific religious activities designed to engage my beliefs. This history provides both sensitization to the research topic as well as the potential for bias. “Clinical experts should possess knowledge of the practice area that is the topical focus of the synthesis project and of ways to translate the synthesis itself into clinically useful knowledge” (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2007, p. 24-25). I have identified several of these relevant beliefs:

- Spirituality is worthwhile to study just for the sake of hearing personal descriptions of the experience.
- Spirituality is a uniquely personal experience.
- Spiritual experiences have personal, internal effects.
- The internal experience of spirituality is not easily reducible.
- Spiritual experiences are universally available.

- Spirituality is accurately understood as being a part of the person, not a set of behaviors or beliefs.

In addition to my perspectives on spirituality, I bring a personal history that did not have spiritual or religious practices during my childhood. Despite this lack of spiritual expression, I cannot remember a time in my life when I did not believe in the spiritual nature of this world. A more intimate relationship with spirituality began during college and has continued to the present. It has become an increasingly significant part of my life and has included a Master's degree completed at a Protestant seminary. Further, I have worked as a professional counselor at churches located in both an urban and suburban context.

Furthermore, I am passionate about spirituality. This passion stems from personal spiritual experiences. These experiences have ranged from the ordinary (e.g. attendance at church, enjoyment of nature) to the extraordinary (e.g., feeling the presence of God, experiencing healing from past trauma). I believe these experiences have collectively and specifically changed who I am. Steady engagement with spiritual experiences has shaped how I see myself, others, and the world.

Results

Four themes describing the client experience of spirituality and religion in counseling emerged from the synthesis of the 11 included studies. The client experience of addressing spirituality and religion in therapy contained a context, a fear, a freedom, and a personal expression.

A Context

As with all experiences, a context underlies the structure of the actual

experience. This context underlies and helps to account for the emergence of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). For the client experience of addressing spiritual and religious beliefs and practices in counseling, the context contains three specific layers. These layers were demonstrated across the synthesized articles.

First, the client's background with spirituality and religion is part of the context of the experience. This layer had both positive and negative contours. In order to understand the client's experience, it is important to remember that there is an immense amount of variety in client's spiritual and religious backgrounds. Some participants reported little or no desire to address spirituality in counseling because it was not a significant layer of their life experience (Puckett, 2012). Other participants reported spirituality as integral for understanding life experiences, including counseling (Gockel, 2011; Puckett, 2012). This variety of experience informs the desire to address spirituality and religion in therapy as well as the experience of doing so.

Second, the counselor's personal spiritual background is part of the context of the experience of the client. Clients who experienced addressing spirituality and religion were aware of the counselor's spirituality. This was evident in the metasynthesis through clients consistently offering reflections that demonstrated an awareness of the counselor's spirituality. Participants described perceiving spiritual beliefs or background in their counselor (Buser et al., 2011; Cragun & Friedlander, 2012; Knox et al., 2005). This awareness of the spirituality of the counselor impacted the client's experience of addressing spirituality and religion. Participants in one study noted the importance of counselor self-exploration of

spirituality (Gockel, 2011). Clients gave positive and negative descriptions of this dimension.

Third, client awareness of the relationship between the counseling profession and spirituality was part of the context. Clients demonstrated an awareness of potential attitudes toward spirituality by the counseling profession. This layer of the experience included perceptions of training and professional receptivity. Participants in one study “attributed a counselor’s distance or unavailability to professional training” (Gockel, 2011, p. 162). Thus, client’s perception of the counseling profession’s perspective on spirituality and religion contributes to the context of the experience for clients.

A Fear

Fear was the most pronounced layer of the experience across all of the articles included in this synthesis. The presence of fear was evident in the direct quotes of participants as well as in the interpretation of several researchers. Fear emerged in the client’s experience as fear of judgment, fear of being misunderstood, fear of vulnerability, and concerns about appropriateness. The significance of fear in the experience is demonstrated by the inclusion in the title of one of the synthesized articles, “*Don’t Be Afraid to Tell*” (Macmin & Foskett, 2004).

While fear appeared in some form across all the articles, it took on different contours within the experience. Fear emerged in the form of the fear of judgment. Clients experience a reluctance to address their spiritual and religious beliefs for fear that they would be judged or seen as “kooky” (Knox et al., 2005, p. 16). Apart from judgment, fear was evident in the experience that sharing their beliefs or

practices would be misunderstood by the counselor. While this aspect was structural to the experience, it also appeared directly in the textural contours as evidenced by participants stating explicitly that they experienced a lack of understanding (Buser et al., 2011; Koslander & Arvidsson, 2007; Macmin & Foskett, 2004).

Finally, fear resided in the vulnerability of the topic. Spirituality and religion were described in deep terminology. Evidence of the depth of experience for clients with addressing spirituality and religion in therapy was demonstrated with terms like, “invalidating” (Buser et al., 2011) and “core sense of self” (Macmin & Foskett, 2004). In one article, clients described spirituality and religion as an aspect of “me” (Goedde, 2000). These comments reflect a piece of the experience reflected across the included articles. A piece that demonstrates an experience of spirituality as a deep part of the self. Offering this deep layer of the self was a vulnerable engagement for clients addressing spirituality and religion in counseling.

A Freedom

Freedom emerged as an aspect of client’s experience of addressing spirituality and religion in counseling. Freedom consisted of two main layers: the freedom to explore and the freedom to express. Clients experienced a freedom within the counseling room and relationship to explore their spiritual and religious beliefs and practices. This aspect of the experience appeared across the included articles through words like “openness,” “free,” and “affirmation.” Freedom also presented itself through a lack of forcefulness by the counselor about when and how much to discuss spirituality. Clients experienced an awareness of freedom regarding

what they could and could not talk about. Participants across the included articles described different aspects of this layer of the experience. Some described experiencing an openness from their counselor while others described resistance from the counselor. This resistance was experienced as a lack of freedom to explore spirituality and religion.

Clients also experience a freedom to express their spirituality and the level of personal significance. Freedom emerged in terms of the freedom to express the personal significance of spirituality for the client. This was seen through the variety of expressions provided by participants. Whereas some clients desired the freedom not to discuss spirituality (Knox et al., 2005), others describe spirituality in significant terms such as the “air you breathe” (Goedde, 2000, p. 111).

A Personal Expression

The final ingredient in this experience is a personal expression. Client’s experience of personal expression of spirituality and religion was demonstrated through language, beliefs, practices, and description of the counseling process. Clients experience spiritual and religious beliefs and practices as a part of their “self.” The contours of this experience of personal expression varied across religious or spiritual traditions, was influenced by upbringing and past experiences, and took on individual nuances depending on the personal resonance of the client. This expression was individualized and experienced as deeply personal. One research participant captured this element of the experience by saying, “to invalidate a person’s spirituality no matter how distorted it is, is to invalidate the real core sense of self” (Macmin & Foskett, 2004, p. 27).

Clients utilized specific, personalized language in describing their experience of spirituality and religion. Clients experienced the expression of their beliefs and practices through specific language as a vulnerable engagement attempting to describe something that cannot be fully described. Clients experience spirituality and religion as something beyond full expression. It is more than the sum of its parts. The words utilized by clients to express their spirituality include, “whole” and “peaceful” (Beitel et al., 2007), and “love” (Gockel, 2011; Knox et al., 2005; Starnino, 2014). Furthermore, Gockel (2011) noted the diversity in experiences of spirituality through words like “God,” “higher power,” “spirit,” and “soul.”

Finally, clients experienced personal expression within the counseling process and relationship as a spiritual experience. Gockel (2011) noted this layer of the experience in her discussion. She states that, “participants viewed counseling as an extension of their spiritual practices.” Goedde (2000) identified entry points for spirituality into the counseling process. She describes several that include, “a healing force in therapy,” as well as, “healing aspects of the therapeutic relationship.”

Discussion

As already noted, research on spirituality and religion in counseling has advanced substantially in recent years. This qualitative metasynthesis builds on the advancements made during the past fifteen years. The results of this qualitative metasynthesis serve several valuable functions. These results reinforce conclusions already noted within research on spirituality and religion in counseling.

Furthermore, the results spotlight areas of interest that can serve to increase the

professional understanding of the client experience of spirituality and religion in counseling. Limitations to this study will be examined followed by a discussion of the results. Finally, implications for practice, counselor education, and research will be identified.

Limitations. The main limitation of this metasynthesis is the spiritual demographics of the participants in the included studies. While the articles did capture a variety of spiritual beliefs, the majority of the participants identified as Christian. The narrow range of spiritual and religious traditions limits the transferability of these results. This limitation was addressed through broad inclusion criteria for the articles being synthesized. Despite this broad inclusion, the majority of participants identified as Christian. Another potential limitation was researcher bias. This limitation was addressed by locating the researcher and providing a thick description of the experience being synthesized (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Comparison to extant research. Research has shown that clients want to address spirituality and religion in counseling (e.g., Morrison, Clutter, Pritchett, & Demmitt, 2009; Rose, Westefeld, & Ansley, 2008). While research has increasingly demonstrated client interest in addressing spirituality, little research has been conducted on the client experience of addressing. The results of this metasynthesis add to the literature by describing the experience of addressing spirituality and religion. By understanding the essence of this experience, counselors are more able to competently address spirituality and religion with clients.

The theme of context includes client history with spirituality and religion. In

addition, clients demonstrate an awareness of the counseling profession's demeanor toward spirituality and religion. The need to understand both of these layers is addressed in the ASERVIC competencies (ASERVIC, 2009). The importance of understanding client context has been documented by several researchers (e.g., Bishop, 1992; Ingersoll, 1994; Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2000). Building on the work of these researchers, Ybañez-Llorente and Smelser (2014) published the Tree Ring Technique. In part, this technique aids clinicians in ascertaining the context noted in this metasynthesis. In addition, Ybañez-Llorente and Smelser (2014) note the importance of counselor self-awareness. The result of context adds to this understanding by including the profession within the context of addressing client spirituality.

The result of fear demonstrated that clients experience spirituality and religion as a deep part of the self. These results illuminated the vulnerable nature of spirituality and religion (e.g., Cragun & Friedlander, 2012). This is seen in the fear of being rejected, misunderstood, or judged. This is due in part to a lack of confidence about offering spiritual and religious experiences in counseling. This result is consistent with the publications of numerous researchers that have documented fear in a variety of forms around spirituality and religion (e.g., Morrison et al., 2009; Rose et al., 2008; Young, Dowdle, & Flowers, 2009). The result of fear in this metasynthesis is congruent with the need for trust identified by Post and Wade (2009). Sperry (2012) notes the need for trust in light of the fear of addressing spirituality and religion.

The result of freedom is part of the client experience of counselor openness.

Several authors have noted the importance of counselor openness when engaging with spirituality and religion (e.g., Rose et al., 2008; Sperry, 2012; Steen et al., 2006; West, 2000). This openness needs to extend to the freedom to express and explore (e.g., ASERVIC, 2009; Steen et al., 2006). The connection between counselor openness and the result of freedom can be understood through the concept of the therapeutic alliance (Bordin, 1979). Several authors have examined the therapeutic alliance in terms of spirituality (Cragun & Friedlander, 2012; Sperry, 2012; Young et al., 2009). Young et al. (2009) have provided an examination of the therapeutic alliance with spiritual and religious clients. Understanding the therapeutic alliance with spiritual and religious clients can serve to cultivate the experience of freedom.

Finally, the result of personal expression is relevant to culturally competent practice. This result is supported by the ASERVIC (2009) competencies that place an importance on utilizing spiritual themes that are consistent with the worldview of the client. Regarding spirituality and religion in counseling, Hinterkopf (2014) discusses the need for counselors to be attentive to what is personally significant for a spiritual client. This is consistent with the result of personal expression which validated the importance of attending to the client expression of spirituality and religion.

Implications for practice. In light of these results, counselors should pay close attention to fear when discussing spirituality and religion with clients. Recognizing and addressing fear will serve to invite freedom and personal expression. Counselors can facilitate personal expression by attending to the specific expressions of clients (Hinterkopf, 2014). Counselors can facilitate freedom

by maintaining openness and acceptance toward the spirituality and religion of clients.

Implications for counselor education. The counseling profession is making progress in pursuing the integration of spirituality and religion within counselor education. Evidence of this progress can be seen in the *2016 CACREP Standards* (CACREP, 2015) which now include an item for the inclusion of spirituality for understanding client and counselor worldviews. Counselor educators need to be intentional about including spirituality and religion in their pedagogical planning and implementation. Adams, Puig, Baggs, and Wolf (2015) have identified the current state of implementation as well as barriers and strategies for integration. This metasynthesis adds support to their strategies for overcoming barriers to integration. Specifically, the authors call for an increase in counselor self awareness and awareness of the experiences of clients (Adams et al., 2015). Counselor educators can use the results of this metasynthesis toward these goals.

Implications for research. In light of spirituality and religion being deep aspects of self, more research is needed to understand this experience for clients. As noted by other researchers (e.g., Gockel, 2009; Miller & Kelley, 2005; Ocampo Hoogasian & Gloria, 2015; Post & Wade, 2014), more qualitative research is needed on spirituality and religion in counseling. The result of personal expression confirms the appropriateness of more qualitative research in this area. The personal and experiential nature of spirituality and religion will benefit from the strengths of qualitative research (Creswell, 2012).

It is also noteworthy that only four of the included articles (Buser et al., 2011;

Goedde, 2000; Knox et al., 2005; Puckett, 2012) in this metasynthesis contained a dedicated researcher disclosure statement. This is despite the pervasive emphasis placed on researcher disclosure statements present across qualitative research guides (e.g., Creswell, 2012; Sandelowski & Barroso, 2007). Creswell (2012) notes the importance of actively addressing researcher bias through methodology and disclosure. Furthermore, the lack of researcher disclosure statements is relevant to the result of context. Client awareness of professional beliefs and attitudes toward spirituality and religion is part of the result of context.

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Chapter 3

A Grounded Theory Study of How Private Practice Christian Client's Experience
Their Spirituality and Religion During the Counseling Process with Similar Faith
Counselors

Johnny LaLonde

Oregon State University

Deborah J. Rubel

Oregon State University

Abstract

This article presents the results of a grounded theory exploration that describes how Christian clients experience their spirituality and religion in the counseling process. This study fills a gap in the literature regarding the role of spirituality and religion in the therapy process. Interviews with Christian clients in counseling with Christian counselors were conducted in order to understand how spirituality and religion is experienced during the process of counseling. These findings describe the central priority that spiritual/religious identity takes in the life of these participants. The central location of spirituality/religion within the therapy process decentralizes the therapist. Additionally, a priority is placed on receiving from spirituality and religion during the therapy process. The discussion presents implications for practice, counselor education, and research.

Keywords: spirituality, religion, counseling, therapy

The standards of practice for the counseling profession place a high value on multiculturalism. The counseling profession has made significant advances in deepening multicultural knowledge, skills, awareness, and action (Ratts, Singh, Nassar-McMillan, Butler, & McCullough, 2015). The results of these advances can be seen in publication patterns (Worthington, Soth-McNett, & Moreno, 2007), ethical and competency guidelines produced by professional organizations (ASERVIC, 2009; Harper et al., 2013; Ratts et al., 2015), as well as ongoing revisions to training standards (CACREP, 2016). While the profession has made strong advances in cultural understanding, spirituality and religion have been underrepresented (Hage, Hopson, Siegel, Payton, & DeFanti, 2006). Sperry (2012) has identified a recent recognition of spirituality as, “an element of culture and a domain of cultural assessment and practice” (p. 250).

Powers (2005) noted an increase in counseling research on spirituality and religion. This trend in research has continued over the past 10 years. Research has addressed several gaps in the literature and has informed substantial progress in understanding the relationship between the counseling profession and spirituality and religion. Research has focused on the appropriateness of spirituality and religion in counseling. Appropriateness has been specifically addressed through studies focused on the perspectives of professionals (e.g., Carlson, McGeorge, & Anderson, 2011; Cornish, Wade, & Post, 2012; Jones, 2013; Saunders, Petrik, & Miller, 2014) and the perspectives of clients (e.g., Diallo, 2012; Harris et al., 2015; Post & Wade, 2014; Post, Wade, & Cornish, 2014; Saenz & Waldo, 2013; Zahn, Reiser, Baumann, & Riemann, 2015). This emphasis on the appropriateness of including

spirituality and religion in counseling was necessary to address a historically antagonistic stance taken by the counseling profession (Allmon, 2013). With this prior hostility largely addressed, the counseling profession has made substantial progress toward including spirituality and religion in the standard practice multicultural competencies.

Beyond the emphasis on the appropriateness of including spirituality and religion in counseling, research focused on the counselor has exceeded research focused on the clients. Counselor research has focused on three broad areas. The first area is research on integrating spirituality and religion in counselor education (e.g., Adams, Puig, Baggs, & Wolf, 2015; Dobmeier & Reiner, 2012; Elkonin, Brown, & Naicker, 2014; Reiner & Dobmeier, 2014; Shaw, Bayne, & Lorelle, 2012). The second research focus is addressing spirituality and religion in counselor supervision (e.g., Gilliam & Armstrong, 2012; Hull, Suarez, Sells, & Miller, 2013; Ross, Suprina, & Brack, 2013; Shafranske, 2014). Finally, the research includes studies on spirituality and religion as part of counseling in general (e.g., Carlson, Kirkpatrick, Hecker, & Killmer, 2002; Cornish et al., 2012; Walker, Gorsuch, & Tan, 2004)

The trend of expanding research on spirituality and religion in counseling has extended into practice-level research. This has included research focused on utilizing spirituality and religion in therapy in general and through specific intervention approaches (e.g., Aten, McMinn, & Worthington, 2011; Buser, Buser, & Peterson, 2013; Giordano & Cashwell, 2014; Ybañez-Llorente & Smelser, 2014). This category has been deepened through research focused on effective assessment of spirituality and religion in therapy (e.g., Chidarikire, 2012; Gomi, Starnino, & Canda,

2014; Hodge & Horvath, 2011; Murray-Swank & Pargament, 2011).

In spite of these advances, research does not adequately address the experience of clients. Research focused on client experiences of spirituality has been suggested by several authors (e.g., Brown, Elkonin, & Naicker, 2013; Gockel, 2011; Macmin & Foskett, 2004; Rosmarin, Forester, Shassian, Webb, & Björgvinsson, 2015). Client focused research is needed to inform practice. With this research problem in mind, qualitative research is particularly well suited for the task at hand (Kazdin, 2008). The need for more qualitative research on client spirituality has been noted by several authors (e.g., Gockel, 2009; Miller & Kelley, 2005; Ocampo Hoogasian & Gloria, 2015; Post & Wade, 2014). As Corbin and Strauss (2014) have noted, “qualitative researchers want the opportunity to connect with their research participants and to see the world from their viewpoint” (p. 5).

At present, qualitative research exists that addresses client spirituality. However, these studies do not address the role of spirituality and religion in the therapy process. Several articles lack the appropriate sample population in order to specifically address client spirituality (Buser, Goodrich, Luke, & Buser, 2011; Lietz & Hodge, 2013; Puckett, 2012). These studies focused on populations that included counselors/counselor educators (Buser, Goodrich, Luke, & Buser, 2011), a combination of clients and counselors (Lietz & Hodge, 2013) and couple’s (Puckett, 2012). Other studies suffered from a lack of methodological rigor (Cragun & Friedlander, 2012; Puckett, 2012). These studies were broadly identified as qualitative but lacked thorough descriptions of methodological implementation. Several articles captured fragmented pieces of the client experience by focusing on

incorporating spirituality into counseling (Beitel et al., 2007; Starnino, 2014). These studies focused on the implementation of spiritual based interventions.

Additionally, within the existing qualitative research, several studies focus on client perspectives of spirituality and religion in counseling (Beitel et al., 2007; Goedde, 2000; Knox, Catlin, Casper, & Schlosser, 2005; Koslander & Arvidsson, 2007; Lietz & Hodge, 2013; Macmin & Foskett, 2004). This focus encompasses limited aspects of the client experience of this phenomenon, such as. However, the purpose of these studies is to determine appropriateness and effectiveness in addressing spirituality and religion. These are valuable contributions, but the studies lack a specific focus on the role of client spirituality and religion in counseling.

Two published studies stand out because they come closest to focusing on the role of client spirituality and religion in the counseling process. These two studies contribute significantly to research on the client experience of spirituality and religion. Both articles are derived from a single qualitative study. In the first, spirituality is examined as part of the process of healing (Gockel, 2009). However, the author fails to explicitly connect spirituality with the counseling process. Instead, the focus is on the healing process in general. The author notes the need for different qualitative methods and research that addresses spiritual healing in the context of counseling (Gockel, 2009).

In the second article (Gockel, 2011), the counseling process is examined. This narrative study examines the role of counseling for clients who draw on spirituality for healing. The study sought to identify the meaning that spiritual client's place on counseling. Because of the research method and the central research question, this

study came the closest to the focus of the present research. There are two noteworthy differences. First, Gockel (2011) utilized a narrative approach in order to identify underlying meaning. The present study is seeking to understand the underlying process of spirituality and religion in counseling. Second, whereas Gockel (2011) focused on the role of counseling for spiritual clients, this study will focus on the role of spirituality and religion for clients in counseling.

Because of the underrepresentation of research focused on the role of spirituality and religion in the counseling process, more research is needed which focuses on this process for spiritual and religious clients. Additionally, this grounded theory study is focused on illuminating a particular, deep experience of spirituality and religion in the therapy process. Therefore, in order to target this particular, deep experience, the research was designed to focus on a specific set of participants with a specific set of counselors. Participants were included if they identified as Christian, sought therapy from a Christian counselor, and saw their spirituality and religion having a significant impact on their life. This intentional selection of participants was designed to produce results capable of capturing the depth and richness of the experience being studied.

Additionally, the focus of this research is on understanding the potential for involving spirituality and religion in the therapy process. Conditions that facilitated the spiritual/religious process in therapy were of particular interest. This is in contrast to elements that would present a barrier. Because of these considerations, participants were selected based on their own identification as a Christian as well as their selection of a Christian therapist. This combination offered the opportunity to

explore the particular, deep experience of interest in this research.

The purpose of this grounded theory study is to understand how Christian private practice clients experience spirituality and religion within the counseling process. At this stage in the research, the experience of spirituality and religion will be generally defined as the contributions made by the spiritual and religious experiences of the client to the therapy process. Openness to the experiences of clients is necessary to deepen cultural understanding (Fowers & Davidov, 2006). Understanding this process will deepen the professional understanding of the worldview of spiritual and religious clients in general and Christian clients in particular.

Method

This section will outline the research design for this grounded theory study. This study will add to the existing literature regarding spirituality and religion in counseling. To address the identified research problem, the methodology outlined in Corbin and Strauss (2014) was utilized. By utilizing a qualitative approach, the experiences of participants who identify as spiritual or religious will be the emphasis of this research. The central research question for this study is, "How do Christian private practice clients experience their spirituality and religion in their counseling process?" This question is informed by these subquestions: (a) How do spiritual and religious clients experience their spirituality and religion as a part of therapeutic change? (b) How do spiritual and religious clients experience their spirituality and religion in session? (c) How do spiritual and religious clients experience their spirituality and religion as part of their counseling process outside

of the session? (d) How do spiritual and religious clients experience their spirituality and religion in relationship to their counselor? (e) How do spiritual and religious clients describe the role of spirituality and religion in their counseling process? (f) What does spiritual and religious look like in the counseling process to the client? (g) What are the mechanisms by which spiritual and religious experiences affect the counseling process?

Qualitative methods were selected for this research for several reasons. First, there has been a consistent call for more qualitative research focused on spirituality and religion in counseling (e.g., Gockel, 2009; Miller & Kelley, 2005; Ocampo Hoogasian & Gloria, 2015; Post & Wade, 2014). Second, the nature of spirituality and religion is a suitable application for qualitative methods. Third, qualitative research places an emphasis on the words, descriptions, and experiences of participants. This emphasis will serve to honor the voices of clients. As already noted, there has been a noticeable deficit in focusing on client experiences of spirituality and religion in the literature.

These identified reasons for selecting qualitative methods are aligned with the motivating reasons already identified in the literature (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). Corbin and Strauss (2014) note that, “qualitative researchers want the opportunity to connect with their research participants and to see the world from their viewpoints” (p. 5). By entering and honoring the experience of clients, qualitative research can serve to elevate spirituality and religion as a multicultural issue. Fowers and Davidov (2006) note that, “culturally competent practice is crucially dependent on general and specific knowledge about culture” (p. 587).

Beyond qualitative research in general, grounded theory methodology is appropriate for this study. Grounded theory is beneficial for formulating rich descriptions of complex processes (Creswell, 2012). The internal, personal, and significant nature of spiritual and religious beliefs and practices create a complex but identifiable process. In order to understand how this process operates within counseling, a grounded theory is suitable. Developing a theory grounded in the experiences and descriptions of clients will help to understand the process at work. Development of this theory will also help to identify future research directions.

Participants

Purposeful sampling was utilized for the selection of participants in this study. This method of sampling allowed the researcher to intentionally select individuals based on identification with the process in question (Creswell, 2012). Purposeful sampling is suitable for identifying individuals who are able to provide information-rich data (Patton, 2015). For this study, participants with a deep, particular experience of spirituality and religion in the therapy process were needed. Therefore, the research was designed to focus on a specific set of participants. Participants were included if they identified as Christian, sought therapy from a Christian counselor, and saw their spirituality and religion having a significant impact on their life. Additionally, participation in individual counseling for at least six months with a licensed counselor was required. Involvement of spirituality and religion in the counseling process, is defined as explicitly or implicitly addressed internal and external experiences that were positive and/or negative.

Participants were notified of the call for research through a written

description delivered to them by their counselors. Counselors were intentionally identified for recruitment because of their inclusion or openness to Christian spirituality. These counselors were all licensed counselors located across the US who identify as Christian. This Christian identification was demonstrated through participation in a variety of Protestant denominations. Most of the counselors utilized for recruitment had seminary training which included either theological education or counselor training. Counselors utilized for recruitment were advised to assure participants of the voluntary nature of their involvement.

Some participants for this study were drawn from the same work site as the researcher. Because of this, the institutional review board process was completed with special attention paid to the potential conflict of interest. This was accounted for by excluding participants who had an existing relationship with the researcher. Additionally, contacts were provided guidelines on recruiting participants for the study that emphasized the voluntary nature of participation. Once participants were screened for eligibility and the verbal consent was gained, 10 participants volunteered. Relevant participant demographic information is presented in Table 1.

Setting

Qualitative research emphasizes the importance of gathering information through direct engagement with people (Creswell, 2012). This emphasis allows researchers to engage closely and directly with participant descriptions. For this study, video conference software was utilized because of the distributed location of the participants. This offered a solution which accommodated the physical distance of the participants as well as the qualitative research need for direct engagement.

Table 1

Participant Demographic Information

Participant	Gender	Age	Spiritual/Religious Identification	Reason for Seeking Counseling
Participant 1	Female	41	Christian with a leaning toward mystic spirituality	Trauma
Participant 2	Female	27	Very spiritual and religious	Marital Issues
Participant 3	Female	25	Non-denominational Christian Believer, Christian, Protestant	Childhood trauma, anxiety, addiction
Participant 4	Male	34	Christian	Depression, anxiety
Participant 5	Male	30	Christian/Protestant	Unhappiness, anxiety, negative thoughts and feelings
Participant 6	Female	23	I am a gospel-believing, relationship-with-Christ Christian	Emotional distress and difficulties from past experiences
Participant 7	Male	61	Christian, conservative Presbyterian	Grief, anxiety, depression
Participant 8	Female	24	Christian, no denominational preference	Anxiety
Participant 9	Female	41	Believer, Christian, Protestant	Discontentment
Participant 10	Female	25	Christian	Depression, anxiety

Researcher as Instrument

Disclosure of the vantage point of the researcher is consistent with qualitative research and with the social constructivist worldview of this researcher. Furthermore, disclosure is important in grounded theory research because the

biases and assumptions of the researcher impact conducting and analyzing research (Creswell, 2012). Therefore, I hope to identify and reduce the impact of the relevant biases that I bring to this study. I bring a strong personal history with spirituality as well as specific religious engagement designed to demonstrate my beliefs. This history provides both sensitization to the research topic as well as the potential for bias (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). I have identified several of these relevant beliefs:

- Spirituality is worthwhile to study just for the sake of hearing personal descriptions of the experience.
- Spirituality is a uniquely personal experience.
- Spiritual experiences have personal, internal effects.
- The internal experience of spirituality is not easily reducible.
- Spiritual experiences are universally available.
- Spirituality is accurately understood as being a part of the person, not a set of behaviors or beliefs.

It is important to note that I bring personal experiences of spirituality and religion to this research process. While my childhood lacked engagement with religion or spirituality, experiences of spirituality/religion have been central to my adult life. The centrality of spirituality/religion began during college and has continued to the present. These experiences have included a Master's degree completed at a Protestant seminary and working as a professional counselor in churches in both an urban and suburban context.

In addition, spirituality is a high priority in my life. This priority has been reinforced by personal spiritual experiences. These experiences have ranged from

the ordinary (e.g., attendance at church, enjoyment of nature) to the extraordinary (e.g., feeling the presence of God, experiencing healing from past trauma). These experiences have shaped my personal identity. Continued engagement with spiritual practices has shaped how I see myself, others, and the world.

Finally, through the research and data analysis process, another important bias emerged. During theory development, it became clear that the professional counseling training and experience of the researchers was an important item to identify as potential bias. This familiarity with the counseling profession impacted the researcher's ability to see the therapeutic experiences from the vantage point of the study participants.

Data Collection

Data collection began by providing contextual questions to participants in order to collect relevant information. These questions were, (a) What is your current age? (b) Have you attended individual counseling for six consecutive months? (c) How did you locate your counselor? (d) What brought you to counseling? (e) How would you identify yourself in terms of spirituality and religion? (f) How would you describe the significance of spirituality and religion in your life? (g) Did spirituality and/or religion impact your selection of a counselor?

Next, data collection continued with the first set of interviews. These interviews were conducted via video call, were audio recorded for transcription, and lasted between 50 and 60 minutes each. Interview rounds were conducted until a point of saturation was achieved. In this case, two interviews over the course of six months. The interviews utilized open-ended questions in order to obtain in-depth

exploration of the participant's experiences (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). Interview guidelines were constructed to address the central research question of this study. These guidelines can be found in Appendix O.

Consistent with the constructivist worldview, interviews were engaged as an emergent interaction intended to build mutuality in the process of data collection (Charmaz, 2014). Five questions were constructed to engage the central research question through semi-structured interviews: (a) How would you describe the role of spirituality and religion in your life? (b) Describe how you experience spirituality and religion in your counseling. (c) How were spirituality and religion involved in your counseling change process? (d) How did you experience your counselor in relation to your spirituality and religion? (e) What else would you like to tell me about spirituality and religion in your counseling process? Upon completion of the interviews, audio files were transcribed.

As the research progressed into analysis, a second round of interviews was necessary for a rich, thick description. These interviews were conducted via video call, were audio recorded for transcription, and lasted between 50 and 60 minutes each. For these interviews, six questions were constructed to further engage the central question: (a) How does spirituality or religion enter into your counseling process? (b) How do you know something is spiritual or religious in your counseling? (c) Can you give me a picture or metaphor that will help me understand how spirituality or religion operates in your counseling process? (d) What does it do for you to experience spirituality or religion in counseling? Experiencing spirituality or religion with your counselor? (e) What do you gain from having spirituality or

religion in your counseling process? (f) What is challenging or hard about having spirituality or religion in your counseling process? Upon completion of the interviews, audio files were transcribed.

Data Analysis

The interview transcripts were de-identified and then analyzed using the procedures outlined by Corbin and Strauss (2014). These procedures moved from the transcribed interviews toward the construction of a grounded theory. Coding was conducted by the same researcher who conducted the participant interviews. Memo-writing was engaged from the beginning of data collection in order to facilitate engagement with the data as well as to provide a tool for reflexivity (Charmaz, 2014). Analysis began with open coding, which involved examining transcript data to determine meaning, assign codes, and group concepts into thematic categories. In vivo codes were utilized to ground the emerging theory in the words, phrases, and meaning communicated by the participants. Next, axial coding was conducted to identify subcategories, properties, and dimensions that describe the categories (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). Throughout the coding process, constant comparison was utilized as an analytic tool. This process of analysis produced categories, properties, dimensions, and context for the role of spirituality and religion in the process of counseling for spiritual and religious clients.

During data analysis, theoretical sampling was utilized. Theoretical sampling served to refine the developing theory and to generate questions for additional rounds of interviewing. This process involved the researcher evaluating the logic and consistency of the tentative structure, validating the structure against the data,

and filling in poorly developed categories (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). The theoretical structure was addressed during this refinement. Areas of the structure that did not make sense were restructured. Questions were developed in order to address areas that had insufficient detail. These questions were developed to collect additional data for the second round of interviewing (Corbin & Strauss, 2014).

Trustworthiness

Thorough qualitative research explicitly addresses the concept of trustworthiness, and the researcher took steps to promote the trustworthiness of this study. Consumers of qualitative research want to know that the research being consumed is a credible source for use in other research projects, for implementation into practice, or for policy making (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Therefore, steps were taken to promote the trustworthiness of this study by focusing on the following criteria as defined by Lincoln and Guba (1985): credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. These four criteria are identified as the most known and utilized framework for evaluating the trustworthiness of qualitative research (Hoyt & Bhati, 2007).

The researcher promoted the credibility of this study through member checking, prolonged engagement, triangulation, reflexive journaling and a peer review (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In keeping with the emphasis on the voices of participants, a member check was included in the research process. A member check was conducted through an electronic presentation of the results. Participants were presented with the grounded theory and given the opportunity to provide feedback. Feedback was then integrated into the existing theory. Prolonged

engagement was obtained by doing two interviews with participants with a gap between engagements to allow for researcher reflexivity. Triangulation was accomplished through the interviews, a review of the literature, and conducting a member check.

Dependability and confirmability were addressed by maintaining an audit trail. The audit had two main aspects. One aspect focused on the research process in order to facilitate dependability. The second aspect of the audit focused on the product in order to facilitate confirmability. Raw data, records, process notes, and supporting materials were maintained in a fashion conducive to an audit. This audit was conducted in a manner consistent with the parameters outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985). The audit trail maintained throughout the research process was included in the peer review documents.

The peer review was conducted by identifying a suitable peer reviewer and supplying the reviewer with an audit checklist along with all necessary documentation. The format of this independent audit was constructed by applying the structure outlined by Miller (1997, March). The guidelines described by Lincoln and Guba (1982, March) were utilized in order to establish a theoretical framework for the utility of an independent audit in qualitative research. These guidelines were then supplied to the peer reviewer. Finally, the critical appraisal checklist for qualitative research studies developed by Treloar, Champness, Simpson, and Higginbotham (2000) was supplied to the peer reviewer in order to guide the appraisal.

In order to promote transferability of this study, the researcher provided the

necessary “thick description” so that consumers of this research have the data essential for transferability to occur (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 316). This was done by providing context of the study, providing rich description of the participants, without jeopardizing anonymity, and using participant quotes to support the findings. Additionally, the researcher located himself within the research by identifying the guiding interests, sensitizing concepts, and disciplinary perspectives (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). This location was reinforced through the researcher disclosure as well as the reflexive journaling engaged throughout the research process.

Upon completion of theory development, a member check was conducted with participants. The member check was completed by contacting participants through email. The email contained a presentation of the theory along with questions related to the participant’s experiences. The member check responses indicated that members found the theory to be descriptive of their experience of spirituality and religion in their therapy process.

Results

In order to develop a grounded theory of how private practice Christian clients experience their spirituality and religion during the therapy process, I gathered data from 10 participants through two rounds of interviews and concluded with a member check. The participants described their spirituality and/or religion as a central feature of their life and identity. The centrality of spirituality/religion in the life and identity of the client sets important context for this theory. These participants described a therapeutic process that joined into an ongoing

spiritual/religious growth process. While the professional training of the therapist and the therapeutic relationship remained important, the fundamental structure of the therapeutic process was oriented in relation to the ongoing spiritual/religious process.

Beyond spirituality/religion as a contextual category, this theory consists of three key categories that describe how these participants experience spirituality and religion during their therapy process. These three categories are: (a) ***organizing the therapy process in relation to spirituality/religion***, (b) ***attending to spirituality/religion in the therapy process*** and the central category, (c) ***receiving from spirituality/religion in the therapy process***. *Organizing the therapy process in relation to S/R* is defined as spirituality/religion acting on the therapy process, influencing the focus of therapy, and the interactions of the therapist and client. *Attending to S/R in the therapy process* is defined as the internal and external actions that focus the client on the spiritual/religious layer of their experience. *Receiving from S/R in the therapy process* is the central category of this theory and is based on S/R being the source of valuable and necessary elements of the client's ongoing growth process. Receiving is therefore defined as the client being able to access valuable and necessary elements for their growth process during therapy.

These three categories will be examined in terms of their associated properties, dimensions, and interactions. Furthermore, *experiencing connection with S/R* (a property of *receiving from S/R in the therapy process*) is a focal point of this results section because of the significance of this connection to these participants. Additionally, experiencing connection facilitates receiving for these participants.

These results focus on the process that leads to *connection with S/R*. To highlight process and connections, interactions will be described under the heading *Theory in action*. Finally, throughout these results, the term “S/R” may be utilized in place of spiritual/religious. However, it should be noted that participants used a variety of words to relate to this central aspect of their life. These terms included, spirituality, religious, beliefs, faith, God, and Jesus.

Key dimensionality. Spiritual/religious experiences in the therapy process had important dimensions which appeared throughout participant descriptions. This dimensionality was demonstrated across all the categories, subcategories, and properties of this theory. Because of this, these dimensions are presented here, ahead of the presentation of the theory. These experiences had dimensional variance in relation to time. The timing of experiences varied *in the past, in the future, and within the present moment*. Experiences of spirituality/religion dimensionally ranged from *general to specific*. S/R experiences ranged from *intangible to tangible*. Participants also described dimensionality on the intensity of their felt sense of an S/R experience. This dimension ranged from *weak to strong*. Finally, participants describe a dimension related to the subcategory, proximity. This dimension ranged from *feeling close to S/R to feeling distance from S/R*.

Experiencing Spirituality/Religion as Central to Life and Personal Identity

Experiencing S/R as central to life and personal identity is a contextual category that describes the surrounding conditions of participants' experiences of S/R as a part of their therapeutic process. As a contextual category, *experiencing S/R as central to life and personal identity* serves as a foundation for the experience that

influences all other parts of this theory. Participants describe spirituality/religion as being central to their life and to their personal identity. One participant stated, "it's so a part of who I am and how I understand myself, how I understand the world, that I can't even understand how you would separate it out."

As a central feature of their life, participants describe spirituality/religion existing outside of themselves. S/R orients their experiences in and understanding of the world. Additionally, they experience S/R as existing internally as a central feature of their personal identity. For these participants, S/R is more than a set of beliefs and practices they adhere to. Rather, it is how they identify themselves as a people. Basically, these participants would affirm both of the following statements: "The world is spiritual/religious" and "I am a spiritual/religious person."

Additionally, these participants described this context as part of their shared experience with their therapist:

It's been in the structure of how we know each other. And so it was never something that really had to be established or um... had to... it was just assumed I guess from the get go...that I was a person of hope or a person of faith and that was something we shared and how we would articulate and understand that might be different. There was this common thing.

Within this contextual category, three subcategories emerged. These subcategories describe the *presence*, *proximity*, and *priority* of S/R in the lives of these participants.

Sensing the presence of S/R in all things. One subcategory that emerged as part of *experiencing spirituality/religion as central to life and personal identity* was *sensing the presence of S/R in all things*. This subcategory describes spirituality/religion being present in all things. These participants do not perceive a distinction between experiences that 'do' or 'do not' contain elements of S/R.

Furthermore, the presence of S/R in all experiences creates the potential to access S/R through any experience. However, participants described conditions that were more conducive to sensing the presence of S/R. In turn, these conditions are more conducive for having an experience of S/R. These conducive experiences are properties of this subcategory and are *suffering, questioning, feeling lost, desiring personal growth/transformation, and desiring connection with spirituality/religion.*

The properties of this subcategory were drawn from numerous participant quotes. A sampling of these quotes has been included here to demonstrate these properties in the words of the participants. One participant reflected on experiences of suffering, "It's not that we think that God is present in a way differently to people who are suffering, but that God shows up in a particular way. It's not more or less, it's just particular." Another participant reflected on an experience of *questioning* and *suffering* together. "It was the whole providence question right away. If God allowed it, or God or whatever. I made some comment of like, 'Well, God allowed it so that God could bring good out of it,' or something like that."

Other participants described experiences of *feeling lost*. Experiencing S/R in their therapy process gave participants perspective in moments of *feeling lost*. One participant stated, "I can understand that this is then the vision of God's vision for the world, or God's vision for me, or God's vision for restoration and wholeness, and then I know how to orient myself in that, and I know how to move forward and get a sense of direction and purpose."

Participants spoke about the role of their spirituality/religion in their experience of *desiring personal growth/transformation*. One participant stated, "I

mean pretty much everything flows from that.. you know like making decisions and relating with other people. And then, you know just my own personal growth, help and that type of stuff.” Another participant reflected that, “God is like really the only.... like He's the healer like He's the only one that can heal my heart. Or like. Um... like help me grow, like there is only... so much like a therapist or I can do like on my own without God's help in that process.” And still another participant directly connected *desiring personal growth/transformation* with *desiring connection with spirituality/religion*. They described that, “a lot of the process is Him growing you and challenging you, and deepening your relationship, which takes time, a lot of the times.”

Experiencing proximity to S/R. Participants described *experiencing proximity to S/R* as a subcategory of *experiencing S/R as central to life and personal identity*. While *presence* refers to experiencing a sense of where this central feature of their life is located, *experiencing proximity to S/R* refers to the amount of distance a participant feels in relation to their S/R center. Participants all desired to feel close to their spirituality/religion because it is seen as the source of vital things they need. For these participants, the more closeness that is experienced with S/R, the more accessible *connection with S/R* becomes. While discussing progress in counseling related to trauma experiences, one participant stated, “That's from a spiritual place. That's not from any other place that I would be able to draw from.” *Connection with S/R* is the conduit for receiving the vital things that S/R provides to participants. In addition, participants describe S/R as being a central part of their own identity. Because of this, close proximity to S/R interacts significantly with connecting

deeper with one's self. One participant described *experiencing proximity to S/R*:

Experiencing God as very real and very like present in those moments. And I think it's easy sometimes to be like there's all this stuff going on like does...does God see or is he in the details or does it even matter. But like my experience in counseling was like God is very present and He cares.

Prioritizing connection with S/R. Participants value cultivating and maintaining connection with their S/R. While connection is facilitated by *sensing presence* and *experiencing closeness*, it is a distinct aspect of their experience with S/R. Connection is defined as the participant having an internal experience of trust in their spiritual/religious center. This trust includes the ability to rely on their S/R for things vital to their growth process. *Prioritizing connection with S/R* first enters the therapy process by participants seeking a counselor who shares this priority. *Prioritizing connection* continues in the therapy process through focusing on S/R within their experiences. Participants described an interactive process with the internal and external connection to S/R. One participant described this interaction by saying, "I try to... get back to my center where God is and just receive the comfort that's already there." For these participants, experiencing connection with their spirituality/religion is their highest priority. Connection can be experienced by focusing on S/R outside of themselves as well as on S/R inside of themselves. This process operates in both directions. One participant spoke about this internal connection corresponding with an external connection to their S/R.

Maybe for some people who don't have the spirituality piece, they would just call that self reflection afterwards, but I see myself really bouncing that off of who I know God is and what I'm thinking His course for my life is or whatever He's working on in me.

Organizing the Therapy Process in Relation to Spirituality/Religion

Experiencing S/R as central to life and personal identity sets the stage for participants' experience of *organizing the therapy process in relation to spirituality/religion*. The therapy process is located within the context of a broader, ongoing S/R growth process. This category contains three properties which are *experiencing the therapy process as an extension of the spiritual/religious growth process, decentralizing the therapist, and experiencing the therapist in differing roles*. One participant described the importance of being able, "to engage in spirituality and realize that there's validity to it in the counseling experience, I think, just allows counseling to be much more whole and healing." Rather than spirituality/religion being added in to a therapeutic process, for these participants it is more accurate to conceptualize that the therapist is invited into the ongoing spiritual/religious growth process.

Experiencing the therapy process as an extension of the spiritual/religious growth process. These participants described an ongoing process of spiritual/religious growth in their life. This property refers to the therapy process becoming part of this ongoing spiritual process. One participant described her spiritual/religious growth as, "It is my process. My spiritual growth is my therapy, because I wouldn't have experienced any of the healing that I have without it."

Decentralizing the therapist. For these participants, the centrality of their S/R influenced the therapy process by *decentralizing the therapist*. This property refers to the participants experiencing their therapist playing an important but

limited role in their spiritual and religious growth process. The therapist is not seen as the source of growth but is experienced as one important access point for S/R into the ongoing growth process of the participant. One participant described this aspect of their experience by saying, “for me it was, ‘God is my healer,’ like God is the central thing... my counselor is awesome, but like, my faith is bigger than that.”

The decentralized location of the therapist is demonstrated in *Figure 1*. The figure depicts the therapist entering into the participant’s ongoing process. By entering into this ongoing process, the therapist initiates a therapeutic process that works toward the priorities of the client. These priorities are formed by S/R in the life of the participant. Further, the lack of centrality of the therapist is demonstrated by the “spiritual/religious center” being the most prominent feature of the diagram. This is consistent with the descriptions presented by the participants. One participant described the decentralized location of the therapist saying, “my spirituality has me seeking my true healer, rather than my therapist.”

Experiencing the therapist in differing roles. In addition to being decentralized in the process, these participants experienced the therapist assuming different roles in the therapy process. *Experiencing the therapist in differing roles* refers to the participant’s experience of distinct ways the counselor relates to the client and their ongoing spiritual/religious process. These roles operated in relation to S/R as central and *connection with S/R* as a high priority. As in all therapy, these participants experienced the therapist in the role of *counselor*. However, the role of *counselor* was unique in that it was set in relation to S/R and was joined by two other distinct roles. These two roles were *witness* and *guide*.

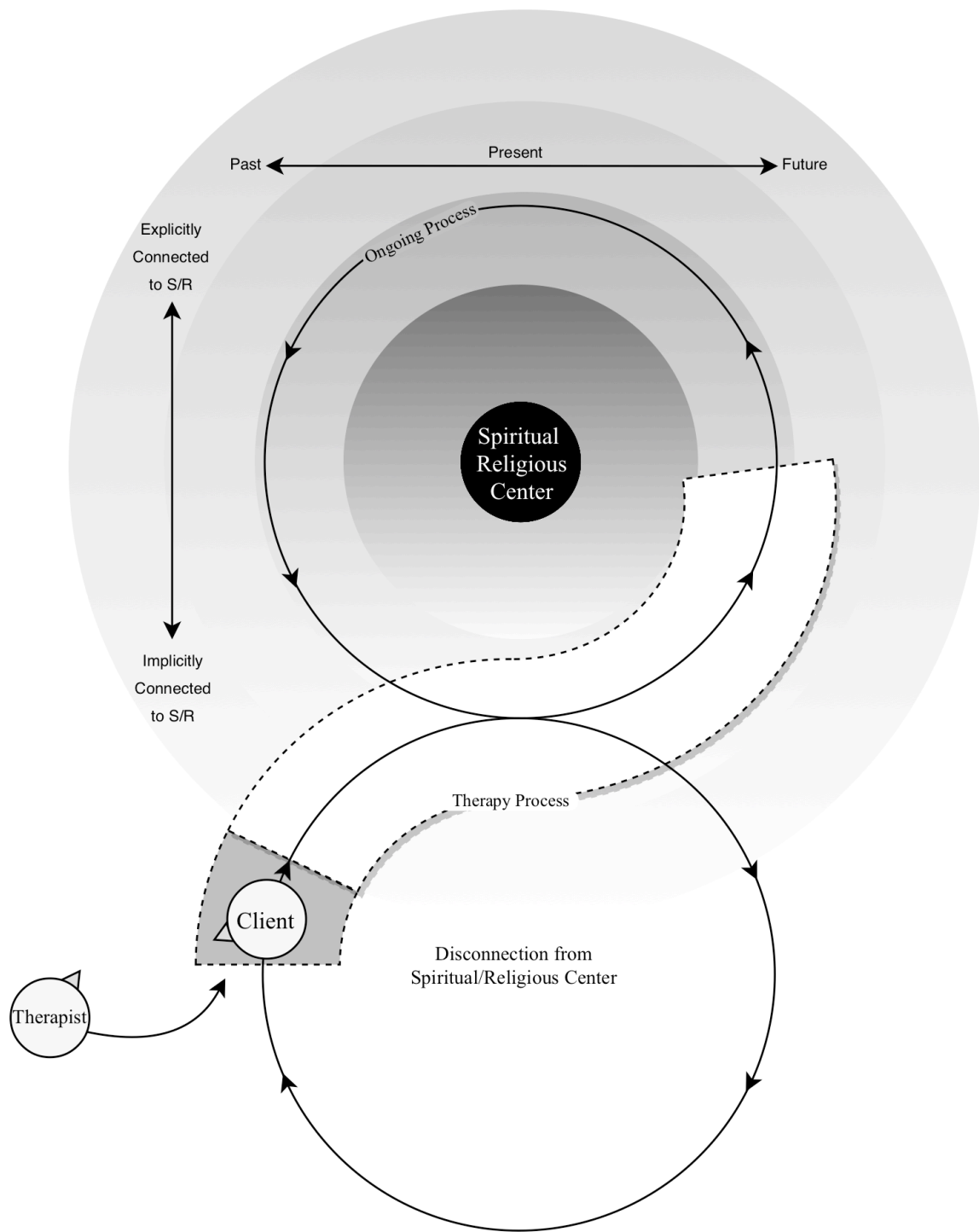


Figure 1: Organizing the Therapy Process in Relation to Spirituality and Religion.

Counselor. Participants described the role of counselor as the therapist acting to create a therapeutic relationship and to address topics that are typical of a therapeutic process. Examples of topics mentioned by participants were addressing emotions, relationship patterns, and family of origin dynamics. In the role of *counselor*, the focal points of counseling and the skills of the counselor support the S/R priorities of the participant. One participant described the therapist addressing topics in the role of *counselor* while the S/R process remained the highest priority. They stated:

I think in counseling you can walk away with tools and coping mechanisms and hours of time where someone has empathized with you, but I didn't realize until I was done with counseling that the thing that was most impactful for me were the spiritual elements that were, that we spent time on in counseling.

Witness. Participants described the role of *witness* when the therapist was attentive to the S/R layer of experiences during the therapy process. Participants brought a context into therapy that sees spirituality/religion present in all things. However, their felt sense of these experiences can vary. The therapist, through the role of *witness*, is invited to join the participant's process by witnessing the presence of S/R in the participant's experiences. One participant described the counselor in the role of witness as, "I'm often able to notice the presence of S/R after my therapist points out a situation where God's presence may have been evident and invites me to consider whether or not that was the case." Another participant described "seeking out a Christian counselor to kind of help me navigate the trauma um.. as well as the how... how my faith has... was impacted by that, my whole life."

Guide. Participants describe the role of *guide* when the therapist takes an

active, directive role in relation to the spiritual/religious experience of the participant. One participant described their counselor as, “He is more of a guide or a coach even depending on the session.” This role particularly occurs in instances when the participant is experiencing distance from S/R or is lacking a sense of the presence of S/R. In these instances, the therapist assumed the role of *guide* in order to help the client locate, move toward, and/or connect with their S/R.

Attending to Spirituality and Religion in the Therapy Process

These participants described *attending to S/R in the therapy process* as an important and necessary part of their experience. *Attending to S/R in the therapy process* is defined as the internal and external actions that focus the client on the spiritual/religious layer of their experience. *Attending to S/R in the therapy process* includes the properties *addressing S/R in the therapy process*, *addressing barriers to attention*, *looking for S/R*, and *encountering S/R*.

Addressing S/R is defined as actions by the client and/or therapist to involve spirituality/religion within the participant’s therapy process. *Addressing S/R* occurs by the participant stating their desire to prioritize S/R, asking questions related to S/R, and inviting the therapist to address S/R in the therapy process. One participant described the importance of being able to address S/R, “the fact that it’s an underlying part of how it’s structured, like, that makes a difference I guess. And knowing I can talk about it or can incorporate it when I need to.”

Addressing barriers to attention is defined as addressing elements of the client’s experience that inhibit connection with S/R. Barriers which need to be addressed included *building trust with the therapist*, *addressing distractions*, and

addressing conflicting priorities. These barriers ranged from experiences within the therapy process to experiences in the life of the client. For these participants, the priority to experience connection with S/R is accompanied by a corresponding priority to remove barriers that can inhibit experiencing connection with S/R. An example of this would be the therapist asking a client, “is there anything that is getting in the way of you experiencing God?” As one participant described, “it was like God was telling me you know it's time to look at this stuff. It's time to look at how your wounds have kept you from me.”

Looking for S/R. This property is defined as actions of the participant and/or counselor aimed at locating the spiritual/religious layer of the participant's experiences. The counselor is invited alongside the client in this process. This invitation includes supporting the client in *looking for S/R*. It also includes making contributions to *looking for S/R* through the role of *witness*. An example of this would be a therapist asking, “where do you experience God in the midst of this situation?” One participant described examples of this from their therapy process:

There were times when... where I'm processing something that doesn't even remotely feel spiritual to me. But then the counselor asks “How does that affect the way you view God?” “How has God been present to you or not and as you've been thinking about this,” and...like some of the big, just, overarching questions.

Encountering spirituality/religion. This property is defined as experiences when the spiritual/religious layer of an experience becomes evident to the client. Encountering included the key dimensionality already noted. Therefore, experiences of *encountering spirituality/religion* ranged from tangible to intangible as well as varying from feeling close to S/R to feeling far from S/R. One participant reflected

on a session when they *encountered spirituality* while engaging a therapeutic topic with the counselor. They described, “We were talking, and I wasn't particularly eloquent, but even though I was what felt like neck-deep in panic, I was able to slowly start talking, which otherwise totally wouldn't have happened...It kind of felt like a miracle.” For this participant, the experience of moving past panic was seen as a spiritual/religious experience.

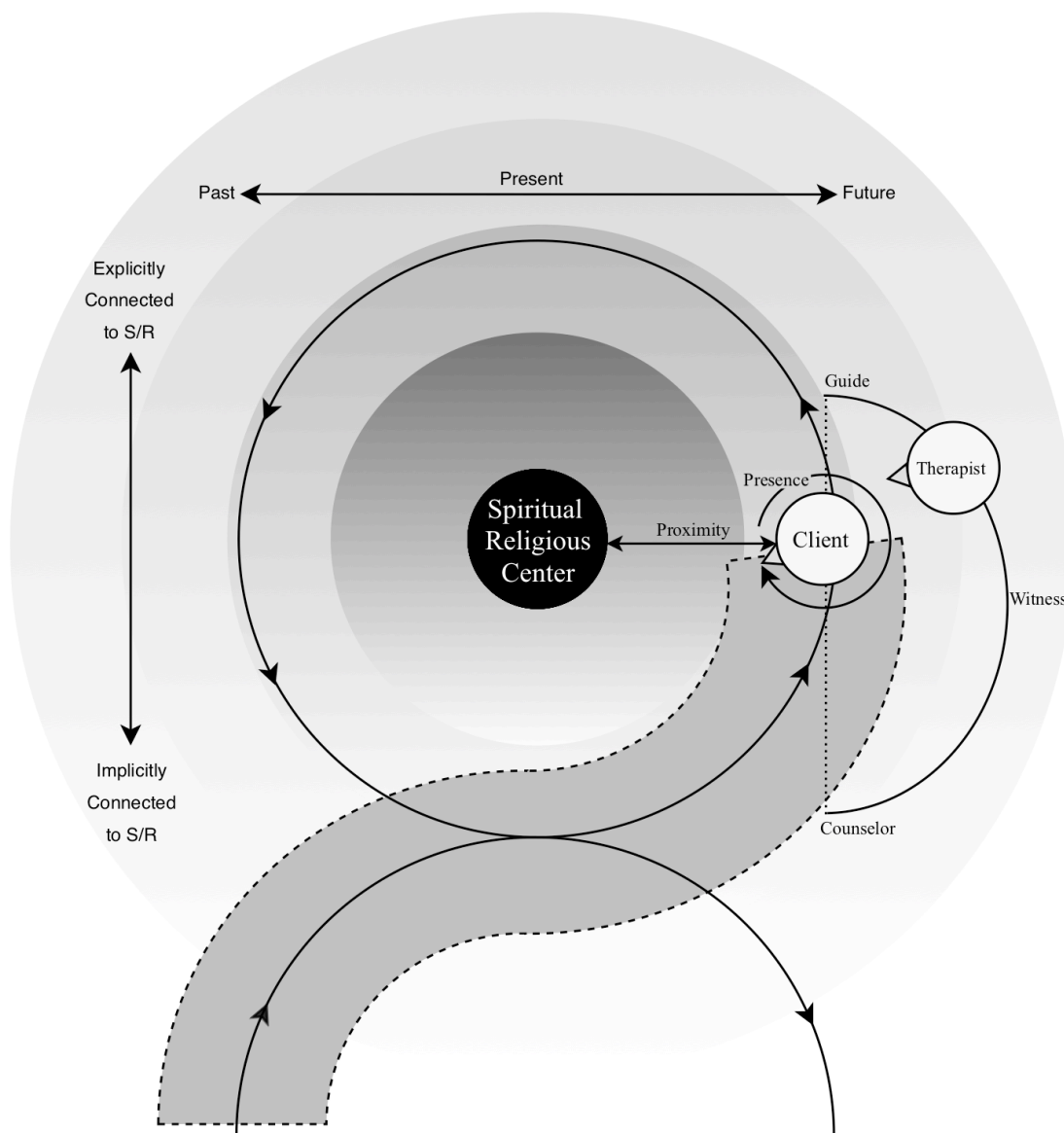


Figure 2. Attending to Spirituality and Religion in the Therapy Process.

Theory in action. As already noted in the contextual category, *experiencing spirituality/religion as central to life and personal identity*, participants enter therapy *prioritizing connection with S/R*. Additionally, participants entered therapy viewing spirituality/religion as a core piece of their personal identity. Because S/R is experienced as an aspect of identity, the process of *addressing S/R in therapy* is a personally vulnerable experience. One participant described S/R plainly as, “A very deep, vulnerable part of who I am.” The vulnerability of addressing S/R that is experienced by these participants necessitates *building trust with the therapist*. The participants in this study had intentionally selected therapists with a shared experience of spirituality/religion. One participant described the S/R of their therapist as providing, “shared context, just shared understanding.” As the therapy process progresses, participants address increasingly vulnerable pieces of their experience. This increase in vulnerability facilitates *building trust*. In turn, this trust is necessary for the therapist to act in the roles of *witness* and *guide*. One participant noted this interaction between vulnerability, trust, and spirituality/religion.

I feel like most things in counseling are vulnerable. But, I think the relationship with God thing for me or just the faith/spiritual aspect of it. I think the reason I mention like the trust piece and safety piece is because, um... I think I learned a lot or like experienced a lot of like God's love and character um... through my counselor.

These participants place a high priority on *connecting to S/R during the therapy process*. Because of this priority, there is also a corresponding focus on *addressing barriers* to this connection. These barriers ranged from experiences within the therapy process to experiences in the life of the client. One key barrier within the therapy process was trust with the therapist. However, these participants

had largely addressed this barrier by selecting a counselor with a shared S/R background.

Because of the vulnerability of addressing S/R, participants needed to build trust with the therapist in order to explore this aspect of their experience. Exploration of the S/R layer would often move the therapist into the role of *witness*. Even deeper trust was needed as the participant sought to prioritize connection with S/R. This priority would prompt the therapist to move into the role of *guide* and in turn, require additional trust. It is also important to note that experiences conducive to experiencing S/R could eventually become a barrier to experiencing S/R. For example, *suffering* was conducive to seeking comfort from S/R, however, *suffering* could become so pronounced or prolonged that it became a barrier. One participant described, "I know that in the traumas that I've been working on in my counseling and my therapy, my belief system plays a huge role in my healing, and that I believe that the emotions and shame, and that kind of thing, has really kept me from a deeper union with God."

These participants experience *looking for S/R* by focusing on the S/R layer in all things. Participants described instances in which they brought a therapeutic topic to a session, the therapist served in the role of *counselor* and this directed the attention of the client back to their S/R. "There's been a few times when I've had, when maybe she's said something, and I thought "hmm, I'm not so sure about that." So then it causes me to go and ask God, is that true of me?" This participant highlighted the therapist in the role of *counselor* supporting the client in *looking for S/R*.

These participants invite the counselor into the process of *looking for S/R* by focusing on connection with S/R that has happened or is happening, as well as looking for places in need of connection. This variance in looking demonstrates the key dimensionality outlined earlier. One participant described this process of *looking for S/R*:

I'm often able to notice the presence of S/R after my therapist points out a situation where God's presence may have been evident and invites me to consider whether or not that was the case. I don't normally become aware of a connection I may have had until after the fact when I process it with them. But I'm able to know that I was having a connection, or even consider that I may have been, because often a connection with S/R for me can look like being able to see something clearer or having a moment when I experience a truth that challenges something I've struggled with and allows me to see it in a different light that otherwise was impossible for me to see.

The client and counselor engage this process of looking together in order to turn the attention of the client toward spirituality/religion. *Looking for S/R* typically moves the therapist into the role of *witness*. One participant described this process of *looking for S/R*:

I do believe that we kind of have a common goal and that we both see counseling as a means to achieve that. And so yeah when I sort of say oh that's a given. You know I kind of feel like God's like omniscient you know, he knows everything. And in my mind I'm like of course he would be using this as a kind of means to...to heal and develop.

Participants experienced inviting the counselor to be proactive about *looking for S/R* in order to support the participant toward *encountering S/R*. This process of *looking for S/R* can move the therapist into the role of *witness* as well as the role of *guide*. In the role of *witness*, participants experience the counselor being attentive to the S/R layer that is present for the client. Then, the therapist invites the client to turn their attention toward this layer of the experience. One participant described a

highly tangible example of their therapist serving as a *witness* as they were *attending to S/R in the therapy process*.

I can give you a very concrete example and then maybe talk a little bit about some less concrete things. I know in one session, I was sharing about some sexual harm, and feeling very alone, and like God wasn't there, and [I was] wanting to hide. It was a very cloudy day. I'm just sitting there crying. The clouds parted, and the sun just shined through the window, just on me, just through one window in the office. "[My counselor] was like, "Did you see what just happened?" It was literally after I was sharing God's not here, basically. I didn't notice it, and so he brought it to my attention. It was just like ... I don't know, I think it's his ability to see, and his poetic mind, and being present spiritually with me in that moment, and me being spiritual ... or seeking, anyway, and then having a moment happen where I was able to embrace that and go, "Yeah, God is here."

Receiving from Spirituality and Religion in the Therapy Process

For these participants, the therapy process is located within an ongoing spiritual/religious process. *Receiving from S/R* is the central category of this theory and is based on S/R being experienced as the source of valuable and necessary elements of the client's ongoing growth process. Receiving from S/R is therefore defined as the client being able to access valuable and necessary elements for their growth process during therapy. The properties of *receiving from S/R* included *prioritizing what is received, positioning to receive from S/R, waiting to receive from S/R, acknowledging the mysterious, and connecting with S/R*.

Prioritizing what is received. Participants experienced prioritizing what is received from S/R during therapy. These participants receive a variety of things from their S/R during their therapy process. All of these things are valuable to the participant. However, the most valuable thing to receive is experiencing connection with S/R. Because connection with S/R is experienced as the highest priority for these participants, receiving connection in therapy is prioritized more than

receiving other things. For example, these participants described receiving comfort in the midst of suffering, reassurance in the midst of questioning, and finding direction in the midst of feeling lost. For these participants, receiving from spirituality/religion in the midst of these experiences is good, but receiving spirituality/religion itself is better. One participant described an experience in which receiving comfort in the midst of suffering was not the highest priority, “I think there's an internal, emotional healing that on a daily basis there's not as much suffering. Not that it's about minimizing suffering, but there's not as much unnecessary suffering.”

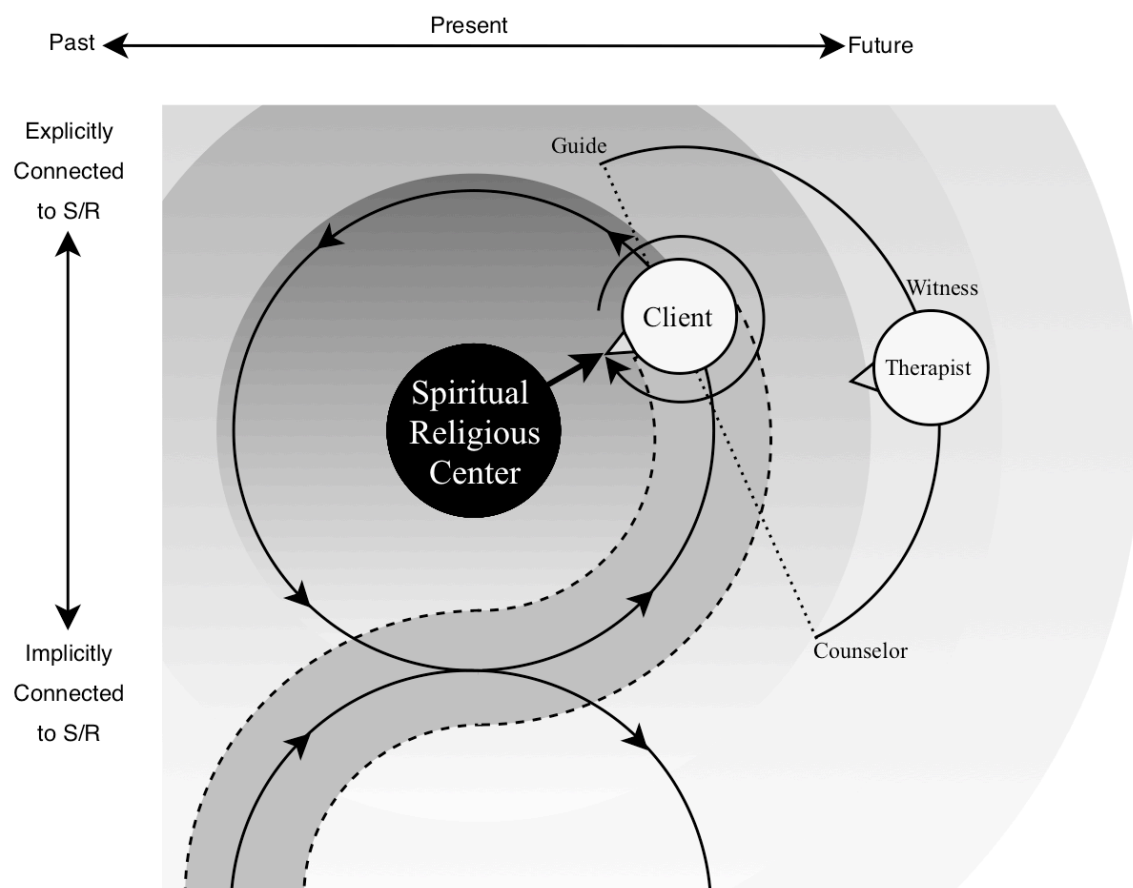


Figure 3. Receiving from Spirituality and Religion in the Therapy Process.

For these participants, a higher priority is connecting with S/R within themselves. This occurs in relation to the property of *desiring personal growth/transformation*. Finally, *connecting with S/R* is the highest priority and is desirable above all other things received in therapy. One participant spoke about how spiritual practices are engaged in order to experience connecting with S/R and are involved in the therapy process:

And the meditation and the you know all of the things that I do in that meditation process is about getting connected whether it's breathing or sound or whatever. So, I think that that's a piece that I didn't talk about a whole lot but that was a really important part of the counseling that plays into the spirituality for me as well.

Positioning to receive from S/R. This property refers to participants orienting themselves toward their spirituality/religion in order to experience the aspects of their process which originate in their spirituality/religion. This process occurs as the client brings their S/R with them into the therapy process and into specific therapy sessions. The action of *positioning to receive* intersects with the category *attending to S/R in the therapy process*. By *looking for S/R* together, the client and therapist locate places in the process in need of *receiving from S/R*. These topics are engaged with the therapist shifting between the roles of *counselor*, *witness*, and *guide*. The therapist serves as a *witness* to places in need of receiving and, at times, will *guide* the client toward *positioning to receive from S/R*. One participant described an example of this experience with her therapist:

It will definitely be something that she'll ask me or ... Have you asked God about this? Wrestling with something. Well, have you spent time asking Him that question? No, I haven't. That's what brings the clarity. Maybe this isn't why it's clicking, is I haven't made room for this issue in my time in the morning.

It is also important to note that *receiving from S/R* can happen at any time in the process for these participants. However, in general, receiving from S/R takes place when the participant is *sensing the presence of S/R* and is feeling close in proximity to S/R. However, instances in which the participant experiences *receiving from S/R* apart from these conditions will often lead to the creation of these conditions. Meaning that *receiving from S/R* will increase the sense of presence of S/R and draw the participant closer to spirituality/religion.

Waiting to receive from S/R. Vital things that these participants seek in their personal growth process are seen as originating from spirituality/religion. In addition, these participants do not experience themselves as being in control of when and how receiving these things takes place. This property describes the participant's experience of reliance on their S/R for vital things they need in their therapy process. This also demonstrates a tangible example of *decentralizing the therapist* as the participant does not expect the therapist to be able to provide these things either. The participant and therapist may work together to position the participant to receive. Then, *waiting to receive* is necessary because the participant is dependent on S/R for the receiving to take place. This part of the process contains more movement between the roles of the therapist. The therapist may serve as counselor to provide internal strategies to cope while waiting, serve as a *witness* who is *looking for S/R*, or serve as a *guide* to position the participant to receive.

The experience of *waiting to receive* can be difficult for participants because of the pain and discomfort associated with these experiences. One participant discussed the tension of waiting to receive from S/R in their therapy process. They

stated:

I think that we were just talking about a lot of sensitive stuff, like deep traumatic things to take the moment of silence and stillness to pray and listen, to listen for God. It kind of gave me a breather and a sense of, "it's okay, God is here, all is not in despair that we're talking about," there's something higher that is in control.

Acknowledging the mysterious. An important aspect of the experience of receiving is *acknowledging the mysterious*. This property is defined as the shared understanding between the client and counselor that spiritual/religious experiences can be pursued and facilitated but not controlled. Because of the dependence that comes with relying on spirituality/religion, there is mystery in how, when, and where connection will be experienced and receiving will take place. One participant described the importance of *acknowledging the mysterious* with the therapist, "it's not that we are looking for a fix or solution in grief (my case), but that we want to sit in the mystery and pain with someone, and just understand it better."

Connecting with S/R. This property is defined as the participant having an experience of trust in their spiritual/religious center. This trust includes the ability to rely on their S/R for things vital to their growth process. This property directly follows the property, *acknowledging the mysterious*. This placement is intentional because clients describe the actual experience of *connecting with S/R* as being mysterious and, at times, difficult to describe. One participant described a tangible experience of *connecting with S/R* which led to *receiving from S/R*. They described an interaction with God:

But I was like there's no way God can love me even in this. You know, there's got to be something still that God would say, "I can't forgive that." ...But, like it just it always felt like I did have to hold some part of myself back because God could... there's no way God could love even that. You know what I mean.

And so I think by bringing it out into the light and... and realizing wow even in this which I was taught was like literally the worst thing ever. Even in this, God still loves me. And I'm still accepted, and called and beloved.

Another participant described their experience of *connecting with S/R* during their therapy process:

Telling that story and then processing what all was there to process with him. It was like I felt it again like like the spirit was present in that room and in retelling of that story because it was such a healing experience for me. And then being able to process it with my therapist on a deeper level because he had been the one helping me process all the things that were going on... you know like, it was another level of healing and another level of God's presence. And that's not necessarily super tangible but it felt tangible to me.

Connecting with S/R is a key aspect of how participants experience *receiving from S/R*. Connecting is valuable in and of itself because it is a demonstration of this valuable and important aspect of life for these participants. However, connection also serves as a conduit for *receiving from S/R in the therapy process*. For example, *connecting with S/R* is necessary for receiving comfort in the midst of suffering to take place. The counselor plays a key part in the process by moving into different roles as the client seeks to experience *connecting with S/R*. One participant described this interaction between themselves, their therapist, and their spirituality and religion. This participant noted that, “[my counselor] isn't healing me, that I am using what I'm learning about myself and the process, and who God is to me, to really propel my healing a lot more quickly than I think I would have otherwise.” Another participant poignantly stated that, “my spirituality has me seeking my true healer, rather than my therapist.”

Theory in action. Clients describe a process of connecting to spirituality/religion within themselves (internally) working in conjunction with

connecting to S/R in life (externally). Other things received during the therapy process were viewed as valuable and as a priority but were not the top priority. These things still contain a spiritual/religious layer, however they were more circumstantial or related to therapeutic topics. One participant described how the involvement of S/R in the therapy process changed how they viewed their struggles. They commented that, "It gives me a bigger picture to know that suffering is not the end."

Receiving from S/R was contingent on *connecting with S/R*. Like all other aspects of this theory, *receiving connection with S/R* was experienced with all of the key dimensionality of other aspects of spirituality/religion. Several participants described the role of *connecting with S/R* and how it wove through the therapy process. One participant noted that:

I think that there were things that I would not categorize as overtly spiritual that did help in my healing process, but there were a lot of things that were really healing to me because of my relationship with God and Jesus that came about through counseling that wouldn't have necessarily come about in other ways.

Another participant described:

I tend to be, like, a very controlling... I want to control things I want to figure it out. I want to fix it. And so for God to bring me to that moment of... you don't have to fix it all and figure it all out and be God essentially. But I am God and I see these things and want to be the one who heals you and walks you through this process and transform me you was really just transformative for the rest of my walk in counseling because it was like OK what is God doing.

As *receiving from S/R in the therapy process* takes place, it intersects with *attending to S/R during the therapy process*. Attention is given to the receiving that has taken place in a way that seeks to deepen the connection that is being experienced. Once again, the therapist serves in the role of *witness* as they attend to

the experience of receiving. Additionally, the therapist may shift to the role of *counselor* as they seek to apply this healing to the therapeutic issues presented by the client.

Discussion

This manuscript presents a grounded theory study of private practice Christian client's experiences of spirituality and religion during their therapy process with similar faith counselors. This theory was developed around the central research question, "How do Christian private practice clients experience their spirituality and religion in their counseling process?" Spirituality/religion is experienced as a central part of personal identity which influences the client's experience of therapy. This discussion reflects on the centrality of S/R for these participants and the implications this centrality has on the therapeutic process. The findings of this study are relevant for culturally competent practice by understanding the therapy process from the vantage point of S/R clients. In addition, these results can add to the understanding of the therapeutic alliance. Finally, writing in the field of spiritual formation has relevance for understanding these results.

These findings demonstrate spirituality/religion as a central aspect of identity for these participants. The category *experiencing spirituality/religion as central to life and personal identity* confirms the centrality of spiritual/religious beliefs described in the ASERVIC Core Competencies (2009). Spirituality and religion have historically been neglected in multicultural competencies and identifying as spiritual/religious has not consistently been viewed as an aspect of

cultural identity (Scott, Sheperis, Simmons, Rush-Wilson, & Milo, 2016; Weinrach & Thomas, 2002). However, there has been progress made toward consistent inclusion. Inclusion of S/R within culturally competent practice has the potential to influence several important aspects of the therapeutic process that are important for counselors and counselor educators to be aware of. Key textbooks on spirituality and religion in counseling have identified spirituality and religion as a multicultural focal point (Fukuyama & Sevig, 1999), an aspect of personal identity (Moon & Benner, 2004), as well as the unfeasibility of excluding it from the therapy process (West, 2000). Furthermore, Moon and Benner (2004) have noted the experience of spirituality as an aspect of identity which is experienced as both an internal and external experience.

Experiencing spirituality/religion as central to life and personal identity is the contextual category for this theory. Christian writer's in spiritual formation and Christian psychology have already thoroughly examined the subcategories and properties of this contextual category. This includes spiritual growth as an ongoing process, *sensing the presence of S/R in all things, experiencing proximity to S/R, and prioritizing connection with S/R* (e.g., Foster 2012; May, 1982; Nouwen, 2010; Shults & Sandage, 2006; Sperry 2004). The centrality of spirituality/religion to identity creates a therapy process embedded within an ongoing spiritual growth process. This is described in the category *experiencing the therapy process as an extension of the spiritual growth process*. This finding is consistent with the description of therapy put forth by West (2000) as being seen by the client as a spiritual process.

Structuring the therapy process in relation to an ongoing spiritual growth

process impacts how the therapeutic process unfolds. Changes in the therapeutic relationship are demonstrated in these results through the category *organizing the therapy process in relation to spirituality/religion*. In particular, *decentralizing the therapist* is a unique contribution. This property offers a unique conceptualization of the therapeutic relationship for a specific client population. Sperry (2012) has examined the therapeutic relationship in terms of spirituality and religion. The findings of this grounded theory are consistent with a tension that Sperry notes between spirituality/religion being considered the “agent of transformation” with psychotherapeutic views of the therapist-client relationship. Sperry recommends directly addressing client’s spirituality and spiritual concerns. Addressing spirituality and spiritual concerns is confirmed in this study and is consistent with the high priority placed on S/R by these participants.

The properties *decentralizing the therapist* and *prioritizing what is received* have implications for understanding the therapeutic alliance. Bordin (1979) conceptualized the therapeutic alliance in terms of goals, tasks, and bond. This theory demonstrates the role client spirituality/religion can play on the goals of therapy (*prioritizing what is received*) as well as the bond (*decentralizing the therapist, building trust with the therapist*). Safran and Muran (2003) have extensively written on the topic of the working alliance. In 2006, Safran and Muran published a thoughtful critique of the concept and its future utility. They conclude that future research on the therapeutic alliance should focus to “clarify how and in what way” (Safran & Muran, 2006, p. 290) the relationship impacts the change process. Consistent with Safran and Muran’s conclusion, these findings have

implications for how spiritual/religious clients experience the impact of the therapeutic relationship.

These results demonstrate that the involvement of spiritual/religious identity in the therapy process introduces elements of spiritual direction. Many spiritual writers have already identified the contextual elements in this theory. These elements do not represent anything new to the field of spiritual direction. Rather, what is new, is understanding how these elements shape and direct the therapeutic process. For example, the category *positioning to receive* has striking overlap with what Richard Foster described as spiritual practice that, “places us where the change can occur” (Foster, 2012, p. 8).

The category *prioritizing connection with S/R* as well as the therapist serving in the role of *guide* are commonplace in writings on spiritual direction while being uncommon constructs in counseling literature. The role of *guide* may seem contrary or uncomfortable for therapist’s with particular orientations- such as person centered or other non-directive modalities. *Prioritizing connection with S/R* is described by Moon and Benner as being, “at the heart of spiritual direction” (2004, p. 14). The priority of connection and the role of guide are consistent with what Sperry has described as “spiritually oriented psychotherapy” (Sperry, 2004; Sperry 2012). Within Sperry’s conceptualization of spiritually oriented psychotherapy, “the clinician functions as psychotherapist and spiritual guide simultaneously” (Sperry, 2004, p. 175).

Future Research

This study highlights the importance of research focused on the experiences

of spiritual and religious clients in therapy. Participants consistently spoke about the location of the counselor in their process and how it impacted their expectations of the therapist and of therapy. Future research might focus on navigating the therapeutic alliance with spiritual and religious clients. In order to further multicultural understanding, future research may also focus on variations in client and counselor identification. For example, focusing on the therapeutic experiences of non-Christian counselors with Christian clients. Additionally, expanding this research to include participants from other spiritual/religious identities. Finally, several individuals involved in the evaluation of this research commented on the role of spiritual development as it relates to this theory. Because this reflection emerged consistently, future research may focus on the role of spiritual development in this theory.

Limitations

The most significant limitation of this research is the inclusion of Christian participants who sought counseling from Christian therapists. This uniformity allowed for illuminating a deep, rich experience and is consistent with qualitative research results being limited to the participants being studied. While the S/R demographics of this study were intentional, the study might have been strengthened by inclusion of participants with more diversity in areas outside of spiritual/religious identification. Information about participant demographics has been provided for context so that consumers of the research can assess the transferability of the study. These limitations are presented here for readers to consider in the evaluation of this project.

Conclusions

This grounded theory study provides a qualitative appraisal of the experience of spirituality/religion in the therapy process for Christian clients. This study deepens the understanding of the experience of spirituality and religion in the therapy process. The results of this study demonstrate how Christian clients experience spirituality/religion as a deeply integrated aspect of their identity and their life. As such, this aspect of identity and life becomes centrally located and influential within the therapy process. This research describes the influences on the therapy process and the priorities of spiritual/religious clients.

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Chapter 4

Chapter 4: Conclusion

This dissertation consists of two manuscripts presented in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3. These two manuscripts are thematically linked in that both explore client experiences of spirituality and religion during the therapy process. Chapter two presents the results of a metasynthesis with a central research question of, “How do clients describe their experience of addressing spirituality and religion as a part of their counseling process?” Chapter three presents the results of a grounded theory study with the central research question, “How do Christian private practice clients experience their spirituality and religion in their counseling process?”

This dissertation responds to the call for more qualitative research in the area of spirituality and religion in counseling (e.g., Gockel, 2009; Miller & Kelley, 2005; Ocampo Hoogasian & Gloria, 2015; Post & Wade, 2014). Qualitative research has particular contributions to make on this topic because it emphasizes the words, descriptions, and experiences of the research participants. This emphasis is important to promote culturally competent, evidence based practice (Kazdin, 2008, Silverstein & Auerbach, 2009).

Manuscript 1 Conclusions

The first manuscript, a metasynthesis of existing qualitative research, serves to consolidate understanding about the client experience of addressing spirituality and religion in counseling. It contributes to the published literature by focusing on the client experience of spirituality and religion in counseling. The findings of this metasynthesis demonstrate the vulnerability of addressing spirituality/religion in therapy. These findings include the themes of A Context, A Fear, A Freedom, and A

Personal Expression. These categories are consistent with spirituality/religion as an aspect of personal identity as well as a vulnerable, important topic to engage with spiritual/religious clients.

The results of this metasynthesis illuminate the experience of addressing spirituality and religion with spiritual/religious clients. Illuminating this experience informs counselors to more competently address spirituality and religion with clients. These results illuminated the vulnerable nature of spirituality and religion (e.g., Cragun & Friedlander, 2012). For example, the result of fear demonstrated that clients experience spirituality and religion as a deep part of the self. This is seen in the fear of being rejected, misunderstood, or judged.

Manuscript 2 Conclusions

The second manuscript presents a grounded theory study of the experience of spirituality and religion for clients during their counseling process. The specific sample consisted of Christian clients meeting with Christian counselors. This sample provided access to a rich, deep description. This research provided key insights into the role spirituality/religion plays in forming the structure of the therapeutic process and relationship. Specifically, this theory produced the categories *experiencing S/R as central to life and personal identity, organizing the therapy process in relation to spirituality/religion, attending to S/R in the therapy process, and receiving from S/R in the therapy process.*

Within the categories of this grounded theory, there are several noteworthy properties. *Experiencing the therapy process as an extension of the spiritual growth process* is a significant finding from this research. This property can help counselors

to understand that the client's perspective of the therapy process is seen as secondary to a more fundamental process. Organizing therapy in relation to S/R led to *decentralizing the therapist*. This was a key insight identified in this theory. It demonstrates a unique form of the therapeutic relationship for a specific population. Further, understanding the changes in the structure and priorities of therapy for S/R clients helps to understand the client's perspective of the therapy process.

By presenting a grounded theory of Christian clients' experience in counseling, the results of this study have direct applications related to the multicultural counseling competencies (Ratts, Singh, Nassar-McMillan, Butler, & McCullough, 2015). For example, *experiencing the therapy process as an extension of the spiritual growth process* has direct application with understanding how client identity influences domain III of the competencies- the Counseling Relationship. Additionally, *attending to S/R in the therapy process, receiving from S/R, and prioritizing connection with S/R* have direct relevance to domain II of the competencies- Client Worldview.

Dissertation Conclusions

The combined work of the manuscripts of this dissertation contribute to understanding the client's experience of spirituality/religion in the therapy process. Collectively, the thematic link of this dissertation is seen through the two manuscripts. The manuscripts progress from addressing S/R in Manuscript 1 to involving S/R in manuscript 2. The progression of the research demonstrates how S/R enters the therapy process and then what it does once it has entered. The progression of this research is depicted in Figure 1. Finally, Manuscript 1 focused

primarily on Christian clients and Manuscript 2 focused exclusively on Christian clients. However, practitioners can utilize these findings and determine the generalizability of these results for their own applications. And researchers can utilize these findings to illuminate S/R in the therapy process for other S/R identities.

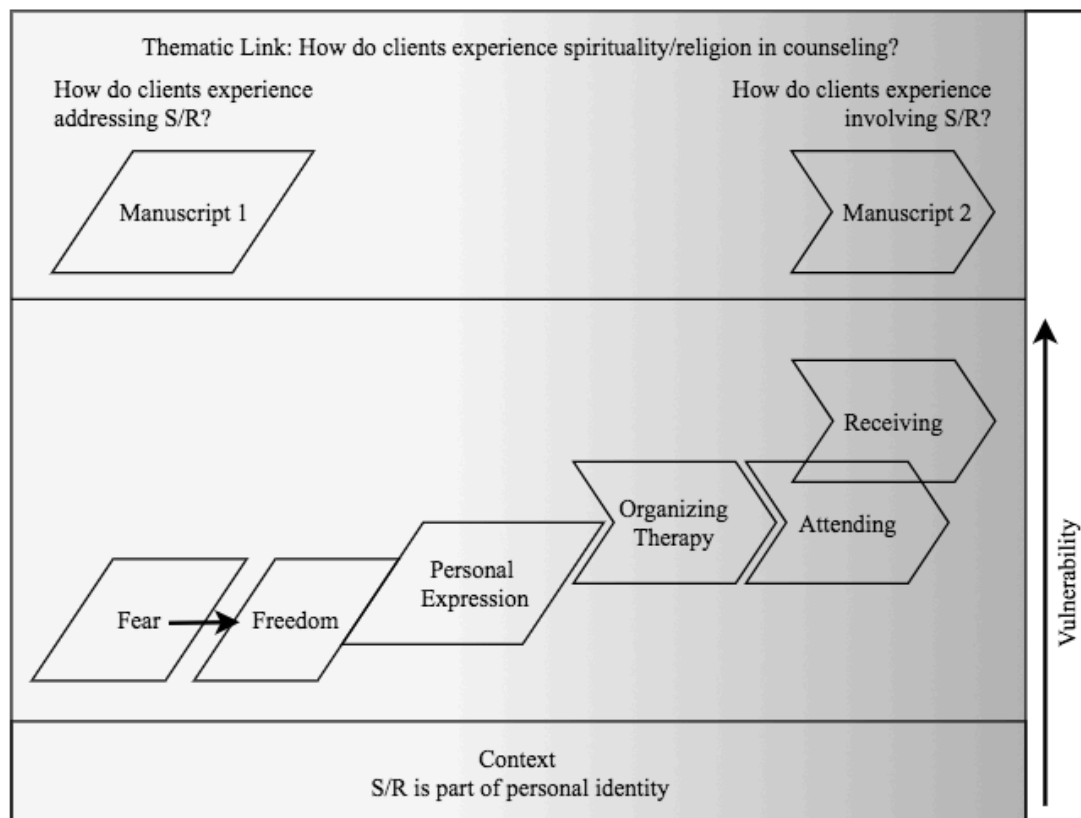


Figure 1: Dissertation Thematic Link Diagram

Implications

The results of this metasynthesis and grounded theory study produced implications relevant to practice, training, and research.

Practice. These manuscripts offer a detailed examination of the client's experience of spirituality and religion in the therapy process. Both manuscripts identified the vulnerable nature of this topic. This vulnerability is rooted in spirituality/religion being an aspect of personal identity. This research has implications for the therapeutic alliance and can be utilized to identify potential ruptures with spiritual/religious clients. Additionally, it is important for counselors to understand changes in the structure of the therapy process. Specifically, spirituality/religion is a vulnerable aspect of personal identity, the therapy process of spiritual/religious clients is added on to an ongoing growth process, and the client's priorities are influenced by their spiritual/religious identity.

Training. Research has demonstrated that significant progress has been made to identify spirituality/religion as an aspect of multicultural identity. However, several authors have noted that counselor education programs need to integrate this aspect of training more intentionally (Adams, Puig, Baggs, & Wolf, 2015; Cashwell & Young, 2004; Dobmeier & Reiner, 2012; Hage, Hopson, Siegel, Payton, & DeFanti, 2006; Post & Wade, 2009; Walker, Gorsuch, & Tan, 2004; Young, Wiggins-Frame, & Cashwell, 2007). Evidence of this progress can be seen in the 2016 CACREP standards which now include an item for the inclusion of spirituality for understanding client and counselor worldviews. Counselor educators need to be intentional about including spirituality and religion in their pedagogical planning and implementation. Adams, Puig, Baggs, and Wolf (2015) have identified the current state of implementation as well as barriers and strategies for integration

Research. This study highlights the importance of research focused on the experiences of spiritual and religious clients in therapy. Participants consistently spoke about the location of the counselor in their process and how it impacted their expectations of the therapist and of therapy. Future research might focus on navigating the therapeutic alliance with spiritual and religious clients. In order to further multicultural understanding, future research may also focus on variations in client and counselor identification. For example, focusing on the therapeutic experiences of non-Christian counselors with Christian clients. Additionally, expanding this research to include participants from other spiritual/religious identities.

In light of spirituality and religion being deep aspects of self, more research is needed to understand this experience for clients. As noted by other researchers (e.g., Gockel, 2009; Miller & Kelley, 2005; Ocampo Hoogasian & Gloria, 2015; Post & Wade, 2014), more qualitative research is needed on spirituality and religion in counseling. The result of personal expression confirms the appropriateness of more qualitative research in this area. The personal and experiential nature of spirituality and religion will benefit from the strengths of qualitative research (Creswell, 2012).

Overall Conclusions

The research contained in these manuscripts adds perspective on the experiences of spiritual/religious clients in therapy. The results of the two manuscripts presented in this dissertation demonstrate the client's experience of spirituality/religion as a deeply integrated aspect of their identity and their life. As

with all qualitative research, the application of these findings will be up to the readers in their own settings and with their own populations.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Article Evaluation Template

Methods for Evaluating the Retained Studies

Will utilize Hoyt and Bhati's work as well as Kline's work

Focus of Research	Evaluations and Comments
*Contact between any coder and participants (yes or no)	
*Nature of contact (none, telephone, or face-to-face)	
*Proportion of coders who have such contact with at least one participant	
*Data available to all coders (transcripts or other written, audiotape, videotape, direct observation or interaction)	
*Average time spent with each participant	

Setting

*Interactions with or observation of participants took place in a naturalistic setting, defined as a real world setting in which the behaviors of interest might normally be expected to occur.	
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Researcher Role

*Use of auditors as a check on the findings of the main coders	
*Written reflections on the authors' biases in the published article	
*Explicit discussion of the desirability of minimizing or eliminating the effects of researcher bias	

Reporting Findings

*Presentation of free-standing quotations (at least one sentence in length) from participants	
*Presentation of extended quotations (at least five lines in length)	
*Inclusion of identifiers with the quotations	

Presentational Rigor

Introductory Section

^Statement of the problem	
^Statement that establishes the significance of the problem	

Presentation of the Purpose, Central Research Question, and Rationale for a Qualitative Approach

^Purpose Presented	
^Presentation of Central Research Questions	
^Argument for applicability of qualitative research	

Description of Analysis Approach and Methods

^Researchers' knowledge of the methods and analytic process used with the selected approach	
^Includes essential technical terminology	
^Authoritative authors cited?	

^Discussion of Sampling Methods	
^Description of how data collection and analysis interact	
^Data Collection Methods and Procedures are Presented	
^Inclusion of Interview Questions	
^Rationale for Inclusion of Questions	
^Questions are consistent with approach?	

Presentation of Findings

^Consistent with Employed Approach?	
^Includes quotations from Participants?	

The Discussion Section

^Findings are compared and contrasted with current theoretical and research literature	
^Limitations are in qualitative terms?	
^Need to discussion implications for targeted field.	

Note: *Hoyt and Bhati; ^Kline

Appendix B

Completed Article Evaluations

Beitel, Mark, Genova, Marla, Schuman-Olivier, Zev, Arnold, Ruth, Avants, S Kelly, & Margolin, Arthur. (2007). Reflections by inner-city drug users on a Buddhist-based spirituality-focused therapy: A qualitative study. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 77(1), 1-9.

Focus of Research	Explanation and Comments
*Contact between any coder and participants (yes or no)	Unclear
*Nature of contact (none, telephone, or face-to-face)	Face-to-face (Focus groups)
*Proportion of coders who have such contact with at least one participant	Unclear
*Data available to all coders (transcripts or other written, audiotape, videotape, direct observation or interaction)	Yes
*Average time spent with each participant	Not stated

Setting

*Interactions with or observation of participants took place in a naturalistic setting, defined as a real world setting in which the behaviors of interest might normally be expected to occur.	Setting not described
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Researcher Role

*Use of auditors as a check on the findings of the main coders	No
*Written reflections on the authors' biases in the published article	No

*Explicit discussion of the desirability of minimizing or eliminating the effects of researcher bias	No
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Reporting Findings

*Presentation of free-standing quotations (at least one sentence in length) from participants	Yes
*Presentation of extended quotations (at least five lines in length)	Yes
*Inclusion of identifiers with the quotations	No

Presentational Rigor

Introductory Section

^Statement of the problem	Yes- In this article, we describe the steps taken by our clinical research team to develop and evaluate one such intervention, beginning and ending with what we view as the guiding force behind this endeavor—our clients' personal experiences recorded in their own words.
^Statement that establishes the significance of the problem	No

Presentation of the Purpose, Central Research Question, and Rationale for a Qualitative Approach

^Purpose Presented	Yes
^Presentation of Central Research Questions	Somewhat- there is a presentation of questions that frame the research.
^Argument for applicability of qualitative research	This is mentioned but the argument is weak

Description of Analysis Approach and Methods

^Researchers' knowledge of the methods and analytic process used with the selected approach	Minimal- this article seems like it is more of a phenomenology. But, the authors describe it as a grounded theory and reference Corbin & Strauss.
^Includes essential technical terminology	No
^Authoritative authors cited?	One- Corbin & Strauss
^Discussion of Sampling Methods	Yes
^Description of how data collection and analysis interact	No
^Data Collection Methods and Procedures are Presented	Yes
^Inclusion of Interview Questions	Yes
^Rationale for Inclusion of Questions	Rationale is included but is not very strong
^Questions are consistent with approach?	No

Presentation of Findings

^Consistent with Employed Approach?	No
^Includes quotations from Participants?	Yes

The Discussion Section

^Findings are compared and contrasted with current theoretical and research literature	No
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^Limitations are in qualitative terms?	Average
^Need to discussion implications for targeted field.	Yes

Note: *Hoyt and Bhati; ^Kline

Buser, Juleen K, Goodrich, Kristopher M, Luke, Melissa, & Buser, Trevor J. (2011). A narratology of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender clients experiences addressing religious and spiritual issues in counseling. *Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling*, 5(3-4), 282-303.

Focus of Research	Evaluation and Comments
*Contact between any coder and participants (yes or no)	Yes
*Nature of contact (none, telephone, or face-to-face)	Not stated
*Proportion of coders who have such contact with at least one participant	3 out of 4
*Data available to all coders (transcripts or other written, audiotape, videotape, direct observation or interaction)	No- 1 researcher reserved as an auditor.
*Average time spent with each participant	Initial Interview: 45-60 Minutes

Setting

*Interactions with or observation of participants took place in a naturalistic setting, defined as a real world setting in which the behaviors of interest might normally be expected to occur.	Unclear/Not Stated
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Researcher Role

*Use of auditors as a check on the findings of the main coders	Yes
*Written reflections on the authors' biases in the published article	Yes
*Explicit discussion of the desirability of minimizing or eliminating the effects of researcher bias	Yes

Reporting Findings

*Presentation of free-standing quotations (at least one sentence in length) from participants	Yes
*Presentation of extended quotations (at least five lines in length)	Yes
*Inclusion of identifiers with the quotations	Yes

Presentational Rigor

Introductory Section

^Statement of the problem	Yes: "Among many LGBTQIQ individuals, religious and spiritual concerns are also salient."
^Statement that establishes the significance of the problem	Yes: "Taken together, these findings suggest that, for some LGBT individuals, matters of religion and spirituality are at the fore of their experience. Thus, it is plausible that concerns related to religion and spirituality would surface in counseling sessions. Perplexingly, little previous research has sought to explicitly examine this."

Presentation of the Purpose, Central Research Question, and Rationale for a Qualitative Approach

^Purpose Presented	Yes: "Although conceptual pieces have provided recommendations to counselors in working with LGBT clients around spiritual and religious issues (e.g., Brammer, 2009; Buchanan, Dzelme, Harris, & Hecker, 2001), minimal research has explored the ways in which LGBTQIQ clients experience the topics of spirituality and religion in counseling."
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^Presentation of Central Research Questions	No
^Argument for applicability of qualitative research	Yes (but for Narratology in particular): “Narratology (Hays & Wood, 2011; Hoshmand, 2005; Riessman, 1993) was utilized to understand the experiences of participants in the study. Hays and Wood (2011) summarized narratology as a qualitative research method that seeks to construct a narrative about participant lives. Authors have underscored that various types of narratology exist, noting that, “it is probably best to consider narrative theory and narratological concepts as methodological principles rather than as a codified methodology” (Hoshmand, 2005, p. 183).”

Description of Analysis Approach and Methods

^Researchers’ knowledge of the methods and analytic process used with the selected approach	Yes (Narratology)
^Includes essential technical terminology	Yes
^Authoritative authors cited?	Yes
^Discussion of Sampling Methods	Yes
^Description of how data collection and analysis interact	Yes: “As participants frequently do not tell their stories in a linear fashion, it is important for researchers to make decisions about how to sequence the narrative, attending to issues of temporal order and chronology in tandem with the story’s meaning

	<p>(Riessman, 1993). Narratology is concerned with the manner in which a participant tells a story (Hays & Wood, 2011; Riessman, 1993). By attending to more than the content of a story, researchers can obtain a range of vital information that may assist in ascertaining the chronology of the narrative (Hays & Wood, 2011; Riessman, 1993). Another area that has been emphasized in narratology is the positionality of researchers (Hoshmand, 2005). Researcher perspective and interpretation play roles in the interview and analysis process (Riessman, 1993), and authors have recommended that researchers identify their positionality to alert readers to the various perspectives affecting the narrative (Hoshmand, 2005). Following is a discussion of the position of the four researchers in this study.”</p>
<p>^Data Collection Methods and Procedures are Presented</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>^Inclusion of Interview Questions</p>	<p>Yes: “Could you please describe what your counseling experience was like for you?” Following that question, we allowed participant responses to direct the interview. The semistructured interview protocol contained several questions that asked participants to discuss their experience of spirituality and religion in counseling. For example, questions in the protocol included, “In what ways did spirituality/religion emerge in counseling sessions?” Moreover,</p>

	the protocol involved inquiries about occasions when spirituality was addressed in a positive and/or negative way in counseling. This interview protocol was partially based on the protocol used by Knox, Catlin, Casper, and Schlosser (2005)."
^Rationale for Inclusion of Questions	No
^Questions are consistent with approach?	Yes

Presentation of Findings

^Consistent with Employed Approach?	Yes
^Includes quotations from Participants?	Yes

The Discussion Section

^Findings are compared and contrasted with current theoretical and research literature	Yes
^Limitations are in qualitative terms?	Yes
^Need to discuss implications for targeted field.	Yes

Note: *Hoyt and Bhati; ^Kline

Cragun, Carrie L, & Friedlander, Myrna L. (2012). Experiences of Christian clients in secular psychotherapy: A mixed-methods investigation. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 59(3), 379-391.

Focus of Research	Evaluation and Comments
*Contact between any coder and participants (yes or no)	No
*Nature of contact (none, telephone, or face-to-face)	Remote
*Proportion of coders who have such contact with at least one participant	None
*Data available to all coders (transcripts or other written, audiotape, videotape, direct observation or interaction)	Yes
*Average time spent with each participant	Not stated

Setting

*Interactions with or observation of participants took place in a naturalistic setting, defined as a real world setting in which the behaviors of interest might normally be expected to occur.	No
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Researcher Role

*Use of auditors as a check on the findings of the main coders	Yes
*Written reflections on the authors' biases in the published article	Somewhat
*Explicit discussion of the desirability of minimizing or eliminating the effects of researcher bias	No

Reporting Findings

*Presentation of free-standing quotations (at least one sentence in length) from participants	Yes
*Presentation of extended quotations (at least five lines in length)	Yes
*Inclusion of identifiers with the quotations	Some- gender

Presentation Rigor

Introductory Section

^Statement of the problem	Yes
^Statement that establishes the significance of the problem	Yes

Presentation of the Purpose, Central Research Question, and Rationale for a Qualitative Approach

^Purpose Presented	Yes
^Presentation of Central Research Questions	Not clearly
^Argument for applicability of qualitative research	Yes- an introduction of depth to the topic of interest.

Description of Analysis Approach and Methods

^Researchers' knowledge of the methods and analytic process used with the selected approach	Yes
^Includes essential technical terminology	Yes
^Authoritative authors cited?	Yes

^Discussion of Sampling Methods	Yes
^Description of how data collection and analysis interact	No
^Data Collection Methods and Procedures are Presented	Yes
^Inclusion of Interview Questions	Yes
^Rationale for Inclusion of Questions	Yes
^Questions are consistent with approach?	Yes

Presentation of Findings

^Consistent with Employed Approach?	Yes
^Includes quotations from Participants?	Yes

The Discussion Section

^Findings are compared and contrasted with current theoretical and research literature	Yes
^Limitations are in qualitative terms?	No- mixed methods study; limitations took on quantitative terminology.
^Need to discussion implications for targeted field.	Yes

Note: *Hoyt and Bhati; ^Kline

Gockel, A. (2011). Client perspectives on spirituality in the therapeutic relationship. *The Humanistic Psychologist*, 39(2), 154-168.

Focus of Research	Evaluation and Comments
*Contact between any coder and participants (yes or no)	Yes (Author- presumably)
*Nature of contact (none, telephone, or face-to-face)	Face-to-Face
*Proportion of coders who have such contact with at least one participant	Unclear
*Data available to all coders (transcripts or other written, audiotape, videotape, direct observation or interaction)	Yes
*Average time spent with each participant	1 hr to 1 hr 30 min

Setting

*Interactions with or observation of participants took place in a naturalistic setting, defined as a real world setting in which the behaviors of interest might normally be expected to occur.	Unclear
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Researcher Role

*Use of auditors as a check on the findings of the main coders	Participant feedback
*Written reflections on the authors' biases in the published article	No
*Explicit discussion of the desirability of minimizing or eliminating the effects of researcher bias	No- Minimal (In Data Collection and Analysis)

 Reporting Findings

*Presentation of free-standing quotations (at least one sentence in length) from participants	Yes
*Presentation of extended quotations (at least five lines in length)	Yes
*Inclusion of identifiers with the quotations	Some (integrated into the writing vs. explicitly set apart)

Presentational Rigor

Introductory Section

^Statement of the problem	Yes
^Statement that establishes the significance of the problem	Yes- Gaining a clearer understanding of client experiences of spirituality in the counseling relationship can help us to build theory that supports the effective integration of spirituality into counseling practice.

Presentation of the Purpose, Central Research Question, and Rationale for a Qualitative Approach

^Purpose Presented	Yes- explicitly and clearly
^Presentation of Central Research Questions	Yes- "What is the role of counseling in the narratives of people who draw on spirituality for healing and wellness?"
^Argument for applicability of qualitative research	Yes

 Description of Analysis Approach and Methods

^Researchers' knowledge of the methods and analytic process used with the selected approach	Yes
^Includes essential technical terminology	Yes
^Authoritative authors cited?	Yes- Lieblich, et al.
^Discussion of Sampling Methods	Yes- Purposive Sampling
^Description of how data collection and analysis interact	No
^Data Collection Methods and Procedures are Presented	Yes
^Inclusion of Interview Questions	Somewhat- "Participants were asked to tell their story of drawing on spirituality for healing in the first part of the interview and reflect on their story with the researcher in the second part of the interview."
^Rationale for Inclusion of Questions	No
^Questions are consistent with approach?	Yes?

Presentation of Findings

^Consistent with Employed Approach?	Yes
^Includes quotations from Participants?	Yes

The Discussion Section

^Findings are compared and contrasted with current theoretical and research literature	Yes
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^Limitations are in qualitative terms?	Yes
^Need to discussion implications for targeted field.	Yes

Note: *Hoyt and Bhati; ^Kline

Goedde, Claudia. (2000). *A qualitative study of the client's perspectives of discussing spiritual and religious issues in therapy.*

Focus of Research		Evaluation and Comments
	*Contact between any coder and participants (yes or no)	Yes
	*Nature of contact (none, telephone, or face-to-face)	Face-to-face
	*Proportion of coders who have such contact with at least one participant	All
	*Data available to all coders (transcripts or other written, audiotape, videotape, direct observation or interaction)	Yes
	*Average time spent with each participant	Not stated

Setting

	*Interactions with or observation of participants took place in a naturalistic setting, defined as a real world setting in which the behaviors of interest might normally be expected to occur.	No
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Researcher Role

	*Use of auditors as a check on the findings of the main coders	Yes
	*Written reflections on the authors' biases in the published article	Yes
	*Explicit discussion of the desirability of minimizing or eliminating the effects of researcher bias	Yes

Reporting Findings

	*Presentation of free-standing quotations (at least one sentence in	Yes
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length) from participants	
*Presentation of extended quotations (at least five lines in length)	Yes
*Inclusion of identifiers with the quotations	Yes

Presentational Rigor

Introductory Section

^Statement of the problem	Yes (in the Relevance to Clinical Practice section)
^Statement that establishes the significance of the problem	Yes

Presentation of the Purpose, Central Research Question, and Rationale for a Qualitative Approach

^Purpose Presented	Yes- explicit and in a separate section
^Presentation of Central Research Questions	Yes
^Argument for applicability of qualitative research	Yes- explicit and thorough.

Description of Analysis Approach and Methods

^Researchers' knowledge of the methods and analytic process used with the selected approach	Yes- though seemingly not exhaustive
^Includes essential technical terminology	Minimal
^Authoritative authors cited?	Yes
^Discussion of Sampling Methods	Yes

^Description of how data collection and analysis interact	No
^Data Collection Methods and Procedures are Presented	Yes
^Inclusion of Interview Questions	Yes
^Rationale for Inclusion of Questions	No
^Questions are consistent with approach?	Yes

Presentation of Findings

^Consistent with Employed Approach?	Yes
^Includes quotations from Participants?	Yes

The Discussion Section

^Findings are compared and contrasted with current theoretical and research literature	Yes
^Limitations are in qualitative terms?	Yes
^Need to discuss implications for targeted field.	Yes

Note: *Hoyt and Bhati; ^Kline

Knox, Sarah, Catlin, Lynn, Casper, Margaret, & Schlosser, Lewis Z. (2005). Addressing religion and spirituality in psychotherapy: Clients' perspectives. *Psychotherapy Research*, 15(3), 287-303.

Focus of Research	Evaluation and Comments
*Contact between any coder and participants (yes or no)	Yes
*Nature of contact (none, telephone, or face-to-face)	Unclear
*Proportion of coders who have such contact with at least one participant	100%
*Data available to all coders (transcripts or other written, audiotape, videotape, direct observation or interaction)	Yes
*Average time spent with each participant	45-80 minutes

Setting

*Interactions with or observation of participants took place in a naturalistic setting, defined as a real world setting in which the behaviors of interest might normally be expected to occur.	Setting not stated
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Researcher Role

*Use of auditors as a check on the findings of the main coders	Yes
*Written reflections on the authors' biases in the published article	Yes
*Explicit discussion of the desirability of minimizing or eliminating the effects of researcher bias	Yes

Reporting Findings

*Presentation of free-standing quotations (at least one sentence in length) from participants	Yes
*Presentation of extended quotations (at least five lines in length)	No
*Inclusion of identifiers with the quotations	Yes

Presentation Rigor

Introductory Section

^Statement of the problem	“We do not yet know, however, how such discussions actually take place (e.g., when in therapy they tend to occur, who initiates them, how they proceed), what contributes to their reportedly positive effects, nor what clients’ thoughts and feelings are about these conversations.”
^Statement that establishes the significance of the problem	Yes: “As noted earlier, religious and spiritual beliefs (Knox, Catlin, Casper, & Schlosser) and practices may be integral components of the individual’s personal and cultural worldview (Shafranske & Malony, 1996; Worthington, 1988) and as such should be considered appropriate and potentially important topics for discussion in therapy.”

Presentation of the Purpose, Central Research Question, and Rationale for a Qualitative Approach

^Purpose Presented	Yes: “We felt, then, that it would be helpful to ask actual clients about their experiences of having raised religious or spiritual issues in therapy as well as their insights into what made such experiences
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	either helpful or harmful to the treatment.”
^Presentation of Central Research Questions	No- Not explicit
^Argument for applicability of qualitative research	Yes: “because doing so allowed us to explore our participants’ experiences without restricting their responses. We believed that, given the state of existing research in this area, a qualitative design would foster a rich description of this phenomenon through its use of words rather than numbers as data.”

Description of Analysis Approach and Methods

^Researchers’ knowledge of the methods and analytic process used with the selected approach	Yes
^Includes essential technical terminology	Yes
^Authoritative authors cited?	Yes (Hill et al, 1997)
^Discussion of Sampling Methods	Yes
^Description of how data collection and analysis interact	No
^Data Collection Methods and Procedures are Presented	Yes
^Inclusion of Interview Questions	Yes- although not succinctly. “Participants were then asked the main issues they had addressed in therapy and why they chose to address these issues with a psychotherapist instead of or in addition to a religiously or spiritually oriented counselor. Participants were also asked to

describe the religious-spiritual themes they had addressed in therapy and to discuss whether they had identified a religious-spiritual component to their therapeutic issues before or during the therapy process. We then asked them to describe how open they perceived their therapists to be to religious-spiritual topics, how often such topics had been addressed in therapy, and their perception of the similarities between their own and their therapists' religious spiritual beliefs. The interview then moved out of these broader contextual queries and to the main focus of the study—the specific event section—in which participants were asked to describe three distinct incidents (a time in which religious-spiritual topics were addressed in therapy that participants perceived to have been helpful, a time in which religious-spiritual topics were addressed in therapy that participants perceived to have been unhelpful, and finally a time in which participants considered but then did not raise religious-spiritual topics in therapy). For each such incident, participants were asked to respond to specific probes (e.g., what were the religious-spiritual topics; who raised them; how, when, and why they were raised; facilitating conditions for raising these topics; the outcome of the conversation involving these topics; and participants' satisfaction with the therapy). In the incidents involving an

	<p>unhelpful discussion of religion-spirituality, participants were also asked to comment on what might have made the incident less unhelpful. Likewise, when participants discussed an incident of considering, but then not raising, a religious-spiritual topic, we also asked why they chose not to raise the topic, what might have enabled them to raise the topic, and the effect on the therapy of not raising the topic. In closing the interview, we asked participants how important religion-spirituality was to resolving the concerns that brought them to therapy, their thoughts about who should raise such topics (i.e., client or therapist), and their experience of the interview.”</p>
^Rationale for Inclusion of Questions	No
^Questions are consistent with approach?	Yes

Presentation of Findings

^Consistent with Employed Approach?	Yes- including illustrative examples
^Includes quotations from Participants?	Yes

The Discussion Section

^Findings are compared and contrasted with current theoretical and research literature	Yes
^Limitations are in qualitative terms?	Yes

^Need to discussion implications for targeted field.	Yes
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Note: *Hoyt and Bhati; ^Kline

Koslander, Tiburtius, & Arvidsson, Barbro. (2007). Patients' conceptions of how the spiritual dimension is addressed in mental health care: A qualitative study. *Journal of advanced nursing*, 57(6), 597-604.

Focus of Research	Evaluation and Comments
*Contact between any coder and participants (yes or no)	Yes
*Nature of contact (none, telephone, or face-to-face)	Face-to-face
*Proportion of coders who have such contact with at least one participant	One out of Two
*Data available to all coders (transcripts or other written, audiotape, videotape, direct observation or interaction)	Yes
*Average time spent with each participant	60 Minutes

Setting

*Interactions with or observation of participants took place in a naturalistic setting, defined as a real world setting in which the behaviors of interest might normally be expected to occur.	Yes- All interviews were conducted by the main researcher (TK) at the participants' respective mental health wards, in accordance with their wishes.
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Researcher Role

*Use of auditors as a check on the findings of the main coders	No
*Written reflections on the authors' biases in the published article	No
*Explicit discussion of the desirability of minimizing or eliminating the effects of researcher bias	Yes

Reporting Findings

*Presentation of free-standing quotations (at least one sentence in length) from participants	Yes
*Presentation of extended quotations (at least five lines in length)	No
*Inclusion of identifiers with the quotations	No

Presentation of Rigor

Introductory Section

^Statement of the problem	Yes- Thus, nursing care must be open to different ideas about the spiritual dimension in patients. This new reality affects both nurses and patients. Patients in mental healthcare pose questions about the existential and spiritual dimensions. Mental health care can no longer shut its eyes to the various spiritual needs of patients with different cultural backgrounds, religious ideas, values and worldviews.
^Statement that establishes the significance of the problem	Yes

Presentation of the Purpose, Central Research Question, and Rationale for a Qualitative Approach

^Purpose Presented	Yes- The aim of the study was to describe patients' conceptions of how the spiritual dimension is addressed in mental health care.
^Presentation of Central Research Questions	Yes- The aim of the study was to describe patients' conceptions of how the spiritual dimension is addressed in mental health care.
^Argument for applicability of qualitative research	No

Description of Analysis Approach and Methods

^Researchers' knowledge of the methods and analytic process used with the selected approach	Yes- Strong
^Includes essential technical terminology	Yes
^Authoritative authors cited?	Yes
^Discussion of Sampling Methods	Yes
^Description of how data collection and analysis interact	Yes
^Data Collection Methods and Procedures are Presented	Yes
^Inclusion of Interview Questions	Yes
^Rationale for Inclusion of Questions	No
^Questions are consistent with approach?	Yes

Presentation of Findings

^Consistent with Employed Approach?	Yes
^Includes quotations from Participants?	Yes

The Discussion Section

^Findings are compared and contrasted with current theoretical and research literature	Yes- strong
^Limitations are in qualitative terms?	Yes- but minimal limitations section.

^Need to discussion implications for targeted field.	Yes- strong
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Note: *Hoyt and Bhati; ^Kline

Lietz, Cynthia A, & Hodge, David R. (2013). Incorporating spirituality into substance abuse counseling: Examining the perspectives of service recipients and providers. *Journal of Social Service Research*, 39(4), 498-510.

Focus of Research		Evaluation and Comments
	*Contact between any coder and participants (yes or no)	Yes
	*Nature of contact (none, telephone, or face-to-face)	Face-to-face focus groups
	*Proportion of coders who have such contact with at least one participant	Unclear- at least 50%
	*Data available to all coders (transcripts or other written, audiotape, videotape, direct observation or interaction)	Yes
	*Average time spent with each participant	Focus groups lasted 1 hour

Setting

	*Interactions with or observation of participants took place in a naturalistic setting, defined as a real world setting in which the behaviors of interest might normally be expected to occur.	Location was not stated in the article.
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Researcher Role

	*Use of auditors as a check on the findings of the main coders	No- although trustworthiness is addressed explicitly in the article.
	*Written reflections on the authors' biases in the published article	No
	*Explicit discussion of the desirability of minimizing or eliminating the effects of researcher bias	No

Reporting Findings

*Presentation of free-standing quotations (at least one sentence in length) from participants	Yes
*Presentation of extended quotations (at least five lines in length)	Yes
*Inclusion of identifiers with the quotations	No- quotes are presented with generic descriptors.

Presentation Rigor

Introductory Section

^Statement of the problem	Yes: "Although spirituality has consistently been integrated into peer support groups addressing substance misuse and addiction, incorporating a client's spirituality into substance abuse counseling remains less common."
^Statement that establishes the significance of the problem	Yes: "Considering the potential benefits of including a client's spirituality in the treatment of substance abuse, more research is needed that examines how to best implement this practice."

Presentation of the Purpose, Central Research Question, and Rationale for a Qualitative Approach

^Purpose Presented	Yes: "The purpose of this article is to describe a qualitative study that examined the perspectives of both service providers and recipients regarding how to best integrate a client's spiritual preferences into substance abuse counseling."
^Presentation of Central Research Questions	No.

^Argument for applicability of qualitative research	Somewhat. Argument for Focus Groups: "A focus-group methodology was chosen due to the unique opportunity this format provides for the negotiation of complex experiences within a group"
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Description of Analysis Approach and Methods

^Researchers' knowledge of the methods and analytic process used with the selected approach	Yes, researchers demonstrate knowledge.
^Includes essential technical terminology	Yes
^Authoritative authors cited?	Unclear. Coleman & Unrau
^Discussion of Sampling Methods	Yes- purposive sampling utilized
^Description of how data collection and analysis interact	No
^Data Collection Methods and Procedures are Presented	Yes
^Inclusion of Interview Questions	Yes: "What are the benefits of incorporating spirituality into substance abuse treatment?"; "What challenges are faced when incorporating spirituality into therapy?"; and "What strategies do you think could help address these problems?"
^Rationale for Inclusion of Questions	No
^Questions are consistent with approach?	Somewhat- good questions for a focus group, not great questions for qualitative research (not open enough).

 Presentation of Findings

^Consistent with Employed Approach?	Yes
^Includes quotations from Participants?	Yes

The Discussion Section

^Findings are compared and contrasted with current theoretical and research literature	Yes
^Limitations are in qualitative terms?	No explicit limitations section, further research areas addressed
^Need to discuss implications for targeted field.	Yes

Note: *Hoyt and Bhati; ^Kline

Macmin, Liz, & Foskett, John. (2004). "Don't be afraid to tell." The spiritual and religious experience of mental health service users in Somerset. *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, 7(1), 23-40.

Focus of Research		Evaluation and Comments
	*Contact between any coder and participants (yes or no)	Unclear
	*Nature of contact (none, telephone, or face-to-face)	Face-to-face
	*Proportion of coders who have such contact with at least one participant	Unclear
	*Data available to all coders (transcripts or other written, audiotape, videotape, direct observation or interaction)	Yes
	*Average time spent with each participant	1 Hour

Setting

	*Interactions with or observation of participants took place in a naturalistic setting, defined as a real world setting in which the behaviors of interest might normally be expected to occur.	Unclear
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Researcher Role

	*Use of auditors as a check on the findings of the main coders	Unclear
	*Written reflections on the authors' biases in the published article	No
	*Explicit discussion of the desirability of minimizing or eliminating the effects of researcher bias	No

Reporting Findings

*Presentation of free-standing quotations (at least one sentence in length) from participants	Yes
*Presentation of extended quotations (at least five lines in length)	Yes
*Inclusion of identifiers with the quotations	No

Presentational Rigor

Introductory Section

^Statement of the problem	Yes
^Statement that establishes the significance of the problem	Yes

Presentation of the Purpose, Central Research Question, and Rationale for a Qualitative Approach

^Purpose Presented	Yes
^Presentation of Central Research Questions	Yes
^Argument for applicability of qualitative research	Yes

Description of Analysis Approach and Methods

^Researchers' knowledge of the methods and analytic process used with the selected approach	Yes- Grounded Theory
^Includes essential technical terminology	
^Authoritative authors cited?	Yes- Charmaz
^Discussion of Sampling Methods	Yes

^Description of how data collection and analysis interact	No
^Data Collection Methods and Procedures are Presented	Yes- but not thorough
^Inclusion of Interview Questions	Yes
^Rationale for Inclusion of Questions	No
^Questions are consistent with approach?	Somewhat- a grounded theory works, but they were not necessarily developed with a grounded theory in mind.

Presentation of Findings

^Consistent with Employed Approach?	Yes
^Includes quotations from Participants?	Yes

The Discussion Section

^Findings are compared and contrasted with current theoretical and research literature	Yes
^Limitations are in qualitative terms?	Yes
^Need to discuss implications for targeted field.	Yes

Note: *Hoyt and Bhati; ^Kline

Puckett, Jillian M. (2012). *Client's experiences of spirituality in couple's therapy: A phenomenological approach*. (Master's Thesis), University of Kentucky. Retrieved from http://uknowledge.uky.edu/hes_etds/2

Focus of Research		Evaluation and Comments
	*Contact between any coder and participants (yes or no)	Yes
	*Nature of contact (none, telephone, or face-to-face)	Face-to-Face
	*Proportion of coders who have such contact with at least one participant	All
	*Data available to all coders (transcripts or other written, audiotape, videotape, direct observation or interaction)	Yes
	*Average time spent with each participant	1-1.5 Hours

Setting

	*Interactions with or observation of participants took place in a naturalistic setting, defined as a real world setting in which the behaviors of interest might normally be expected to occur.	Not stated
--	---	------------

Researcher Role

	*Use of auditors as a check on the findings of the main coders	Yes
	*Written reflections on the authors' biases in the published article	Yes
	*Explicit discussion of the desirability of minimizing or eliminating the effects of researcher bias	Yes

Reporting Findings

*Presentation of free-standing quotations (at least one sentence in length) from participants	Yes
*Presentation of extended quotations (at least five lines in length)	Yes
*Inclusion of identifiers with the quotations	Yes

Presentation Rigor

Introductory Section

^Statement of the problem	Yes: "Despite the increased literature on spirituality in individual therapy, there is relatively little research on the role of spirituality in couple's therapy."
^Statement that establishes the significance of the problem	Yes: "Research on intimacy in couple relationships has found that spiritual intimacy is associated with emotional intimacy, which points to the need for further research on the subject of spirituality and couple's therapy (Hatch, James & Schumm, 1986)."

Presentation of the Purpose, Central Research Question, and Rationale for a Qualitative Approach

^Purpose Presented	Yes: "The present study will provide more information on the role of spirituality in couple's therapy from clients' perspectives." "The purpose of this phenomenological study is to describe clients' experiences of spirituality in couple's therapy."
^Presentation of Central Research Questions	Not explicitly.

^Argument for applicability of qualitative research	No- a description of qualitative research not a rationale for
---	---

Description of Analysis Approach and Methods

^Researchers' knowledge of the methods and analytic process used with the selected approach	Yes
^Includes essential technical terminology	Yes
^Authoritative authors cited?	Yes/No- limited to Creswell. Did not include Moustakas, Lincoln and Guba
^Discussion of Sampling Methods	Yes: "Convenience sampling was used because participants were recruited from the University of Kentucky Family Center."
^Description of how data collection and analysis interact	No
^Data Collection Methods and Procedures are Presented	Yes
^Inclusion of Interview Questions	Yes: "The fundamental questions that were asked of participants are: (1) How do you define spirituality?, (2) What are your experiences of spirituality in couple's therapy? And (3) What are your experiences of spirituality in your intimate couple relationship?"
^Rationale for Inclusion of Questions	No
^Questions are consistent with approach?	Yes

Presentation of Findings

^Consistent with Employed Approach?	Yes
^Includes quotations from Participants?	Yes

The Discussion Section

^Findings are compared and contrasted with current theoretical and research literature	Yes
^Limitations are in qualitative terms?	Yes
^Need to discuss implications for targeted field.	Yes

Note: *Hoyt and Bhati; ^Kline

Starnino, Vincent R. (2014). Strategies for incorporating spirituality as part of recovery-oriented practice: Highlighting the voices of those with a lived experience. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*, 95(2), 122-130.

Focus of Research	Evaluation and Comments
*Contact between any coder and participants (yes or no)	Yes
*Nature of contact (none, telephone, or face-to-face)	Face-to-Face
*Proportion of coders who have such contact with at least one participant	Unclear
*Data available to all coders (transcripts or other written, audiotape, videotape, direct observation or interaction)	Yes
*Average time spent with each participant	2.5 Hours

Setting

*Interactions with or observation of participants took place in a naturalistic setting, defined as a real world setting in which the behaviors of interest might normally be expected to occur.	Yes- private spaces in mental health agencies and participant's homes.
---	--

Researcher Role

*Use of auditors as a check on the findings of the main coders	No, although other strategies were employed to help insure trustworthiness. Reflective journaling, peer debriefing, keeping an audit trail, member checking, and negative case analysis.
*Written reflections on the authors' biases in the published article	No

*Explicit discussion of the desirability of minimizing or eliminating the effects of researcher bias	No
--	----

Reporting Findings

*Presentation of free-standing quotations (at least one sentence in length) from participants	Yes
*Presentation of extended quotations (at least five lines in length)	Yes
*Inclusion of identifiers with the quotations	Yes

Presentational Rigor

Introductory Section

^Statement of the problem	Yes- There is a need for research that focuses on the spiritual lives of people with SMI (serious mental illness).
^Statement that establishes the significance of the problem	Yes- Spirituality can be an important aspect for individuals with SMI. Research can help to inform practice in regard to these individuals.

Presentation of the Purpose, Central Research Question, and Rationale for a Qualitative Approach

^Purpose Presented	Yes
^Presentation of Central Research Questions	Not explicit
^Argument for applicability of qualitative research	Yes- although minimal

Description of Analysis Approach and Methods

^Researchers' knowledge of the methods and analytic process used with the selected approach	Yes
^Includes essential technical terminology	Yes
^Authoritative authors cited?	Yes
^Discussion of Sampling Methods	Yes
^Description of how data collection and analysis interact	Yes
^Data Collection Methods and Procedures are Presented	Yes
^Inclusion of Interview Questions	Yes
^Rationale for Inclusion of Questions	No
^Questions are consistent with approach?	Yes/No- it is part of a larger study and the questions don't seem to be purely phenomenological.

Presentation of Findings

^Consistent with Employed Approach?	Yes- including themes and relevant supportive quotations.
^Includes quotations from Participants?	Yes

The Discussion Section

^Findings are compared and contrasted with current theoretical and research literature	Yes
^Limitations are in qualitative terms?	Yes
^Need to discuss implications for targeted field.	Yes

Note: *Hoyt and Bhati; ^Kline

Appendix C

Initial Synthesis Procedure Guide

Procedure for Synthesizing the Included Studies into a Metasynthesis of the Experience

Will adapt Moustakas' methods for phenomenological research toward metasynthesis.

Phenomenological Reduction

Bracketing the Topic or Question

Horizontalization: Every statement has equal value

Delimited Horizons or Meanings: Horizons that stand out as invariant qualities of the experience

Invariant Qualities and Themes: Nonrepetitive, nonoverlapping constituents clustered into themes

Individual Textural Descriptions: An integration, descriptively, of the invariant textural constituents and themes of each research participant

Composite Textural Description: An integration of all of the individual textural descriptions into a group or universal textural description

Imaginative Variation

Vary Possible Meanings

Vary Perspectives of the Phenomenon: From different vantage points, such as opposite meanings and various roles

Free Fantasy Variations: Consider freely the possible structural qualities or dynamics that evoke the textural qualities

Construct a list of structural qualities of the experience

Develop Structural Themes: Cluster the structural qualities into themes

Employ Universal Structures as Themes: Time, space, relationship to self, to others; bodily concerns, causal or intentional structures

Individual Structural Descriptions: For each co-researcher, integrate the structural qualities and themes into an individual structural description

Composite Structural Description: An integration of all of the individual structural descriptions into a group or universal structural description of the experience

Synthesis of Composite Textural and Composite Structural Descriptions

Intuitively-reflectively integrate the composite textural and composite structural descriptions to develop a synthesis of the meanings and essences of the phenomenon or experience

Organizing, Analyzing, and Synthesizing Data

Follow modified van Kaam method or Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method

Develop individual textural and structural descriptions; composite textural and composite structural descriptions, and a synthesis of textural and structural meanings and essences of the experience

Van Kaam's Modified Method (Moustakas)

Using the complete transcription of each research participant:

1. Listing and Preliminary Grouping
List every expression relevant to the experience. (Horizontalization)
2. Reduction and Elimination: To determine the Invariant Constituents: Test each expression for two requirements:
 - a. Does it contain a moment of the experience that is a necessary and sufficient constituent for understanding it?
 - b. Is it possible to abstract and label it? If so, it is a horizon of the experience. Expressions not meeting the above requirements are eliminated. Overlapping, repetitive, and vague expressions are also eliminated or presented in more exact descriptive terms. The horizons that remain are the invariant constituents of the experience.
3. Clustering and Thematizing the Invariant Constituents:
Cluster the invariant constituents of the experience that are related into a thematic label. The clustered and labeled constituents are the core themes of the experience.
4. Final Identification of the Invariant Constituents and Themes by Application: Validation
Check the invariant constituents and their accompanying theme against the complete record of the research participant. (1) Are they expressed explicitly in the complete transcription? (2) Are they compatible if not explicitly expressed? (3) If they are not explicit or compatible, they are not relevant to the co-researcher's experience and should be deleted.
5. Using the relevant, validated invariant constituents and themes, construct for each co-researcher an *Individual Textural Description* of the experience. Include verbatim examples from the transcribed interview.
6. Construct for each co-researcher an *Individual Structural Description* of the experience based on the *Individual Textural Description* and Imaginative Variation.
7. Construct *for each research participant a Textural-Structural Description* of the meanings and essences of the experience, incorporating the invariant constituents and themes.

From the Individual Textural-Structural Descriptions, develop a Composite Description of the meanings and essences of the experience, representing the group as a whole.

Appendix D

Final Synthesis Procedure Guide

Procedure for Synthesizing the Included Studies into a Metasynthesis of the Experience

Will adapt Moustakas' methods for phenomenological research toward metasynthesis

Each article will be treated as a “participant” with an experience. The procedural language will be modified to accommodate this application. The results section of each article will serve as the “transcript” for the participant.

Phenomenological Reduction

Bracketing the Topic or Question throughout the *Phenomenological Reduction* and *Imaginative Variation*

[How do clients describe their experience of addressing spirituality in their counseling process?]

The results section of each article will be read in a manner that employs *Phenomenological Reduction* through:

1. Horizontalization: Every statement has equal value
2. Delimited Horizons or Meanings: Horizons that stand out as invariant qualities of the experience
3. Invariant Qualities and Themes: Nonrepetitive, nonoverlapping constituents recognized as Invariant Qualities of the CRQ. These qualities will be noted as they are represented in the results sections when compared across the articles being analyzed. In addition, any outliers noted as well.

All of the articles will serve as participants in order to develop a:

Composite Textural Description: Integration of the textural descriptions of the represented articles.

Next, the results section will be read in a manner that employs *Imaginative Variation* through:

1. Vary Possible Meanings and Perspectives on the experience; including opposite meanings and various roles
2. Free Fantasy Variations: Consider freely the possible structural qualities or dynamics that evoke the textural qualities
3. Construct a list of structural qualities of the experience
4. Develop Structural Themes: Cluster the structural qualities into themes with the sensitized understanding that there are anticipated elements of: A Context; A Fear; A Freedom; A Personal Expression
5. Employ Universal Structures as Themes: Time, space, relationship to self, to others; bodily concerns, causal or intentional structures. Reapply and refine

anticipated elements of: A Context; A Fear; A Freedom; A Personal Expression

6. Individual Structural Descriptions: For each article, integrate the structural qualities and themes into an individual structural description

All of the articles will serve as participants in order to develop a:

Composite Structural Description: An integration of all of the individual structural descriptions into a group or universal structural description of the experience

Synthesis of Composite Textural and Composite Structural Descriptions

Intuitively-reflectively integrate the *composite textural and composite structural descriptions* to develop a synthesis of the meanings and essences of the phenomenon or experience

Organizing, Analyzing, and Synthesizing Data

Follow modified van Kaam method.

Develop individual textural and structural descriptions; composite textural and composite structural descriptions, and a synthesis of textural and structural meanings and essences of the experience

Van Kaam's Modified Method (Moustakas)

Using the complete transcription of each research participant:

1. Listing and Preliminary Grouping
List every expression relevant to the experience and preliminarily group them together.
2. Reduction and Elimination: To determine the Invariant Constituents: Test each expression for two requirements:
 - a. Does it contain a moment of the experience that is a necessary and sufficient constituent for understanding it?
 - b. Is it possible to abstract and label it? If so, it is a horizon of the experience. Expressions not meeting the above requirements are eliminated. Overlapping, repetitive, and vague expressions are also eliminated or presented in more exact descriptive terms. The horizons that remain are the invariant constituents of the experience.
3. Clustering and Thematizing the Invariant Constituents:
Cluster the invariant constituents of the experience that are related into a thematic label. The clustered and labeled constituents are the core themes of the experience.
4. Final Identification of the Invariant Constituents and Themes by Application: Validation
Check the invariant constituents and their accompanying theme against the complete record of the research participant. (1) Are they expressed explicitly in the complete transcription? (2) Are they compatible if not explicitly expressed? (3) If they are not explicit or compatible, they are not relevant to the co-researcher's experience and should be deleted.

5. Using the relevant, validated invariant constituents and themes, construct for each article an *Individual Textural Description* of the experience. Include verbatim examples from the transcribed interview.
6. Construct for each article an *Individual Structural Description* of the experience based on the *Individual Textural Description* and Imaginative Variation.
7. Construct *for each research participant a Textural-Structural Description* of the meanings and essences of the experience, incorporating the invariant constituents and themes.

From the Individual Textural-Structural Descriptions, develop a Composite Description of the meanings and essences of the experience, representing the group as a whole.

Appendix E

Theme Compilation from Synthesized Articles

The following tables include the themes identified in the synthesized research. These themes were identified by the authors of the included research.

Beitel, et al., 2007	Buser, et al., 2011	Cragun & Friedlander, 2012	Gockel, 2011
Expectations and Goals	Negative Counseling Experiences	Client Preferences	Spirituality is integral to effective counseling
Overall comparison of 3-S therapy to standard drug counseling	Emotional Experience Relative to Unhelpful Counseling Relationship	Religious/spiritual topics in relation to assessment	Spirituality is integral to the process of change
Facilitating aspects of treatment	Client Perseverance	Religious/spiritual topics discussed in therapy	Spirituality is a key aspect of the therapeutic alliance
Hindering aspects of treatment	Positive Counseling Experiences	Positive experiences	Effective counselors understand and respond to the client's spiritual needs
	Emotional Experience Related to Helpful Counseling Relationship	Negative experiences	A counselor's effectiveness is linked to his or her own spiritual integration and healing
	Responsibility Reframed		Participants terminated counseling that was lacking in spiritual integration

Goedde, 2000	Knox, et al., 2005	Koslander & Arvidsson, 2007
Varying definitions of spirituality and religion	Background information about religion and spirituality in clients' lives and therapies	Patients wish to have their spiritual needs addressed
The role of spirituality in client's lives	Specific discussion of religion-spirituality in therapy	Patients must see to it that their spiritual needs are addressed
Spirituality plays a central role in clients' lives	Helpful specific event	Patients lack confidence in nurses with regard to discussing spirituality
Spirituality is important for survival and support	Unhelpful specific event	
Clients report a wide spectrum of spiritual practices to be integral to their lives	Considered raising, but decided not to raise, religion spirituality in psychotherapy	
Client's perceptions and experiences regarding spirituality and psychotherapy		
Spirituality enters into therapy through the clients' psychological issues		
Spirituality is perceived by clients as a healing force in therapy		
Spirituality can enter into therapy through the healing aspects of the therapeutic relationship		

Spirituality is an integral part of life and therefore important and appropriate to be discussed in therapy		
Clients express varying concerns about the discussion of spirituality in therapy		
Clients felt validated and acknowledged through therapists' explicit and implicit interventions		
Clients report that therapists used a variety of explicit and implicit spiritual and religious interventions that were perceived as meaningful, supportive, and effective		
Therapists self-disclosure perceived as a helpful and positive experience		
Clients express varying concerns regarding self-disclosure		
Clients express a desire for sharing similar spiritual or religious perspectives and language with their therapists		

Lietz & Hodge, 2013	Macmin & Foskett, 2004	Puckett, 2012	Starnino, 2014
Respect Client Autonomy	To talk or not to talk	Spiritual experiences in Couple's Therapy	Effective Listening
Asses Client Spiritual Preferences	What is talking for?	Relevance of Spirituality	Directive Strategies
Offer Responsive Program Choices	The search for meaning	Spirituality as a Resource	Strategies for addressing the intersection between spirituality and illness

Encourage and Challenge		Comfort Level with Therapist	Strategies related to involvement in spiritual communities
Engage in Open and Tentative Discussions		Perception of Spirituality	
Differentiate Spirituality and Religion		Similarities between spirituality and couple's therapy	
Receive Training and Education		Spirituality defined as broader than religion	
		Spiritual Practices	
		Spirituality as a Sensitive Topic	
		Spirituality as Beneficial	
		Quality time	
		Unity	
		Few Disadvantages	
		Spirituality as a Journey	
		Spiritual history	
		Spiritual fluctuations	

Appendix F

Audit Trail During Metasynthesis

6/1/2015- Dissertation Meeting

Having written a large chunk of Article 1, ready to engage actual synthesis content. At the moment, unsure of finding my way through this.

6/11/2015- Dissertation Meeting

Deb mentioned there will be some expected elements present and to watch for them as I approach the content. Further, allow the process to hold me accountability to what I am looking for.

Historical, Relational, Internal, Transcendent

6/25/2015- Dissertation Meeting

Spirituality will have an interpersonal and intrapersonal and transpersonal element. Read articles with a sensitivity toward power dynamics.

Be creative and dig into what is "going on."

6/26/2015

Thoughts on spirituality- you can't really know me if you don't know my spiritual experience of the world.

Relational might be interpersonal

Internal is intrapersonal

Transcendent is transpersonal

And history is just history

7/14/2015

See handwritten notes and memos.

How do clients...

Positive / Negative Helpful / Unhelpful

(H) Worldview; important

(IQ?)

(R) Judgement; openness; Imposing; Self-Disclosure

(F) Fear; Perceived acceptance

(T) Existential Struggles

Love; openness; authentic

Structure

↳ Texture

INVARIANT Qualities
Not the same as
Structure.

Anticipated Elements

Deb:

Historical

Relational

Internal

Transcendent

What happened before? → Context?

" " between?

" " within?

" " transcendently

↳ w/ Spirituality, there will likely be transcendent qualities

Therapeutic Relationship
part of context or
part of experience?

Structure

↳ essence

↳ underlying order

Texture

In texture - nothing is omitted

"What" of experience

Texture looks at everything.

Reflected upon

Arrived at

Hidden

Observable

Seen

Apparent

Composite Textural Description

↳ pull together "participants" descriptions

I am not necessarily taking the article's identified structural elements because the structure may be different through the lens of my CRA.

Texture; words, phrases, themes, invariant qualities

Structure; underlying elements

Dissertation Sketches - Cambridge, July 2015

A couple questions to sketch...

What are authors / What is the profession doing to the experience of spirituality and religion?

How do clients experience addressing spirituality / religion in their counseling process?

Interpersonal piece

Intrapersonal piece

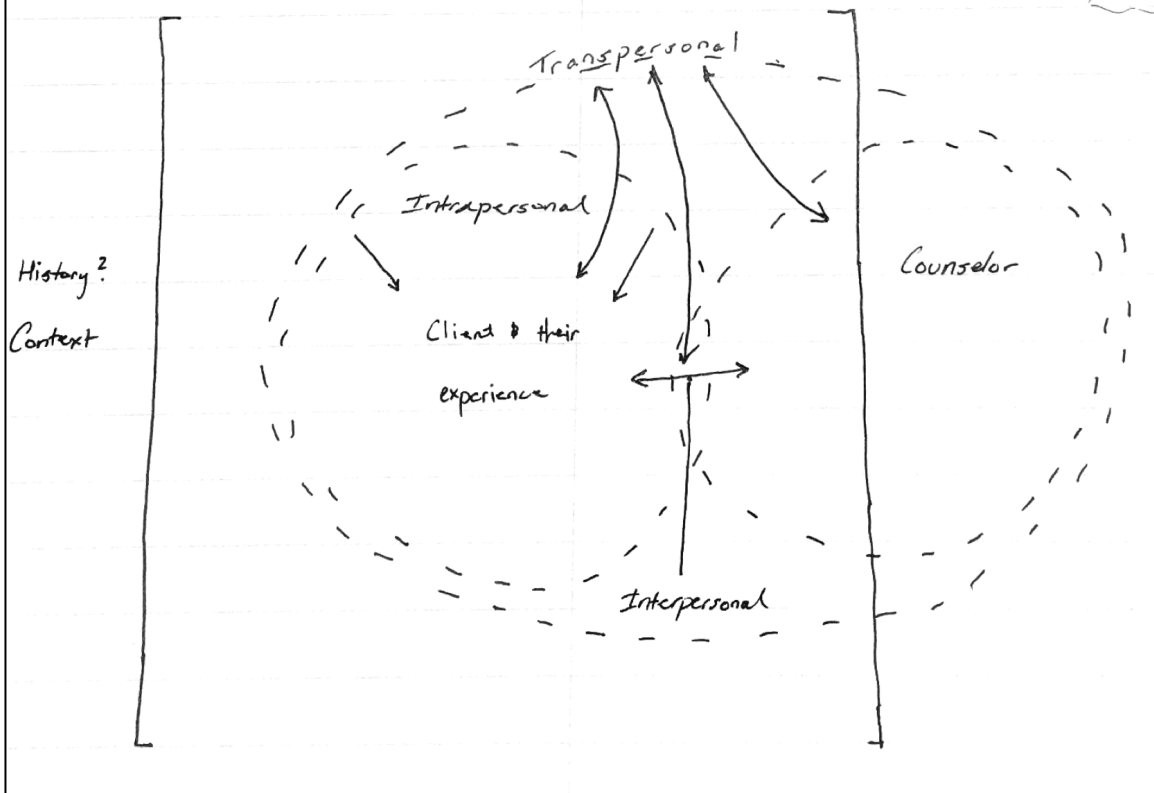
Transpersonal piece

History / Background

"Unlocking"

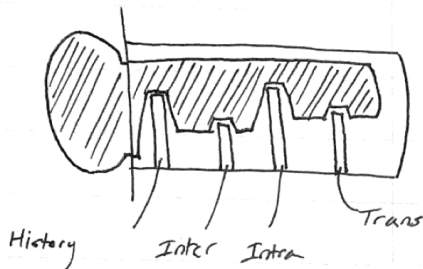
"Opening"

"Offering"

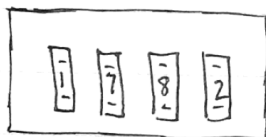


Lock & Key

- Sometimes a key fits but it doesn't unlock anything.



Care
Honor
Listen
Wanted to know



Fear is a key element; it cuts across the studies.

Soul is like a wild animal.

Inviting the soul into the counseling room.

The language of "soul" is important because spirituality provides different language than the counseling profession.

A history/context

Move toward

A fear → related to trust

versus away

A longing → related to knowing/being known

or passing by

An Awe / A peace / A hope / wholeness / healing transformation.

Honor vs. Minimize

Counselor as witness.

Move Toward vs. Away

Connection

Openness, empathy, love experienced as spiritual awareness.

Affirming of the person (identity)

"It is who I am, not something I do."

When we (counselors) engage spirituality as something it is not, as less than it is... we invalidate our client, undermine trust, miss who our client is showing us they are.

When we engage it for what it is, we have the opportunity to experience our client's depth and to connect with them.

A balancing act - don't treat it as more or less than what our client says it is. This reality is true of other areas of multiculturalism. I.e. Race.

Tecton-totter

Balance Beam

How do clients experience...

Getting invited further in to a person's home.

What part of the home is spirituality kept?

Spirituality is a paradox - it is an essential part of a person and their experience which they are able to hide.

In that regard... what is it like?

Not race.

Sexual orientation? Ethnicity?

You will never ~~tell~~ know it unless they tell you.
 They will never tell you unless you invite it.

Counselor:

You have clients who pray for you.

Clients who meditate

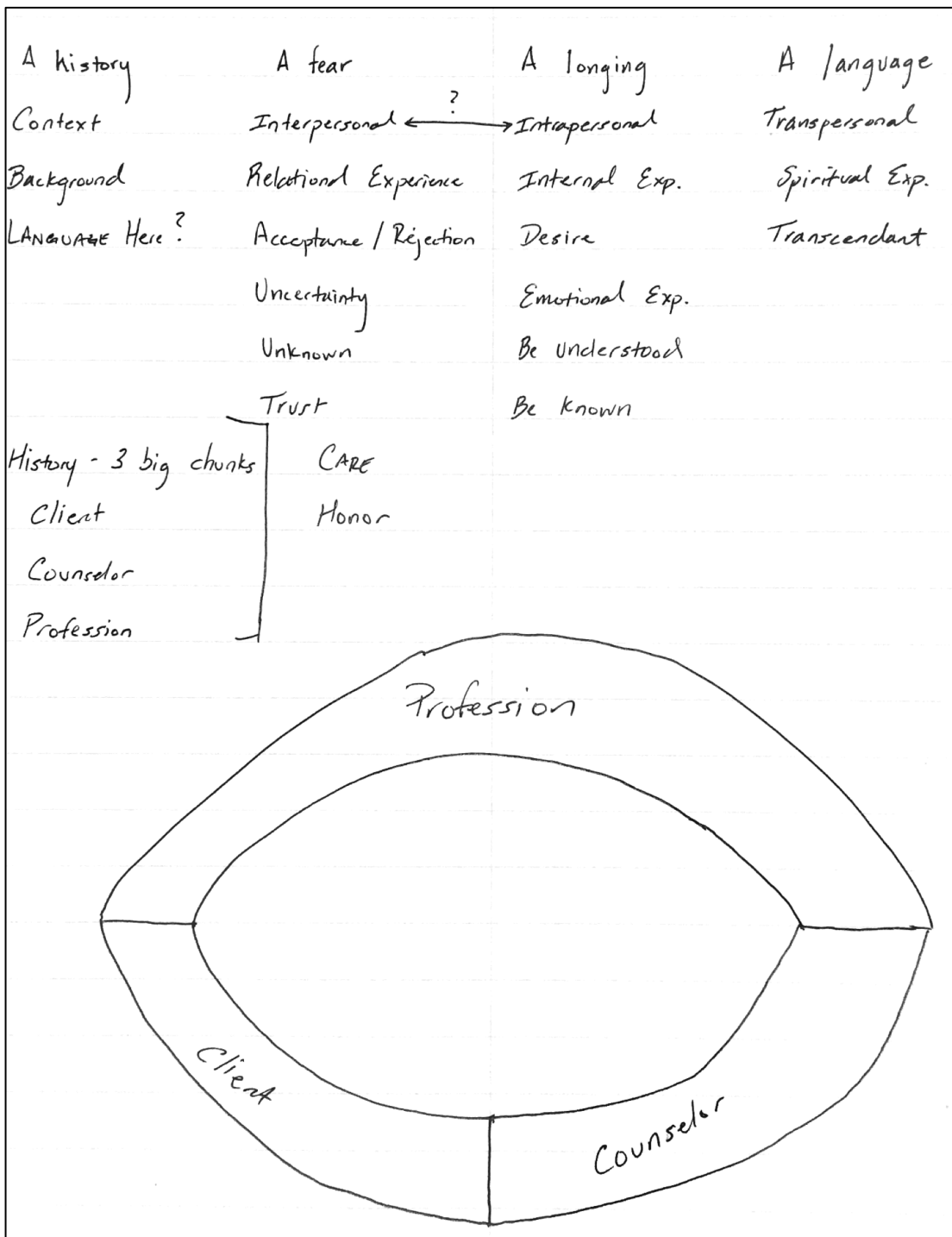
Clients who believe god has spoken to them

Have had visions

Spirituality is like the history of a place. You cannot fully experience a place apart from it. You cannot see it unless someone shows you. Once you see it, the place looks different.

- "There is something here"

Spirituality is like finding out your client thinks in one language but speaks in another.



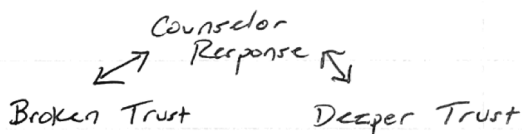
A	B	C	D	
Context	Inter.	Intra.] =	Spiritual Attunement
Alignment	Vulnerability	Impact		

Response of counselor impacted by background
(personal and professional)

[What is the experience of clients of addressing spir/rel as
a part of counseling?]

Description needs to encompass positive and negative exp.

Ex.



Spirituality has a direct bearing on the therapeutic alliance.
Mostly, ruptures are avoidance ruptures with counselors
unaware of their presence because of blindness to
spiritual experience.

Your counselor will see you now, please leave God at
the door.

7/25/2015- Research Journal

Maybe the importance of the language isn't a separate category in itself. Maybe it is part of the context and therefore overarches everything. If you are not willing to enter the language of the client, you miss out on most of the experience.

9/15/2015- Research Journal

For the synthesis, context and fear both feel right on. I think freedom is a good third dimension. Rather than zooming in on language, I think it is more about a personal expression which includes language.

9/16/2015- Research Journal

I am not sure what to call the longing section. I don't think longing or desire feels right (yet). Clients want to have the FREEDOM to offer as much or as little of their spirituality as they would like. Maybe Freedom is the right word.

Keep re-centering around the CLIENT's experience.

Not sure if I can make the two central pieces a contingent type theme. But, fear seems to be linked to not feeling known, inhibition, reservation or even hurt. Whereas freedom is linked to experiencing feeling known, loved, cared for, understood.

9/18/2015- Research Journal

I continue to feel good about the 4 main elements of the experience. I am pondering what angle to take on the discussion. There are multiple options and I think I want to map a couple of them to see what emerges.

10/3/2015- Research Journal

Still feel good about the pieces of the metasynthesis. Working now on the design of the grounded theory research. Unsure what the exact question should be- need to refine it with Deb. Introduction section.... Several entry angles I can take- but which one?

10/29/2015- Research Journal

Want to keep highlighting the path the profession has taken through this topic- moving from "should we address it?" to, "how do we effectively use it?" There has not been enough time spent recognizing S/R as a multicultural issue. If it is a matter of cultural competence, then we need to explore the culture and the experience and not just jump to utilization.

11/13/2015- Research Journal

Need to deepen the metasynthesis and focus in on making it a phenomenology and not falling into process evaluations.

Possible Titles for the Dissertation

“Let it Be”

Spirituality: The Hidden Rupture of the Therapeutic Relationship

I say “me”, you say “resource for resilience.”

“I’ll show you mine if you show me yours.”

When client’s have a crisis of faith, counseling has a crisis with

12/14/2015- Research Journal

My thoughts on this synthesis are too wandery and need to be more linear in order to communicate them effectively.

Specific tools for Johnny to move out of orbit

1. Forbid yourself from using circular words and metaphors.
2. Reverse outlining to track what you are saying with your paragraphs.
3. Construction of strong thesis statements as topic sentences for each paragraph.
4. Disciplined paragraph construction to ensure that outline (as represented by thesis statement/topic sentences) and reverse outline are one in the same.

The quotations that researchers use in qualitative reports are themselves interpretations because researchers don’t use all quotes they select and present quotes in concert with concepts to give a holistic sense of the idea.

2/20/2016- Dissertation Meeting

Presented draft of Chapter 2

Presented metasynthesis articles spreadsheet summary

3/1/2016- Dissertation Meeting

Revision of draft materials was focused on:

Old "In order to address the research question, a qualitative metasynthesis was conducted on studies that utilized qualitative approaches aimed at illuminating the client experience of addressing spirituality and religion as a part of the counseling process."

My Attempt: "A qualitative metasynthesis was conducted to address the research question. This synthesis included studies which utilized qualitative methods to research the client experience of addressing spirituality and religion in counseling." This metasynthesis included qualitative studies that researched client experience of addressing spirituality and religion in counseling.

Old:" Essentially, the misalignment lies as a matter of identity versus practice. While clients regard spirituality and religion as an intertwined aspect of identity, the counseling profession has engaged it as a matter of practice. In many cases, these practices are viewed as beneficial and are cast in a positive light (Cite). And, while this beneficial perspective is a worthwhile contributor to scholarship, it is missing the multicultural mark. In order to realign the professional discourse on this topic, the cultural nature of spirituality and religion needs to be highlighted.

This is part of the discussion. The result that it relates to is the Personal Expression piece of client experience.

The metasynthesis results indicate clients experience addressing spirituality and religions within counseling as a personal expression of core self. This close identification of the client with spirituality and religion is comparable to literature that characterizes spirituality as central to personal experience (cite) and contrasts sharply with literature, research and practice that casts spirituality and religion as a set of behaviors (cite). This supports the view that understanding client spirituality and religion is a necessary aspect of understanding their worldview.

What is misaligned? The client experiences (personal expression) are misaligned

Plan for path to proposal:

Between now and proposal (list)

Ch. 1; 2; 3- What is the next thing I need to get to you?

Can we put something on the calendar?

Don't overstate

" The results... affirm that substantial progress..."

I need deadlines

Writing process is just not an easy process

A lot to cut through

1st time I write, it is extremely slow

Need to be a strong enough writer.

2-3 sentences per hour

Certain rules when I write

Too long?

Straight forward

Need unity and similarity in language

Academic writing

- NBA versus 4th graders

Waxing poetic- use sparingly

- want document to be even
- Length
- Structure
- Language

I am a very abstract thinker

Metaphor

- Clients that aren't very abstract
- "I have to describe things in really concrete terms"
- Whiteboard

Must make the abstract more concrete

Student- "Tell me what you mean when you say that"

Name the result I am speaking about

Identity vs. Practice

Personal expression- who they are, not just what they do

Too much critique

Simple

What is misaligned

Root in the results A LOT

If it is a compare/contrast sentence- SAY SO

Write about the results. Stick to the results.

Spirituality and religion as aspect of worldview.

Breaking it down

Ask yourself the questions i.e. what is misaligned?

Rooting it to the RESULTS.

Metasynthesis- use this term for consistency

What are next things?

Send to committee

- First week of spring term

Ch. 1, Ch. 2, Ch. 3

Next Friday- another draft of Ch. 2 and Ch. 3

Need to send to committee by week of the 21st

2.5 weeks- singular draft of 1, 2, 3

Before 21st- a gelled document

PDF manipulation

Interpersonal--- Experience

Intrapersonal--- vs. Relational/Internal

Analysis -> like clinical diagnosis

Diagnosis versus experience

Seeing structure -> diagnosis

Experience of diagnosis versus actual diagnosis

Confusing starting structure -> versus ending structure

Starting structure is a tool

Be creative with this (Imaginative variation)

Give it something that it doesn't already have

This might be important...

Sensitivity to power dynamics

Push & pull of human experience

Memo about

What does it appear that authors are trying to do to the experience?

(Power)

Homogenize experience

Spirituality into a resource

“Let it be”

How are they constricting the experience?

Essence of spirituality is scary

It is a large experience

Deep knowing

- You can't know me if you don't know this

Make room for gut level; intuition

19 Total Found

11 Included

8 Excluded

What did you include?

It had to...

- Be peer reviewed
- Address the client experience
- Through identifiable qualitative methods
- Address either spirituality or religion or both
- Finally, the experience had to focus on counseling. Articles were retained from multiple disciplines including couples coun, psychotherapy, substance abuse counseling

Should there be a word about “addiction recovery” or nursing?

Exclude

If the focus was not on addressing....

For example

Focus on client spirituality.

Focus on interventions

Qualitative methods utilized yielding results that were thin or unable to be applied to our purpose.

3/15/2016- Dissertation Meeting

Maybe tone back results word. Might be using it too much.

Put limitations as sub heading. Foreshadow in intro to discussion.

3rd Sentence (The lack of representative...)

The narrows range of s/r traditions.... Limits the transferability

This limit was addressed by...

Despite broad inclusion.... Primarily Christian.

[Should only be considered transferability]

Another potential limitation was bias. This was dealt with by
(Last sentence)

Paragraph after limitations...

Research shown - > want to address

Compare/Contrast

Main themes with literature

Implications should be action

Restructure

Paragraph after limitations

Exp. Identified have commonalities with research on spir. Counseling.

Fear... clients have been shown to have.

Personal exp...

Freedom... talking about things personal to themselves.

Implications

Because of X theme, we should...

Be clear what them I am talking about.

COMPARE/CONTRAST Themes with lit

One theme was...

Similar themes were noted by...

This is refuted by...

Medium sized paragraph for each of these

Implications has become discussion

Should be... Given these four themes... Counselors may want.

Counselors should refrain from...

Counselor educators can use these four themes...

Can use the results...

(Research section- best work)

Be on the lookout for passive language.

Ch.1/Ch. 2

Ch. 3- Few too many headings
 Question before methods section
 Then methods are just methods

Context
 Fear
 Freedom
 Personal Expression

Don't beat the drum!

Ch. 3 Reverse outlining

Counseling values multiculturalism
 More R. in S/R

Paragraph 3

Need more focus on clients
 It is working
 Two areas that have focused on the counselor
 (Here are two areas)
 Maybe add something on just counselors
 Walker; Spir & Rel Competencies

Paragraph 4- Watch redundancy!

Multicultural

Maybe mention once
 Central part

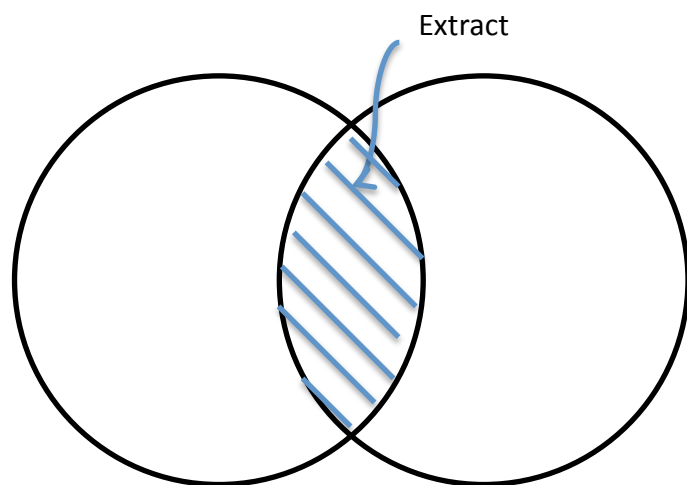
Paragraph 5

In spite of advances,
 literature doesn't address the
 exp. Of the client.

From Deb: Critique the articles
 that I reviewed-
 methodology/treatment
 approach.

Add on to what I have

3 Paragraphs- there is research
 on the client experience
 critique
 One looks at x
 One looks at y



This one comes the closest- critique the most

Presented revised thoughts about core elements of metasynthesis

If analysis spills into discussion

Phenomenology

I am reducing a lot of stuff

Reducing something that has already been reduced

Large quotes=textural

Read results for emotional, idiosyncratic

What is the experience?

Zip file=need to unzip it a bit.

Spiritual

Internal?

Interactive?

Relational?

Context impacts client experience

Err on the side of inclusion

Horizontalization

- Everything
- Create a horizon for each article and then compare them for similarities
- Brainstorming constructs

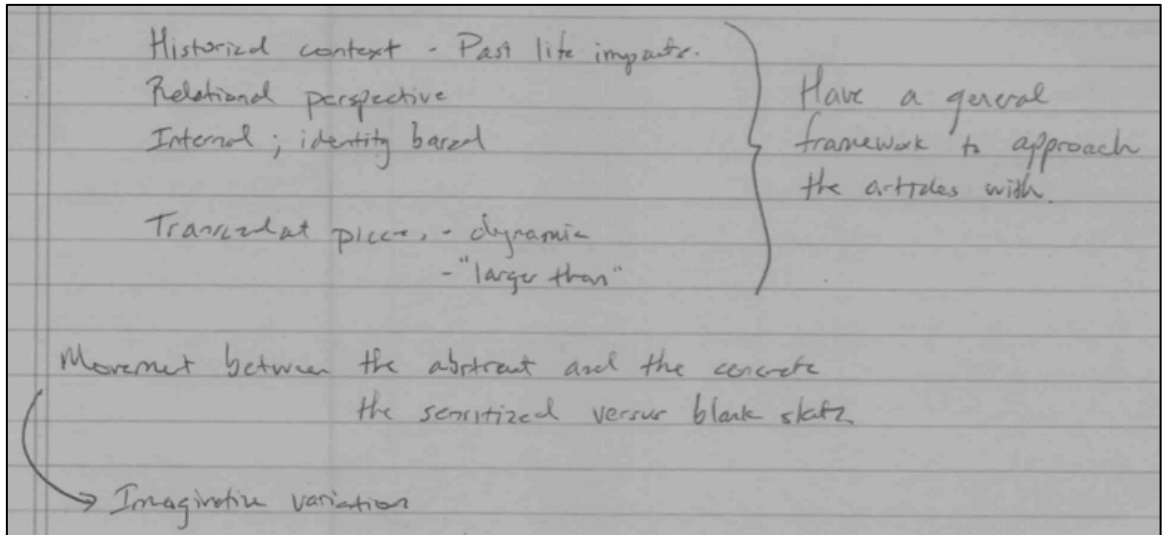
Context- Part of the experience but not the experience itself

Fear Context

Identity

Descriptive Whole

Make my lens more refined



Skill of generalization and holding yourself accountable for it.

A basketball court is not "playing basketball"
 But can't understand the experience apart from context

So sacred it's scary.

3/16/2016- Dissertation Meeting

Notes from Meeting with Deb:
 Johnny LaLonde 3-30-16
 Macmin and Foskett - How does it fit into your rationale?

It kind of does what you want to do -
 client voices
 about their experiences of spirituality in therapy
 good quality
 ...What are they not doing that you want to do.

Johnny wants to know not just 'what is it like' but also "how" spiritual and religious beliefs and practices are experienced, involved in, contribute to, are affected by, help, are worked with, protected, discussed, play a role in therapeutic process.

How do client's experience spiritual and religious phenomena in the therapeutic process. Phenomena ranging from absence to ideas, to practices to experiences interactions and presences."??

4/1/2016- Dissertation Meeting

Proposal this term!

Writing still needs to be cleaned up

Methods section

- Location-> Analysis
- Intro section needs more details
- Locating
 - o One section
 - o Subsections

Trustworthiness

- Deb is like "what?"
- Need to know more about where stuff came from
- Need to get more involved in the process
- Some will rely on having good artifacts of analysis in the appendix
- Memoes

Results need a little bit more connection to the specific articles
Just a little more citations in the results

Chapter 3

- Research
- Be clear about what I am citing
 - o In their chapter...
 - o In their position pierce
 - o Articles
 - o Theories
 - o Studies
 - o Research
 - o Researchers

Macmin and Foskett

How does it fit into your rationale?

Need specific case for specific grounded theory

What is it like? Vs. How does it work?

Need transition paragraph connecting to why we need to understand

Nail my rationale -> critique three articles for

Why do I want to know the HOW?

Define the problem- for problem statement

Need process in the research question

Contribute to...
 Are affected by...
 Role...
 Discussed...
 Contributor or barrier?

My study

- How spirituality and religion rolls through the treatment process

Spirituality/Religion not equal to Beliefs/Practice

Presence
 Identity
 Mystery

Chapter 3- Narrow the rationale- 1st priority.

Schedule proposal after I can answer:

What I want to study?
 Who?
 Need to specify within rationale

How spiritually related phenom. are involved in the therapeutic process.

Phenomena- ranging from absence to ideas, to prac, to exp.

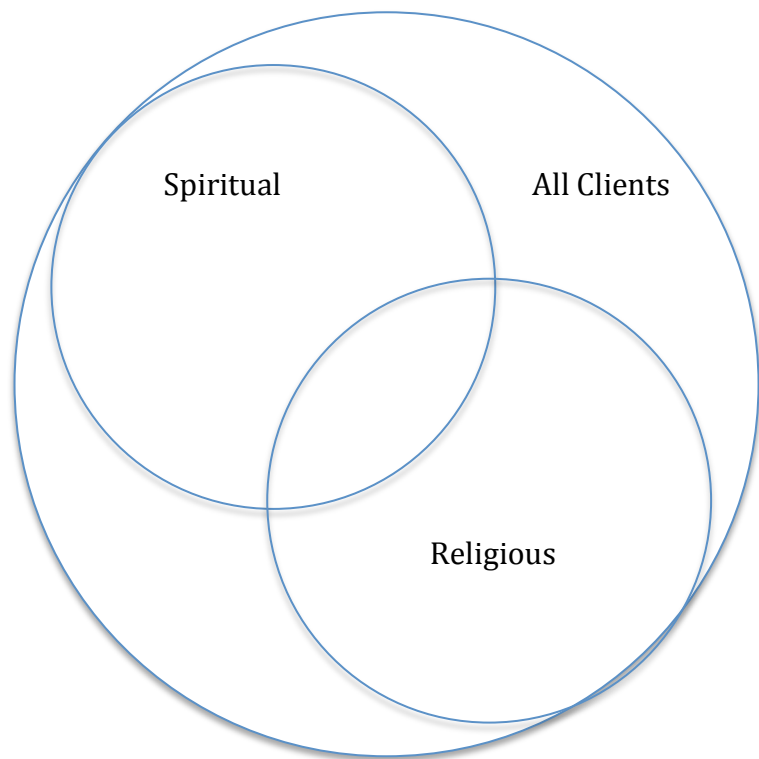
S/R < - - - - > Therapy
 (Good/Bad)

Therapy in general
 Counseling session in particular

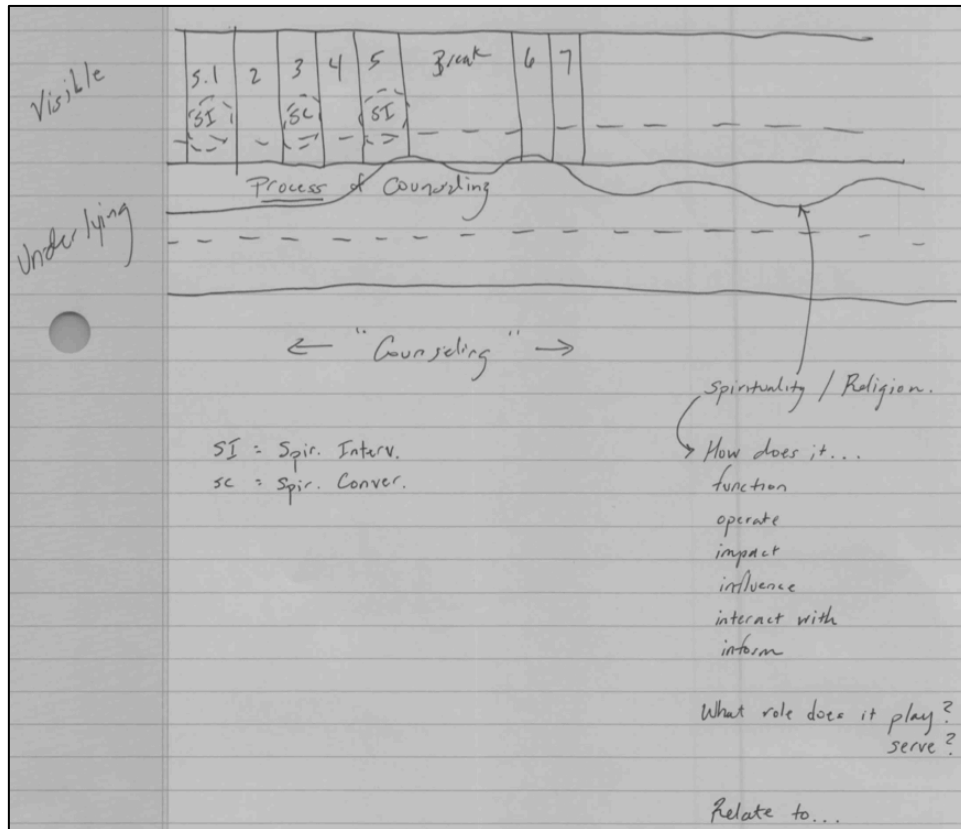
Could be general on all potential clients
 Could be specific to clients who identify as spiritual/religious
 Is NOT about exp. Of addressing or including.

Therapy/Counseling

Counseling Session (actual meeting)
 Counseling sessions (first to last)



Counseling Process (the session)
 Counseling Process (In and beyond/Start to End)



Creswellian Problem Statement
 Grounded Theory

- Generate
- Develop
- Propositions
- Process
- Substantive Theory

The purpose of this grounded theory study is to understand the role of spirituality and religion within the counseling process for spiritual and religious clients at (outpatient counseling practices)?

At this stage in the research, the role of spirituality and religion will be generally defined as (need this in a concise format)

Fulfilling this purpose will...

What do you mean when you say client's spirituality and religion?

We know about prevalence of significance

We know about the experience of addressing

We know about desire to address

We do not know about the role clients see for their spiritual/religious identity in their counseling process

Clients who identify with spirituality/religion playing a significant role in their experience of life.

This research is to understand....

Clients who say spirituality/religion matter to them and inform their experiences in the world

And... who enter into a counseling process

In order to describe a theory of how the S/R for these clients interacts with their counseling process.

The role the S/R plays for clients throughout their Tx process is underrepresented
Need more understanding of this.

-> By understanding how IT functions in the therapy process...

- understand S/R clients' exp.
- clinically engage this layer of the tx process
- inform integration with counseling interaction/interventions

5/10/2016- Dissertation Meeting

Preparing for proposal meeting

- A. Sentence on "How" other articles fell short.
- B. Grand Research Question
- C. IRB Approval Notes
- D. "Typical Case Sampling" BETTER THAN TYPICAL - MIGHT BE 'BEING ABLE TO SPEAK TO THE PHENOMENON' THUS CLIENTS WHO HAVE INCLUDED SPIRITUALITY AND RELITGION IN THEIR COUNSELING - WHO ARE PROBABLY WITH COUNSELORS WHO ARE WILLING TO AND COMFORTABLE WITH THIS.
- E. Wording on Spiritual and Religious Beliefs and Practices
Proposal PowerPoint
Benefit from moderately narrow focus
Matrix Idea
"Christian Identifies"

	Explicit/Overt	Implicit/Covert
Impact		
No Impact		

[Change process that occurred during therapy]

[Spir/Rel played a role]

"was involved in" the holistic therapeutic process

Internal/external; in/out of session; positive and negative

Context:

In therapy (therapeutic process)

Process good

Spir helped

Want to know how

****Focus on Christian spirituality****

GRQ (**nail that**)

- -> "Typical" participant

- -> "Context"

Participants- essential to document

What drew the client to the counselor?

Participants may speak comparatively about different counselors/counseling exp.

Get info about how participants view themselves

[Censor]{Messing up what you really know?}

Interview questions

(1)

Your

(2) spirituality and religion in therapy (Big)

(3) Where or **HOW**

Add 4th

Add 5th

Can add question about the therapist- but later

How else was s/r involved in therapy process?

How did you experience your therapist (in relationship to your therapist?)

What else would you like to tell me about your therapeutic process

Craft [Screening questions]

Do they fit the description?

Been engaged in counseling?

Then [Contextual questions]

How would you identify your spiritual tradition (community)

How long in therapy?

What brought you?

Did S/R impact your selection of a counselor?

1 hour w/committee

Grad Rep is optional

Email ahead with powerpoint that narrows Ch. 1

20 slides or less

2 Weeks to read

Hire to transcribe?

Check with IRB

Trained transcriptionist

20 Minutes- \$5

Wednesday Evening

Pop issues

Buser- id as Counselors/Counselor Educators

Puckett- Couple's

Lietz- Combined recipients and providers

Email Deb:

- Context questions: in person or survey form?
- Finalize CRQ wording?

5/19/2016- Dissertation Process

Email with Deb, pre-proposal:

Questions for you:

- 1 For the context questions that I am collecting, will those be part of the interview or will this be done in written form? I took a stab at compiling the questions for that and put them into this Proposal document. **It can be done either way. It is best collected at the start of the interview and after informed consent.**
- 2 I am trying to nail down my wording on my CRQ- does this work? "How do clients experience their spirituality and religion during their counseling process?" I am trying to get away from the "beliefs and practices" terminology. **This works. I think it is necessary to delimit what you mean by 'during the counseling process' - something like 'during the counseling process' is defined as part of their purposeful use of counseling for change and symptom reduction. This may include experiences within the counseling session or experiences the participants consider within the counseling process but not within the counseling session such as experiences that occur while doing counseling homework, contemplating aspects of past counseling sessions, or thinking about future counseling sessions.**
Do I need to include a rationale for the sampling and recruiting- i.e. accessibility and targeting the experience in question? **Absolutely.**

5/24/2016- Dissertation Meeting

Johnny's SubQuestions

How do spiritual and religious clients experience their spirituality and religion during the counseling process:

1. How do SAR clients experience their SAR as a part of therapeutic change?
2. How do SAR clients experience their SAR in session
3. How do SAR clients experience their SAR as part of their counseling process outside of the session?
4. How do SAR clients experience their SAR in relationship to their counselor?
5. How do SAR clients describe the role of SAR in their counseling process.
- *6. What does SAR look like in the counseling process to the client?
- *7. What are the mechanisms by which SAR experiences affect the counseling process?
 - (a) How would you describe the role of spirituality and religion in your life?
 - (b) Describe how you experience spirituality and religion in your counseling.

(c) How were spirituality and religion involved in your counseling change process?

(d) How did you experience your counselor in relation to your spirituality and religion?

(e) What else would you like to tell me about spirituality and religion in your counseling process?

5/25/2016- Dissertation Process

Proposal Meeting with Committee

Appendix G

Metasynthesis Sample Coding

[How do clients describe their experience of addressing spirituality in their counseling process?]

reviewed the cross-analysis. Suggestions made by the auditor were discussed by the primary team and incorporated if agreed on by consensus judgment, resulting in a revised cross-analysis. The auditor also checked this revised cross-analysis.

Stability check. After the initial cross-analysis had been completed, the remaining two cases were added to assess whether the designations of general, typical, and variant (see later) changed and also to explore whether the team felt that new categories should be added to accommodate the cases. The remaining cases did not change the results meaningfully (i.e., no new categories were added), and thus the findings were deemed stable.

History (H)
Relational (R)
Internal (I)
Transcendent (T)
Invariant Qual.
(±Q)

Results

We first present findings that arose when clients talked broadly about their definitions and experiences of religion and spirituality in their lives and also in their therapy (see [Table I](#)).^(H) These findings create the necessary context within which readers may understand the subsequent, more central, results. However, because these broad findings were not the primary focus of the current study, we present them here in summary form and direct readers to [Table I](#) for the more detailed results.

Then we present fully the results that emerged from the study's central focus: clients' reports of specific instances of discussing religion-spirituality with a particular therapist (see [Table II](#)).^{(R)(I)(T)} Finally, we present illustrative examples to portray representative experiences of clients discussing religion-spirituality in therapy. Although we asked participants to define religion and spirituality early in the interview, other than in the definitional section, the results do not differentiate between these two constructs. We sought, therefore, to understand how clients defined these terms but then wanted them to respond to the questions in the way that was most relevant for them (i.e., whether in terms of religion or spirituality, or both); thus, we use the combined notation "religion-spirituality" for these results. Note that in order to protect the confidentiality of the one male participant, all client examples are referred to in feminine terms (i.e., she/her).

Change CRA?

Background information about religion and spirituality in clients' lives and therapies

These participants defined religion as an institution or organization with rules, traditions, and leaders; they defined spirituality as a personal connection with a force beyond the self, with God/divine, creativity, or good in the world. All performed religious or spiritual activities, and most found that religion-spirituality was an important part of their lives, one that contributed to their understanding of the world and of others. When religious or spiritual discussions emerged

out of the therapy process (i.e., participants seldom identified such issues as the reason for seeking therapy), they focused on existential questions or anger at God. Although the participants tended not to know their therapists' religious-spiritual beliefs, they found their therapists open to such discussions.

Specific discussion of religion-spirituality in therapy

In contrast to the previous results depicting clients' broad and contextual discussion of their experiences of religion and spirituality in their lives and in their therapy as a whole, the following results describe specific instances of clients actually discussing religious-spiritual topics with a particular therapist. As noted previously, the interviewers asked participants to describe three distinct therapy incidents: (a) a time when religious-spiritual topics were addressed in therapy that participants perceived to have been helpful, (b) a time when religious-spiritual topics were addressed in therapy that participants perceived to have been unhelpful, and (c) a time when participants considered but did not raise religious-spiritual topics in therapy. All participants responded to the first such event (i.e., helpful specific event; results are presented later). Six participants reported examples of the second type of event (i.e., unhelpful specific event). Only three participants, however, reported experiences of the last type of event (i.e., considered but did not raise religious-spiritual topics in therapy). As such, participants' descriptions of these events are summarized only. For the helpful events, categories are general if they apply to all cases, typical if they apply to at least half but not all cases, and variant if they apply to at least two but fewer than half of the cases. In the unhelpful events, general categories again apply to all cases, typical categories apply to at least half but not all cases, and variant categories apply to two cases. In both types of events, core ideas that fit for only one case were placed into the "other" category for that domain (and are not presented here).

Helpful specific event (N= 12) *Describe a positive side of the experience (CTA)*

Religious-spiritual topic addressed. Three variant categories emerged. First, clients reported that the religious-spiritual topic addressed in therapy focused on their existential (T) struggles. For instance, one client stated that, after the death of her husband, she felt that she was "walking around in love with a dead person" and wondered how she could still maintain a (CT) connection with her deceased husband and learn to love someone new. Another client (T)(CT) struggled with how to live her life more authentically in accordance with her Jewish faith. Clients also variantly discussed the support they experienced from their religious-spiritual community. When one client lost her home and broke her arm, her spiritual community helped her, evoking

(R)?

a greater sense of family than did her own biological family. Finally, clients variably discussed their use of religious-spiritual beliefs or practices as part of their therapy. Here, for instance, one client described her practice of meditation in her therapist's office.

Who raised topic. When these topics were addressed, typically it was clients who raised them. Variantly, however, clients reported that the topics were mutually raised by clients and therapists together, such as when a conversation about spirituality evolved out of a client and therapist's discussion of the movie *Shine*.

(H)
if presenting
relates to sp

How and why topic was addressed. According to the participants, these discussions typically arose because they were related to clients' presenting concerns. As one example, a client raised religious-spiritual topics when describing her difficult family situation and also when attempting to work through the pending loss of her elderly mother. Similarly, another client expressed to her therapist how difficult it was to pray because of the client's anger at God for making the client so ill. The therapist "picked up on [the client's anger] right away" and the client hoped the therapist could help her get back on a "spiritual path." Such discussions variantly arose out of conversations focused on clients' religious-spiritual community or practices, such as when a client told her therapist about the feelings the client experienced during Mass. (T)

When topic was addressed. Clients reported that all such discussions occurred less than one year into therapy, whether as part of an initial history taking, "fairly early on," or after only a few months of therapy.

Facilitating conditions for addressing topic. Typically, these discussions were facilitated by clients' perception of therapists as open, accepting, and safe. Here, for instance, one client stated that she raised spiritual issues because she felt "perfectly comfortable" doing so and felt that her therapist was respectful of religious-spiritual things. Another client indicated that her therapist seemed open and kind and, therefore, a safe person with whom to discuss such topics. Variantly, these discussions were facilitated by clients' perceptions that they shared similar religious-spiritual beliefs or experiences with their therapists. One client, for instance, stated that she felt her therapist understood her sense of "being outside," because both followed different non-Christian religions. Finally, clients reported that their therapists' sex (i.e., female) fostered such discussions, as noted by the client who stated that her therapist was a woman and seemed kind and thus eased such conversations. (R)

Outcome of discussion. The outcome of these discussions was typically positive. (A single participant categorized the incident overall as helpful but reported that the specific "conversation went well, to a point.") One client, for example, stated that her therapist did not

condemn the client for having hateful feelings toward the client's mother but instead indicated that she (the therapist) understood those feelings, a validation that allowed the client to feel safe to discuss other concerns as well. Similarly, another client reported that these discussions greatly affected the progress of her therapy, which she described as "the best [she] has ever done in therapy and in life."

Satisfaction with therapy. Expectedly, these clients were typically satisfied with the therapy as a whole, as epitomized by the client who stated that she was "extremely satisfied."

Unhelpful specific event (N=6)

Who raised topic. The participants reported that half of the time, religious-spiritual topics were raised by themselves, and half of the time by their therapists.

How discussion became unhelpful. These discussions typically became unhelpful when clients felt that their therapists were passing judgment or imposing their own beliefs on them. As an example, one client reported that her therapist told the client that she was "too Catholic," which made the client feel bad. Another client stated that, instead of addressing the client's presenting concerns (i.e., trauma inflicted by a previous therapist), her therapist made the client lie down on the floor so the therapist could read the client's "aura" and then told the client that she had "holes in her aura." A third client was told that because she had not embraced the religion of her birth, she could not expect spiritual help. *Judgement = (R)?*

imposition

How to make discussion less negative. When asked how the event could have been less negative, the clients variably indicated that if the therapists had not imposed their own values, the effect would have been less hurtful. One client, as an example, felt that her therapist should have been more accepting of the client's feeling that "the Jewish community of faith" was not the answer for her. Clients also variably stated that had therapists attempted to reduce the hierarchy in the therapy relationship and been more open with clients, such events would have been less negative. Here, for example, a client stated that had her therapist asked the client how therapy was proceeding, the client may have felt that her therapist indeed wanted to understand the client's religious-spiritual perspective. A second client indicated that had her therapist answered the client's question about whether the therapist believed in God, their discussion would have felt less negative. *(R) Self Disclosure*

*(R)
Therapist
approach*

*Bordin applied
to S/R*

When topic was addressed. These discussions typically occurred early in therapy, such as in the first session or "very early" in the therapy work.

Facilitating conditions. No facilitating conditions emerged in the unhelpful specific events.

Outcome of discussion. Not surprisingly, the outcome of all of these conversations was negative, wherein clients felt traumatized, confused, frustrated, stuck, angry, or judged. For example, one client indicated that after being told to lie down on the floor so her aura could be read, the client felt "used and completely disregarded"; this client made no more appointments with this therapist, did not see another therapist for a long time, and continued to feel hurt and furious about the event. A second client reported that she was made to feel that something was wrong with her because, as part of her spiritual activities, she wanted to help others instead of being more career focused. A third client "got real mad inside and left therapy" because she did not know what the therapist meant by the comment that the client was "too Catholic." (R) (I?)

Satisfaction with therapy. These clients were typically not satisfied with their therapy. One client, for instance, felt that her therapist had been negligent with her in making her do something she was not comfortable doing.

Considered raising, but decided not to raise, religion spirituality in psychotherapy (N=3)

These participants reported that they thought about raising religion-spirituality in their therapy because religion-spirituality was an important part of their lives but chose not to raise the topic because they felt uncomfortable doing so (i.e., one indicated that she felt discomfort because of "differences" between herself and her therapist, and another felt that her therapist would judge her religious-spiritual beliefs and find them "kooky"). The specific topics they considered raising involved a personal connection with God experienced during Mass and the numerous questions experienced when trying to understand religious-spiritual concepts. The effects of not discussing the religious-spiritual topics were negative (i.e., one participant indicated that she felt a barrier with her therapist that she had to "go around" and that by the time therapy ended, she was unable to discuss with her therapist any of the things that truly mattered to her). Only one participant offered any ideas as to how such a conversation might have been facilitated: had her therapist had a more open demeanor and been willing to listen and wonder with the client, she may have felt more comfortable broaching this topic. Finally, only one of the three participants who thought about but did not raise religion-spirituality in therapy reported being satisfied with her therapy and therapist.

Illustrative examples

We include here two examples, each from a different participant: an illustration of a discussion of religion-spirituality in therapy that the client considered to have been helpful and a discussion of religion-spirituality in therapy that the client considered to have been unhelpful.

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(R) ?
Judgement

(R) (I ?)
Fear
Judgement (I a ?)

Judgement and
fear of judgement

Rupture ?
Why would a
client continue
w/o being able
to discuss things
that matter to
them?

Exp. of therapy ?
Exp. of R/S ?

Experience
can be positive
or negative.

These examples were chosen because they were representative of the experiences clients described of helpful and unhelpful discussions of religion-spirituality. Each illustration has been slightly altered to maintain confidentiality.

In the first example involves "Gayle", a 42-year-old White woman who had been seeing her White female non-Christian therapist "on and off" for several years. Currently, Gayle was struggling with existential concerns that focused on her anger at God. As she told her therapist, she was having difficulty praying, or even thinking about God, because she was so ill (i.e., Gayle reported having a debilitating chronic disease). Additionally, she was angry at God but felt such emotions to be sacrilegious (i.e., "I can't be angry at God"). Gayle indicated that she revealed these feelings to her therapist in the hope that her therapist could help her "get back on the spiritual path." Gayle reported that she felt comfortable raising such concerns because she perceived a similarity between her own and her therapist's beliefs that made it easier for her to open up to her therapist. She also stated that, because her therapist was female, this made Gayle feel that she would understand women's issues, and this also facilitated the conversation. Gayle stated that the conversation went well and helped her realize that her anger was "okay ...it was okay to be angry at a time when [I] didn't think [I] could go on anymore." Gayle stated that she ("loves") her therapist and felt lucky to have her as a therapist.

(H) (±)(P)

(R)
Why is "loves"
in quotes?

In contrast, Barbara, a 35-year-old White woman, saw her White female non-Christian therapist for approximately 1 year after the death of her husband. Barbara reported that, after the death, she felt hopeless and broken and feared that she would never be able to love again. Early in her individual therapy, Barbara discussed the dynamics of the widow's support group she also attended, explaining that she felt out of place because she was much younger than the other women in the group. Additionally, she felt "condescension" because the other women would tell her that she was so young and pretty and would find someone else. As a result, she felt that her concerns were minimized, which "pissed her off." Barbara reported that her therapist intimated that Barbara's anger was inappropriate. Furthermore, Barbara's therapist said that because Barbara did not want to embrace her religion of birth as a way to work through her grief, she could not expect spiritual help with her loss and was, in effect, turning her back on this religion. Being told that she was "doing the grief wrong" was difficult for Barbara, who then started to avoid discussing spiritual topics at all in her therapy and instead talked about more trivial topics (e.g., "eating green vegetables"). The result of this discussion was that Barbara did not feel helped and instead felt stuck and "put some [other] stuff to the side that was important" to her. She added that the incident made the therapy relationship less rich and

Exp. of SR
NOT
Exp of addressing
in therapy

(R)
Judgment
Rupture
The invisible
rupture in therapy

full and also limited her perception of her therapist's ability to help her. In terms of satisfaction with therapy, Barbara acknowledged that she and her therapist "were not the best match." (R) Barbara felt that the incident could have been less negative had her therapist accepted that Barbara's religion of birth was not the answer for her and then pursued what might be suitable answers for Barbara's concerns.

Discussion

Background information about religion and spirituality in clients' lives and therapies

When defining religion, most of these White, largely female participants in secular therapy focused on institutional and organizational features, including rules, traditions, and leaders. Such a conceptualization is consistent with definitions proposed in the literature (e.g., Worthington, 1988). In their definition of spirituality, however, the respondents focused on a personal (i.e., noninstitutional) connection between self and forces beyond self (e.g., God, divine, creativity), again echoing other theorists' understandings of this construct (e.g., Dyson et al., 1997; Ingersoll, 1994). For these participants, then, religion was indeed construed as a perhaps more distant social construct, one that may provide a structure for spirituality, but one that seemed to lack the intimacy depicted in their definition of spirituality.

Whatever their definitions, all of these participants took part in religious-spiritual activities, and most acknowledged that such activities were an important part of their lives and facilitated their understanding of their world. Thus, it appears that, for this client sample, religion-spirituality played a central role in their existence, in some cases preventing them from "ending things," thereby supporting the assertion that religiosity may be more helpful than harmful in maintaining psychological well-being (Bergin, 1983; George et al., 2000; Kelly, 1995; McCullough et al., 2000; Rose et al., 2001).

When they discussed religion-spirituality in therapy, these respondents tended to focus on existential concerns (e.g., questions of meaning and purpose; anger at God) and less on any inherent connection between their religious-spiritual life and their presenting concerns. The religious-spiritual topics that arose usually emerged naturally out of the therapy process and were rarely identified by the participants as reasons unto themselves for seeking therapy, paralleling the finding of Goedde (2001). Once religion-spiritual topics entered the therapy room, most of these participants described their therapists, whose religious-spiritual beliefs were largely unknown to clients, as open to such conversations. Thus, these respondents' religious-spiritual discussions arose in the context of content commonly addressed in therapy (e.g.,

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Appendix H

Construct Quotation Chart

A Context

Beitel, et al., 2007	
(1)	"I guess I liked learning that everyone has a spiritual nature and that being an addict is just a pattern that you learn. Knowing that I can still change, that it can be done."
(2)	"Thirty-six percent of the sample reported that they liked the various concepts"
(3)	"We believe that our report suggests that it is indeed feasible to develop a manual-guided, spirituality-focused intervention for the treatment of addiction, based on Buddhist principles, that can be delivered to and accepted by predominantly Christian clients"
Buser, Goodrich, Luke & Buser, 2014	
(1)	"Specifically, Grace discussed this therapist's failure to address two issues: (a) the grief caused by loss of her Catholic religious identity; and (b) the pain caused by religious tenets. Grace referenced her desire for counseling to emphasize "mourning the loss of the religion of my youth and young adulthood."
(2)	"Ruth recalled two counseling experiences that she found beneficial due, in part, to her sense that the therapist shared her appreciation for the spiritual practices of 12-Step work for addictions."
(3)	"Participants, for example, discussed counselor avoidance of spiritual or religious issues in counseling, a lack of therapist perceived openness to spiritual/religious issues, therapist ignorance of religious theology, and a therapist failure to acknowledge the distress associated with a client's religious experiences."
(4)	"Like if I define myself as Catholic that I must think of myself as less than, and it's something I'm going to have to separate and get over because I will never be a full person if I ever see myself as identifying with this religion."

(5)	“Rather than actually talking about it she directed me to go meet with a pastor that I had never met with in the town. I thought I’m not going to go meet with some stranger about things that I’m not even comfortable talking about.”
(6)	“I do remember in my elementary years a guidance counselor in school. Of course their role was a lot different back then that it is now. . . . Probably the school guy wasn’t allowed to [address religious/spiritual/sexual identity themes], even if he was [open to it]...”
Cragun & Friedlander, 2012	
(1)	“Two subcategories emerged for preferred therapy content: therapist understanding of participants’ religious beliefs (variant) and more Christian content included in therapy (variant).”
(2)	“All of these participants indicated that talking about their faith (e.g., as a way of coping or as part of their identity) was highly important and contributed to their satisfaction with treatment.”
(3)	“included avoidance of religious/spiritual issues due to the therapists’ avoidance of such issues, due to fear of being judged or misunderstood for their religious beliefs, and uncertainty about whether the therapists would see religious matters as relevant to therapy.”
(4)	“I think that in psychology sometimes, people look down on faith and religion,”
(5)	“When I was growing up in my church and my best friend became pregnant when we were in high school. And how a lot of people in the church looked at me negatively after that.”
(6)	“Can she do that? Bring up God?”
(7)	““Because, you know, he never talked about it [client’s faith]. Maybe in his . . . maybe he wasn’t allowed to, I don’t know [laughs]. It did not seem to be a big part of his life or a part of his counseling.”
(8)	“Another participant (3) was unsure whether secular therapists were “allowed” to discuss faith.”

Gockel, 2011	
(1)	“The overarching theme that emerged from the analysis is that participants regarded spirituality as integral to an effective counseling relationship.”
(2)	“Because spirituality was so central to their experience of healing they could not conceptualize counseling as being effective without addressing this aspect of being.”
(3)	“Because participants regarded personal integration as synonymous with healing and as indicative of spirituality, and because they experienced growth in their own intra- and interpersonal skills through their process of drawing on spirituality for healing, they believed that a counselor’s capacity to be helpful was contingent on his or her own self-exploration and healing, and not just on his or her training.”
(4)	“Participants attributed a counselor’s distance or unavailability to professional training that teaches a counselor to screen the spiritual aspect of the self from their clients.”
(5)	“I don’t think without the spiritual realm that healing can take place, I think it’s so vital, it’s paramount that that aspect be there.”
(6)	“They commented on the importance of a counselor’s ability to step beyond what participants perceived as the formality of the clinical role...”
(7)	“When I went to see a counselor, often I saw the textbook approach that they went to [in] the counseling session.”
Goedde, 2000	
(1)	“I don’t want any association with religion...”
(2)	“I identify more as spiritual...”
(3)	“religion can be just a ritualistic matter if it doesn’t touch the heart of the person...”
Knox, Catlin, Casper & Schlosser, 2005	
(1)	“According to the participants, these discussions typically arose because they were related to clients’ presenting concerns.”

(2)	“Clients also variantly stated that had therapists attempted to reduce the hierarchy in the therapy relationship and been more open with clients, such events would have been less negative.”
(3)	“she perceived a similarity between her own and her therapist’s beliefs that made it easier for her to open up to her therapist.”
Koslander & Arvidsson, 2006	
(1)	“patients wish to have their spiritual needs addressed”
(2)	“they want nurses to bring up the subject in nursing care situations.”
(3)	“expectation that nurses should show an interest in talking about spirituality.”
(4)	“patients lack confidence in nurses with regard to discussing spirituality”
(5)	“This descriptive category stressed the notion that nurses avoid addressing patients’ spirituality and lack knowledge about the meaning of the spiritual dimension.”
Lietz & Hodge, 2013	
(1)	“both providers and clients felt that a client’s spirituality should be incorporated into substance abuse counseling as long as that process remains client directed and focused on the client’s personal spiritual beliefs, not the beliefs of the therapist.”
(2)	“That’s not what I came here for. I didn’t come here for spirituality, and it is something I didn’t want to deal with. I don’t believe in that and that’s that.”
(3)	“However, others responded by suggesting the solution of avoiding spirituality may also represent an imposition of beliefs because in this way, some clients’ beliefs are also not honored.”
Macmin & Foskett, 2004	
(1)	“Equally those who have power can and do ignore what they have to say.”
(2)	“Psychiatrists and clergy, for instance, can and do exert power over

	service users whether or not they talk, and if they speak honestly and indiscriminately they find little reassurance in the reactions they get.”
(3)	“the counsellor is perhaps uncertain.”
(4)	“I think I get more out of telling users because they don’t draw conclusions”
(5)	“(suffering)”
(6)	“I’ve told him I don’t like talking about Jesus and God and things like that and he doesn’t talk to me about it.”
(7)	“My community nurse is aware I use church regularly and that religion is important to me.”
Puckett, 2012	
(1)	“I don’t feel like its being left out or being ignored. It just isn’t a topic that needs to be addressed because it’s not prevalent enough in our lives. It doesn’t need to be factored in and it isn’t an issue.”
(2)	“I mean I think when people are in therapy and they are trying to work through their issues and they know there is something in regards to their spirituality that is an issue, then it should be a part of therapy. I think just like in therapy people talk about other issues that might be taboo at a dinner table like sex and other things like that, religion is usually on that list of things you don’t talk about, right?”
(3)	“While spirituality may or may not be explicitly addressed, there is also the possibility of clients implicitly viewing therapy as a spiritual process.”
(4)	“Yeah, if it was important or if we had an issue relating to it, I don’t think we would have a problem at all.”
(5)	“In addition to encouraging the therapist to understand the client’s spiritual history, it is also important for the therapist to help couples to be aware of their partner’s spiritual history.”
(6)	“I wasn’t raised in religion so I’m trying to figure out what I want to pursue and what I don’t.”

Starnino, 2014	
(1)	“All participants spoke positively of providers who listened deeply to their spiritual issues, including beliefs that seem unfamiliar or different to the provider.”
(2)	“Nearly half of study participants stressed the need for practitioners to be open to discussing clients’ spiritual challenges (e.g., spirituality and symptoms intersecting).”
(3)	“Andrea reported finding her therapist’s advice helpful despite not sharing the same spiritual tradition—the therapist was Jewish, while Andrea was a practicing Catholic.”

A Fear

Beitel, et al., 2007	
	N/A
Buser, Goodrich, Luke & Buser, 2014	
(1)	“Participants, for example, discussed counselor avoidance of spiritual or religious issues in counseling, a lack of therapist perceived openness to spiritual/religious issues, therapist ignorance of religious theology, and a therapist failure to acknowledge the distress associated with a client’s religious experiences.”
(2)	“It felt invalidating.”
(3)	“There was a tinge of judgment”
Cragun & Friedlander, 2012	
(1)	“One participant explained that she felt embarrassed discussing religious issues with her therapist because of her awareness of Christian stereotypes.”
(2)	“I think that in psychology sometimes, people look down on faith and religion,”
(3)	“Do you ever think that Christianity is part of the problem or contributing to your depression?” And I was like, “What do you mean?” And she was like, “Well, sometimes fundamental Christians

	have all these rules to follow, and we can never measure up to that. Is that part of the problem?"
(4)	"Then I said, "Well, sometimes I don't feel like I am a good enough Christian or that God is angry with me." That was my way of testing the waters to see what she would say."
(5)	"I think the nonjudgmental attitude...And I never felt like she was putting down my beliefs or criticizing."
(6)	"I felt like when I was in session with him, I didn't feel like he was judging me for what I believed in."
(7)	"this client reported that her therapist was "talking at me, judging me, and not respecting me."
(8)	"So I was bracing myself for, okay, is she going to go off on a tangent on how bad this is? I worried if she would throw it off and say, "It's no big deal. You don't need to feel guilty about that. That is ridiculous for you to feel that way."
(9)	"there is a little bit of risk to expose that part of your person."
(10)	"participant stated that he was reluctant to discuss a particular struggle he was having because he was unsure whether his therapist's values and morals would match his own"
(11)	"So feeling a little bit more vulnerable sharing that information because a lot of times when people hear fundamental, they stiffen up and they cringe a little bit."
(12)	"Some participants also indicated being hesitant to bring up religious issues for fear that therapists would overfocus on negative aspects of Christianity or minimize their religious concerns."
Gockel, 2011	
(1)	"Sigrid contrasted the "average counselor who has certain techniques that they learn" with counselors who "can actually get onto my wavelength, who can actually tune into me."
(2)	"Participants associated a counselor's ability to "tune into" them

	with interpersonal qualities including warmth, empathy, openness, acceptance, and genuineness.”
(3)	“The unconditional love that participants felt from facilitative counselors mirrored the love they felt in connecting with their spirituality.”
(4)	“I think that they demonstrated to me that place [the spiritual place], they made me feel safe, really safe and they encouraged me to think beyond the box I was living in . . .”
(5)	“found their counselor’s responsiveness and sensitivity to spiritual issues, concepts, and experiences to be essential to their healing.”
(6)	“Many participants talked about the stigma associated with their spiritual beliefs, saying they feared that if they shared their beliefs with others they would be considered “crazy,” “woo-woo,” or “out there.”
Goedde, 2000	
(1)	“So in the first instance I just had an inner prohibition about speaking about spiritual things, I think some things I shared with you here she would have thought ‘oh how silly or unimportant.”
(2)	“I guess there is still the fear of judgment.”
(3)	“when I told her I was an intuitive and that I can read people’s auras her whole body just went into fear, and I thought who is going to be the doctor and who is going to be the patient, because all of the sudden the roles were switching.”
(4)	“in a non-judgemental way”
Knox, Catlin, Casper & Schlosser, 2005	
(1)	“These discussions typically became unhelpful when clients felt that their therapists were passing judgment or imposing their own beliefs on them.”
(2)	“Typically, these discussions were facilitated by clients’ perception of therapists as open, accepting, and safe.”
(3)	“Being told that she was “doing the grief wrong” was difficult for Barbara, who then started to avoid discussing spiritual topics at all

	in her therapy and instead talked about more trivial topics (e.g., “eating green vegetables”).”
(4)	“a validation that allowed the client to feel safe to discuss other concerns as well.”
(5)	“As an example, one client reported that her therapist told the client that she was “too Catholic,” which made the client feel bad.”
(6)	“A second client reported that she was made to feel that something was wrong with her because, as part of her spiritual activities, she wanted to help others instead of being more career focused.”
(7)	“one indicated that she felt discomfort because of “differences” between herself and her therapist, and another felt that her therapist would judge her religious-spiritual beliefs and find them “kooky”).”
Koslander & Arvidsson, 2006	
(1)	“Nurses must be open to all ideas that spirituality can entail, and it is their duty to become involved in patients’ spirituality, without stipulating what spirituality may be and without regard to what spirituality may mean to the nurses themselves”
Lietz & Hodge, 2013	
(1)	““I just want to know that I am going to be understood and respected for my own beliefs.”
(2)	“One participant responded to this exchange stating, “So I am getting that imposition of beliefs . . . is a no-no.”
Macmin & Foskett, 2004	
(1)	““Don’t be afraid to talk’ is a worthy admonition to people with mental health problems, but fear is not dispelled that easily as the interviewees told us in any number of ways.”
(2)	“Psychiatrists and clergy, for instance, can and do exert power over service users whether or not they talk, and if they speak honestly and indiscriminately they find little reassurance in...”
(3)	“services which have no access to religious and spiritual resources, effectively frustrated the search for meaning and the recovery

	which it could bring.”
(4)	“Talking did work and bore fruit when listeners empathized and did not judge.”
(5)	“If I could talk about my experience without fear of being judged or them opposing fundamentally ideas or 229abeling or whatever.”
(6)	“you have to be very careful you’re not condemned for what you believe by the professionals”
Puckett, 2012	
(1)	“One participant expressed hesitation regarding the inclusion of spirituality in therapy because of her fear of being directed on specific spiritual practices...”
(2)	“Spirituality is often surrounded by a societal sensitivity and uneasiness.”
(3)	“I mean, I’ve got friends that I don’t talk about it [spirituality] with. Just because I know, you know, I know some people I can talk about it with and say my opinion and they’re fine with it, but you know, other people, you know it could, you know they’re not ready or willing to listen to certain things.”
Starnino, 2014	
(1)	“I trusted my new social worker enough that I could bring it up to her”
(2)	“Many people don’t realize how devastating it is to be told that that’s not real, that that’s fantasy....”
(3)	“Most participants recommended that providers be cautious about making assumptions that a person’s spiritual experiences stem from pathology.”

A Freedom

Beitel, et al., 2007	
(1)	“I like the beginning, the meditation part, 5 minutes. That puts me relaxed, calm. I can come in angry, have something on my mind, after that meditation, it’s like I’m in the room. I don’t have nothing

	else in my mind but in the room.”
Buser, Goodrich, Luke & Buser, 2014	
(1)	“The vast majority of participants had an experience with counselors whom they perceived, in some way, as being unable to help explore or reconcile their sexual/gender and/or religious/spiritual identities.”
(2)	“Zach discussed an experience wherein his therapist seemed to disparage his religious affiliation with Catholicism,”
(3)	“her therapist failed to understand her emotional tie to certain theological tenets of her religion,”
(4)	“Participants, for example, discussed counselor avoidance of spiritual or religious issues in counseling, a lack of therapist perceived openness to spiritual/religious issues,...,and a therapist failure to acknowledge the distress associated with a client’s religious experiences.”
(5)	“I felt her support. I felt her just by the affirming language, yes and nodding and reflecting, I just felt supported. She seemed nonjudgmental about anything that was coming out of my mouth.” Participants also recognized the sense of freedom they felt around their helpful counseling experiences. Mary noted that she felt “free” to discuss issues around spirituality in counseling
(6)	Ruth commenting similarly, “It’s really very liberating. I tie that directly to spiritual growth and recovery work, but also the therapist. . . . His familiarity with those issues seemed to give me freedom.”
Cragun & Friedlander, 2012	
(1)	“she felt free to talk about her faith”
(2)	“And I felt like every week we were talking about something trippy spiritual, and I am not going to be in the mood every week. Let’s just talk in the natural.”
(3)	“I guess if she would have brought up God, I would have elaborated a little I think. Yeah, had she brought up God, I probably would have talked about it a little and maybe even she could have used it to try to help myself.”

Gockel, 2011	
(1)	“as a larger soul or spirit extending beyond the limitations of their circumstances, personality, and struggles, whether or not they explicitly used spiritual language or concepts.”
(2)	“He sort of validated, I don’t know, maybe, my soul. . . . He kind of validated that actually he could see me, and saw some stuff that he could only see if he saw me, right?”
(3)	“she was open to everything, . . . she wasn’t afraid to share that she believed that there was more to life, and she wasn’t afraid to give a little of herself.”
(4)	“Participants believed that a counselor’s capacity to hold them in this larger perspective facilitated their own experience of their spirituality and helped them further tap into this dimension of the self for healing.”
Goedde, 2000	
(1)	“I thought as far as spirituality goes he was a good listener, I think that’s very important, and for me just to know that I was being heard and understood was very empowering and is still empowering for me to this day.”
(2)	“the fact that she used what I brought in to her and then gave me more information (about spirituality) was very validating...”
(3)	“when it was appropriate I felt seen, understood, cared for, validated because in their disclosure they were with me, not judging me...”
Knox, Catlin, Casper & Schlosser, 2005	
(1)	“For example, one client indicated that after being told to lie down on the floor so her aura could be read, the client felt “used and completely disregarded”
(2)	“hoped the therapist could help her get back on a “spiritual path.””
(3)	“Gayle stated that she “loves” her therapist and felt lucky to have her as a therapist.”
(4)	“Another client stated that, instead of addressing the client’s

	presenting concerns (i.e., trauma inflicted by a previous therapist), her therapist made the client lie down on the floor so the therapist could read the client's "aura" and then told the client that she had "holes in her aura."
(5)	"one participant indicated that she felt a barrier with her therapist that she had to "go around" and that by the time therapy ended, she was unable to discuss with her therapist any of the things that truly mattered to her"
Koslander & Arvidsson, 2006	
(1)	"they don't understand the importance of spirituality...they don't understand the feeling that I can be sad."
(2)	"it feels good when they show that they are interested in how I'm thinking about spiritual things..."
Lietz & Hodge, 2013	
(1)	"As long as it is really open, that people can believe in their higher power and that their higher power can be anything they want. It needs to be really open, not that something is slammed down your throat."
Macmin & Foskett, 2004	
(1)	"The search for safety and security and the small comfort that it could bring led people beyond words to places and spaces."
(2)	"The searcher needs space, time and encouragement to begin the search."
(3)	"Professionals who allowed themselves to take the risk of really entering the world of the other person. Identifying with their ideas and even their very bizarre visions allowing themselves, you know, really to empathize"
Puckett, 2012	
(1)	"I think just like in therapy people talk about other issues that might be taboo at a dinner table like sex and other things like that, religion is usually on that list of things you don't talk about, right? In therapy it's different because that's probably the best time or the most appropriate time to have those discussions."

(2)	“One participant described her and her partner’s level of comfort with the therapist regarding spiritual discussions when she explained, “Yeah, if it was important or if we had an issue relating to it, I don’t think we would have a problem at all.”
(3)	“It had to be pertinent to what we were talking about but it wasn’t uncomfortable talking about it at all because it, it was it was something we needed to talk about.”
(4)	“I was comfortable telling [the therapist] my beliefs.”
Starnino, 2014	
(1)	“because it is a very big part of people....It’s their core.”
(2)	“Frank believed that his provider listened poorly because the provider made little effort to extend the conversation.”
(3)	“Frank viewed his provider as disinterested, and this made it difficult for him to have the deeper level conversation that he desired.”
(4)	“Sandy interpreted the provider’s actions as a sign of deep caring: “It made me feel loved that somebody cared that much to come over and help me get rid of a ghost problem.”

A Personal Expression

Beitel, et al., 2007	
(1)	“One client stated the outcome very succinctly: “I feel more whole.” Another commented that she felt “more in control and peaceful.””
(2)	“I like the beginning, the meditation part, 5 minutes. That puts me relaxed, calm. I can come in angry, have something on my mind, after that meditation, it’s like I’m in the room. I don’t have nothing else in my mind but in the room.”
(3)	“I guess I liked learning that everyone has a spiritual nature and that being an addict is just a pattern that you learn. Knowing that I can still change, that it can be done.””
Buser, Goodrich, Luke & Buser, 2014	
(1)	“I felt her support. I felt her just by the affirming language, yes and

	<p>nodding and reflecting, I just felt supported. She seemed nonjudgmental about anything that was coming out of my mouth.” Participants also recognized the sense of freedom they felt around their helpful counseling experiences. Mary noted that she felt “free” to discuss issues around spirituality in counseling, with Ruth commenting similarly, “It’s really very liberating. I tie that directly to spiritual growth and recovery work, but also the therapist. . . . His familiarity with those issues seemed to give me freedom.”</p>
(2)	<p>“I think she really missed the boat in terms of how I define myself and how I practice that.”</p>
(3)	<p>“Like if I define myself as Catholic that I must think of myself as less than, and it’s something I’m going to have to separate and get over because I will never be a full person if I ever see myself as identifying with this religion.”</p>
(4)	<p>“her therapist failed to understand her emotional tie to certain theological tenets of her religion”</p>
<p>Cragun & Friedlander, 2012</p>	
(1)	<p>“One participant (2) reported feeling that her Christian beliefs were misunderstood and not appreciated.”</p>
(2)	<p>“Participants also reported appreciating the therapist’s genuine desire to understand their faith.”</p>
(3)	<p>“Had he been a Christian counselor, I felt like he would have prayed with me and that would have given me a lot of comfort.”</p>
(4)	<p>“She treaded very gently. She did what most therapists do—which is, you know, let the patient do the talking and let the patient teach you. She would ask me questions like . . . I believe in speaking in tongues, and at one point it came up, I don’t know how, and I told her what that means. And one thing that came up over and over again was going up to the altar at church and praying. And she didn’t understand that at all, so I had to break it down for her and tell her why that was important and why that was emotional for me.”</p>
(5)	<p>“The imagery part was something that she initiated, and it was my own way to define it. So someone else might imagine Buddha or some compassionate being. But she talked about, when you</p>

	envision unconditional love, or when you envision this caring, loving all knowledgeable presence. . . . For me, that was Christ and for someone else that might be something else. So in a general way, she initiated it, but the specific Christian application came from me.”
(6)	“This is something else that makes me believe that maybe she didn’t really understand Christianity. She never once mentioned the forgiveness of God for making a mistake and being washed in the blood.”
Gockel, 2011	
(1)	“Participants regarded spirituality as a quality intrinsic to the self, which they described as consisting of an array of interwoven beliefs, feelings, practices, and experiences that they drew upon to make meaning of their daily experiences and guide their choices. Within this broader context, participants held diverse beliefs regarding their specific spiritual cosmology. Some believed in a transcendent deity called God, or sometimes higher power; others saw spirit as a greater force in nature and in the individual, sometimes referred to as a soul or higher self.”
(2)	“Participants understood healing as a process of aligning the mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual aspects of the self into an integrated whole. They believed that problems developed from interrelated patterns of beliefs, emotions, and behaviors that were acquired and practiced over time, interrupting the natural balance and alignment of the different aspects of the self.”
(3)	“Participants viewed counseling as an extension of their spiritual practices. By being fully present to witness their experience with warmth and acceptance, a counselor could create a relationship that mirrored the connection participants established with God, or another spiritual object within the self. Not only was the act of being witnessed in this way intrinsically healing for participants, counseling also provided them with a new perspective on themselves and their problems. They compared counseling to the process of meditation or other spiritual practices, which helped them begin to identify and shift the patterns of thought, feeling, and behavior that contributed to their difficulties.”
(4)	“Participants valued the services of counselors who were able to help them interpret, draw upon, and integrate their spiritual beliefs and experiences to promote the resolution of their difficulties.”

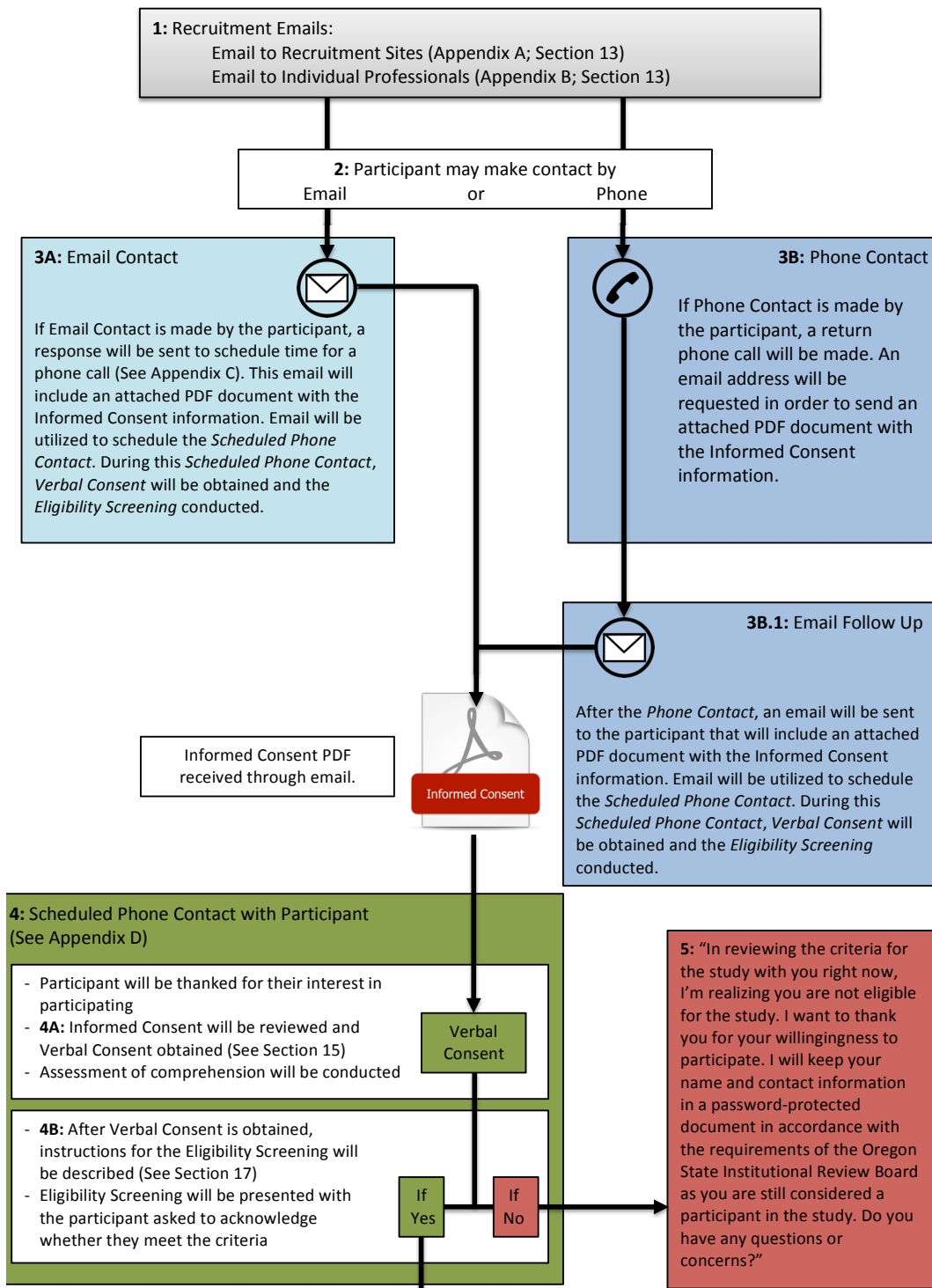
(5)	“... He gave me my sense of purpose of being, that it was okay to be me in that aspect of, not normal, of the unreal world, or the unseen world is part of my life, and it’s very much part of my life.”
(6)	“They used a variety of traditional and nontraditional spiritual practices such as prayer, meditation, spiritual reading, rituals, visualization, service attendance, art, music, and energy work to develop a felt connection with their spirituality that they found intrinsically healing.”
(7)	“Although these qualities have long been associated both theoretically and empirically with effective counseling (Lambert & Barley, 2002; Wampold, 2001), what is new is that participants conceptualized these qualities specifically as spiritual qualities.”
(8)	“He sort of validated, I don’t know, maybe, my soul. . . . He kind of validated that actually he could see me, and saw some stuff that he could only see if he saw me, right?”
(9)	“For example, one participant used the services of a medium to address her grief over the death of a child; another drew on images of Mary and Jesus to help her cope with witnessing her son’s death. Participants stated that counselors who they found helpful were able to understand and normalize their beliefs and practices as part of healthy spiritual coping, rather than pathologizing their beliefs and experiences as abhorrent or unhealthy.”
Goedde, 2000	
(1)	“Another participant M. perceives the spiritual dimension as so integral to her life that she refers to it as the “air you breathe” and as being life itself.”
(2)	“For one woman (M), God is understood within a pantheistic framework.”
(3)	“I guess for me my higher power is God, but it’s the God of my understanding which is not really according to the Bible.”
(4)	“I define spirituality as having a personal relationship with God.”
(5)	“You cannot separate the mind from the spirit.”
Knox, Catlin, Casper & Schlosser, 2005	

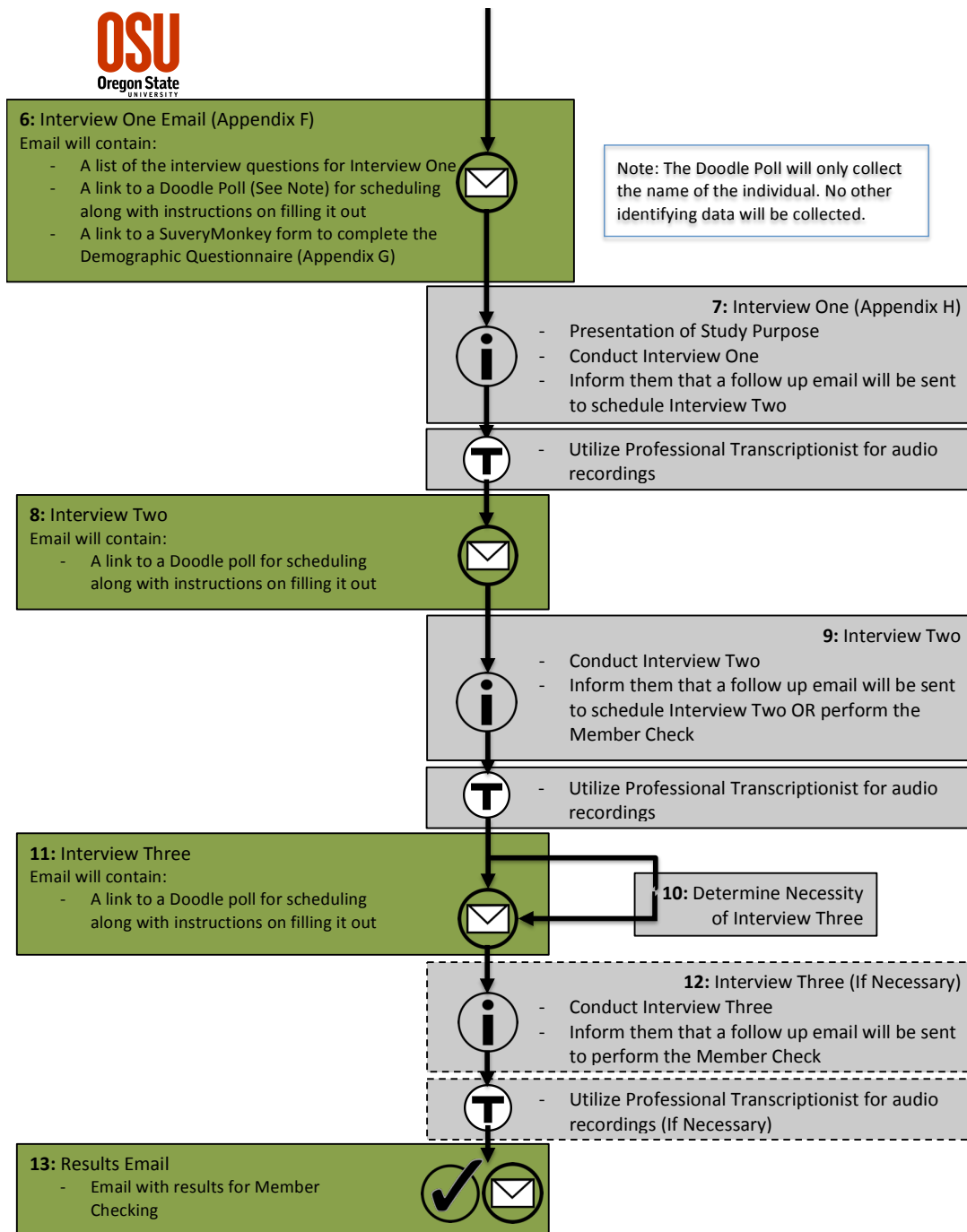
(1)	"Gayle stated that she "loves" her therapist and felt lucky to have her as a therapist."
(2)	"A third client "got real mad inside and left therapy" because she did not know what the therapist meant by the comment that the client was "too Catholic."
(3)	"Another client struggled with how to live her life more authentically in accordance with her Jewish faith."
(4)	"One client, for instance, stated that she felt her therapist understood her sense of "being outside," because both followed different non-Christian religions."
Koslander & Arvidsson, 2006	
(1)	"such things...it's like they don't care about my spirituality."
(2)	"I want to talk about it...I think it's very important to figure it out. I feel that if I got help from the nurse, then she would understand what I mean with my thoughts and experiences...and then maybe I would get a better understanding of my spiritual life and feel better."
(3)	"I want to talk about the meaning of life...Nurses associate spirituality with Christianity...(it is) hard to talk about this."
(4)	"Sometimes when it feels hard and I can't talk to anyone about my thoughts...I listen to music....read the bible or other books...walk in the forest...think a lot about spirituality, but it usually clears up after a little while."
Lietz & Hodge, 2013	
(1)	"participants felt it was critical that communities offer a variety of program choices that can remain responsive to diverse spiritual preferences."
Macmin & Foskett, 2004	
(1)	"The community nurse was terrific. Although he was not a Christian, he asked me very very pertinent questions about how I could reconcile my faith with what was happening to me and what God meant to me. . ."

(2)	“To invalidate a person’s spirituality no matter how distorted it is, is to invalidate the real core sense of self and I think that once you do that you risk doing untold damage to somebody”
(3)	“When I used to be very bad or depressed just going to a church would make all the difference to me. . . So having a room, having access to the Bible was important to me”
(4)	“I have a strong and almost ‘physical feeling’ from places. . . certain places, special places. . . going back to ancient times”
Puckett, 2012	
(1)	“Just the belief in something bigger. It’s you know, that there’s a God or a lot of other religions say there are a lot of different gods. Or even something like karma or something like that. Just something bigger. I don’t think you have to be religious or be in a certain religion to be spiritual.”
(2)	“spirituality to me is not necessarily going to church or listening to a preacher tell you what he thinks.”
Starnino, 2014	
(1)	“It was especially important for Candice to feel listened to by her provider because her recovery was tied closely to her spiritual beliefs.”
(2)	“Participants reported benefiting from providers who used more directive strategies, including recommending spiritual readings, offering spiritually related advice, and participating in a healing ceremony with a client.”
(3)	“Sandy interpreted the provider’s actions as a sign of deep caring: “It made me feel loved that somebody cared that much to come over and help me get rid of a ghost problem.”
(4)	“She eventually developed an interest in a personalized form of spirituality that included belief in “energy” and “spirits,” as well as Tarot card practice.”

Appendix I

Research Process Diagram





Appendix J

Research Timeline

5/2015

Began metasynthesis research

- Location of Articles
- Development of Evaluation Criteria
- Development of Exclusion/Inclusion Criteria
- Development of Synthesis Procedure based on Moustakas
- Development of phenomenological metasynthesis of included articles

2/2016

Draft of Chapter 2

4/2016

Preparations for Proposal

Draft of Chapter 1

Revisions of Chapter 2

Preparations for Chapter 3

5/2016

Final preparations for Proposal

Identification of Grounded Theory as suitable methodology

Refinement of Grand Research Question for Chapter 3

Development of Interview Questions

5/25/2016

Proposal meeting and approval

8/2016

Submission of research documents to IRB

12/2016

Approval of research proposal from IRB

Began participant recruitment

1/2017

Began scheduling interviews with participants

Conducted interviews with participants

2/2017

IRB revision for inclusion of transcriptionist

Transcription of interviews

3/2017

Began analysis of interviews
Listening to interviews
Reading transcripts
Began coding process

8/2017

Began development of second round interview questions

9/2017

Submission to IRB for approval of second round revisions
Approval from IRB

10/2017

Scheduled second interview with participants
Conducted second interview with participants
Transcribed interviews of participants

11/2017

Began analysis of second round transcripts

7/2018

Finalized analysis
Compiled remainder of dissertation

8/2018

Dissertation editing

8/30/2018

Dissertation defense

Appendix N

Recruitment Letter of Introduction to Licensed Counselors



Dear [Licensed Counselor],

My name is Johnny LaLonde. I am a doctoral candidate in Counselor Education and Supervision at Oregon State University. I am in the process of recruiting participants for a grounded theory study on to understand the role of spirituality and religion within the counseling process for spiritual and religious clients engaged in counseling with a counselor working in private practice. This study is being conducted in accordance with the dissertation/thesis qualifications as set forth by Oregon State University. I am under the supervision of Dr. Deborah Rubel, Ph.D., Associate Professor, who serves as my dissertation chair.

Due to your ability to access counseling clients, I would like to ask for your help in the recruitment of participants for my research study. The criteria for participation are as follows:

- Must be over the age of 18;
- Must have attended counseling with a licensed counselor for a minimum of 6 months;
- Must identify as spiritual and/or religious.

If you know any individuals who meet the above criteria, I would appreciate it if you would give them the information I have attached. This information includes an invitation to participate/ letter of introduction and a participant verbal consent form, which further explains the research study. Please indicate to the prospective participant that participation is strictly voluntary, and if interested he or she may contact me directly. By contacting me directly, the risk of breach in confidentiality will be minimized and other individuals will have no knowledge of their participation in the research study. My email address is lalondej@oregonstate.edu. Participants may also contact the principal investigator, Deborah Rubel, Ph.D. at deborah.rubel@oregonstate.edu.

The title of the study is: "A Grounded Theory Study of How Clients Experience Their Spiritual and Religious Beliefs and Practices During the Counseling Process."

The research design and method for this investigation is a qualitative, grounded theory study. Participating in this research study will involve an initial interview that will take 45 minutes, and two follow-up interviews of similar length. In the

interviews, participants will be asked some questions about their personal backgrounds, but mainly about the experiences of spirituality and religion in counseling. The interviews will be conducted by phone, and in total take approximately three hours of the participant's time. The study itself will span no more than five months.

I appreciate your help with this research, which will add to the body of literature related to spirituality and religion in counseling.

Thank you in advance for your support and assistance.

Sincerely,

Johnny LaLonde, M.A.
Oregon State University PhD Candidate

Appendix K

Email Invitation to Participate in Study



Dear Potential Participant,

My name is Johnny LaLonde. I am a doctoral candidate in Counselor Education and Supervision at Oregon State University. I am conducting a study entitled: "A Grounded Theory Study of How Clients Experience Their Spiritual and Religious Beliefs and Practices During the Counseling Process." You may be eligible to participate in this study, if you choose. Participating in this research study is strictly voluntary and, if you qualify, it is up to you to decide if you would like to participate. If you believe that you qualify and desire to be a part of this study, please contact me, the student researcher, directly.

Briefly, to be eligible for this study you:

- Must be over the age of 18;
- Must have attended counseling with a licensed counselor for a minimum of 6 months;
- Must identify as spiritual and/or religious.

As stated previously, participation is strictly voluntary. If you are interested you may contact the student researcher, Johnny LaLonde, M.A., directly via email at lalondej@oregonstate.edu or by calling me at my direct phone number, (407)921-6465. Please include phone contact information so that I might contact you to set up an initial screening conversation. During the initial screening, you will also have the opportunity to ask questions about the research. You may also contact the principle investigator, Deborah Rubel, Ph.D. at deborah.rubel@oregonstate.edu or by direct phone at (541)737-5973.

Thank you,

Johnny LaLonde, M.A.
Oregon State University PhD Candidate

Appendix L

Initial Contact with Potential Participants Script



Dear Potential Participants:

This initial screening will begin by reviewing the eligibility criteria. In order to be eligible you:

- Must be over the age of 18;
- Must have attended counseling with a licensed counselor for a minimum of 6 months;
- Must identify as spiritual and/or religious.
- Must identify as having experienced spirituality and religion as having an impact on their change process during counseling.

After reading the criteria for participation, are you still interested in being considered for this study?

- If no, thank you for your time and I will destroy what information I have, i.e. name and contact information.
- If yes, I will review the Verbal Consent Guide with you now.

Thank you for consenting to participate in this study, I will now review the criteria again, to establish your eligibility:

- Must be over the age of 18;
- Must have attended counseling with a licensed counselor for a minimum of 6 months;
- Must identify as spiritual and/or religious.

If you answered yes to the above questions, we would like your assistance.

Under the supervision of Dr. Deborah Rubel, I (Johnny LaLonde) am recruiting who have attended individual counseling for a minimum of six months and consider yourself to be a spiritual and/or religious person. The purpose of this grounded theory study is to understand the role of spirituality and religion within the counseling process for spiritual and religious clients engaged in counseling with a counselor working in private practice. The role of spirituality and religion is generally defined as the contributions made by the spiritual and religious experiences of the client to the counseling process. This study is titled, "A Grounded Theory Study of How Clients Experience Their Spiritual and Religious Beliefs and Practices During the Counseling Process."

For this study, you will be asked to participate in three rounds of interviews. Each interview will be approximately 45 minutes and will take place on a dates and times convenient to you. The total expected time commitment if you agree to participate in this study will be approximately three hours.

- What questions can I answer for you?
- So that I am sure that you understand what the study involves, would you please tell me what you think I am asking you to do?
- In your own words, can you tell me what the biggest risk might be if you enroll in this study?

Please do not hesitate to contact either one of us should you have any questions.

Johnny LaLonde– Student Researcher

Email: lalondej@oregonstate.edu

Telephone: (407)921-6465

Deborah J. Rubel, Ph.D. – Principal Investigator

Email: deborah.rubel@oregonstate.edu

Telephone: (541)737-5973

Appendix M

Verbal Consent Guide



Purpose. The purpose of this grounded theory study is to understand the role of spirituality and religion within the counseling process for spiritual and religious clients engaged in counseling with a counselor working in private practice. The role of spirituality and religion is generally defined as the contributions made by the spiritual and religious experiences of the client to the counseling process.

There is a lack of knowledge in the counseling field on the role of spirituality and religion in the counseling process. More research is needed which focuses on this process for spiritual and religious clients. This research aims to address this lack of knowledge by developing a theory grounded in the experiences and descriptions of clients. This theory will help to understand the process at work at the intersection of the counseling process with spirituality and religion.

This study is being conducted by a student for the completion of a dissertation and will include interviews with up to ten participants.

Activities. Participating in this study will involve three rounds of interviews that will take approximately 45 minutes each. In the interviews, you will be asked some questions about your personal history, but mainly about the experiences of spirituality and religion in counseling. A member check will be conducted by email after all three interviews have been done, data has been analyzed and a theory has emerged. This will be an opportunity to provide feedback about whether your respective views, feelings and experiences are represented in the theory. You will have seven days to provide this feedback.

The interviews will take place by phone or in person on a date and time that is convenient for you and your total time commitment to the study will be approximately three hours. The study will last no more than five months. All interviewing sessions will be audio recorded. Once the interviews are transcribed and checked for accuracy, the recordings will be destroyed.

You are advised to not enroll in this study if you do not want to be recorded. A copy of the interview transcript, with all identifying information removed will be emailed to you. This will be an opportunity for you to make comments, corrections, or remove any information you feel may identify you. You will have four days to let me know by email, any comments you have or changes you would like made. All

information gathered in this study will be confidentially stored at OSU for at least three years.

Risks. The interviews will cause no physical or economic risk to you. The interviews are confidential and the information gained in the interviews will be reported in a way that minimizes risk of you being identified. However, there is always a small chance that something accidental could risk confidentiality.

The greatest possible risk may be psychological. This study requires a level of self-awareness and reflection. Feeling extremely emotional is very unlikely. As a counselor, I am trained to process emotional reactions and decide if there is a need to refer to an expert or to stop our interview. The interview questions will be general and auto-biographical. Because of this, you are not likely to feel distressed.

Benefits. There are no known direct benefits to you in participating in this study. Your participation will help to contribute to the professions of counseling, and counselor education and supervision. You will also be contributing to the body of knowledge about the role of spirituality and religion within the counseling process for spiritual and religious clients engaged in counseling with a counselor working in private practice. Understanding this process will deepen the professional understanding of the worldview of spiritual and religious clients.

Voluntariness. Participation in this study is up to you. This study is unrelated to your relationship with your individual counselor. If you decide to participate, you are free to stop at any time without penalty. You will not be treated differently if you decide to stop being a part of the study. Choosing or not choosing to be in this study will not in any way impact your relationship with your counselor. If you choose to withdraw from this project before it ends, the researchers may keep information collected about you. This information may be included in study reports.

Contact information. If you have any questions about this project, please contact the student researcher, Johnny LaLonde, at (407)921-6465. Email: lalondej@oregonstate.edu. You may also choose to contact the primary investigator, Deborah J. Rubel, Ph.D. at: (541)737-5973. Email: deborah.rubel@oregonstate.edu. If you have questions about your rights or welfare as a participant, please contact the Oregon State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Office, at (541) 737-8008 or by email at IRB@oregonstate.edu

Sponsor. There is no sponsor

Office of the Institutional Review Board
Oregon State University
A312 Kerr Administration Bldg, Corvallis, OR 97331-2140
ph. (541) 737-8008 fax (541) 737-3093
IRB@oregonstate.edu
<http://oregonstate.edu/irb>

Appendix N

Participant Demographic Questionnaire Data

Q2 Current Age:

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	25	2/27/2017 1:45 PM
2	34	1/20/2017 9:21 PM
3	41	1/19/2017 9:37 PM
4	27	1/18/2017 11:45 AM
5	23	1/16/2017 6:57 PM
6	25	1/16/2017 2:03 PM
7	61	1/16/2017 12:30 PM
8	24	1/14/2017 8:35 PM
9	30	1/12/2017 9:43 PM
10	41	1/12/2017 10:56 AM

Q3 How do you identify your race/ethnicity?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	Latina	2/27/2017 1:45 PM
2	Caucasian	1/20/2017 9:21 PM
3	Caucasian	1/19/2017 9:37 PM
4	Caucasian	1/18/2017 11:45 AM
5	White/caucasian	1/16/2017 6:57 PM
6	White	1/16/2017 2:03 PM
7	Caucasian	1/16/2017 12:30 PM
8	African American	1/14/2017 8:35 PM
9	White	1/12/2017 9:43 PM
10	Caucasian	1/12/2017 10:56 AM

Q4 How do you identify your gender?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	female	2/27/2017 1:45 PM
2	Male	1/20/2017 9:21 PM
3	Female	1/19/2017 9:37 PM
4	Female	1/18/2017 11:45 AM
5	Female	1/16/2017 6:57 PM
6	Female	1/16/2017 2:03 PM
7	Male	1/16/2017 12:30 PM
8	Female	1/14/2017 8:35 PM
9	Male	1/12/2017 9:43 PM
10	Female	1/12/2017 10:56 AM

Q5 Please indicate any pronoun preference:

Answered: 9 Skipped: 1

#	Responses	Date
1	she	2/27/2017 1:45 PM
2	He/him	1/20/2017 9:21 PM
3	She	1/19/2017 9:37 PM
4	she/her/hers	1/18/2017 11:45 AM
5	She/her	1/16/2017 6:57 PM
6	Excuse me?	1/16/2017 2:03 PM
7	He, him	1/16/2017 12:30 PM
8	He/Him	1/12/2017 9:43 PM
9	she	1/12/2017 10:56 AM

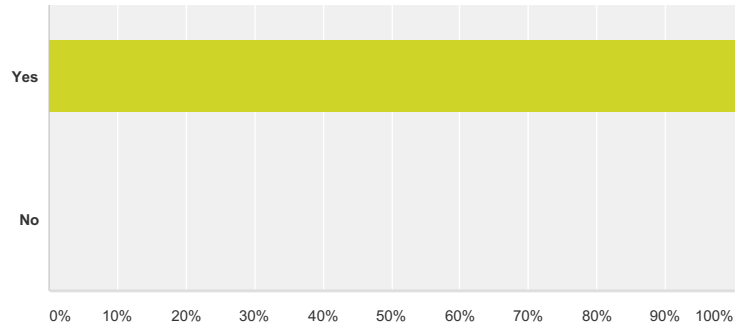
Q6 How would you describe your sexual orientation?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	heterosexual	2/27/2017 1:45 PM
2	Straight	1/20/2017 9:21 PM
3	Heterosexual	1/19/2017 9:37 PM
4	predominantly heterosexual	1/18/2017 11:45 AM
5	Heterosexual/straight	1/16/2017 6:57 PM
6	Straight	1/16/2017 2:03 PM
7	Straight	1/16/2017 12:30 PM
8	Heterosexual	1/14/2017 8:35 PM
9	Straight	1/12/2017 9:43 PM
10	heterosexual	1/12/2017 10:56 AM

Q7 Currently, or within the past two years, have you attended six consecutive months of individual counseling?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	100.00%	10
No	0.00%	0
Total		10

Q8 How did you locate your counselor?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	church	2/27/2017 1:45 PM
2	Referral	1/20/2017 9:22 PM
3	Website	1/19/2017 9:37 PM
4	Referral from another counselor	1/18/2017 11:46 AM
5	Through my church - New Life Church	1/16/2017 6:57 PM
6	Through my church	1/16/2017 2:07 PM
7	Internet, referral by other counselor	1/16/2017 12:32 PM
8	Through a friend	1/14/2017 8:37 PM
9	I learned about Jay while attending City Church	1/12/2017 9:45 PM
10	Reference	1/12/2017 10:57 AM

Q9 What brought you to counseling?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	depression, anxiety	2/27/2017 1:45 PM
2	Depression/anxiety and difficulty in life	1/20/2017 9:22 PM
3	General feeling of discontentment	1/19/2017 9:37 PM
4	Maintenance and marital issues	1/18/2017 11:46 AM
5	There were a lot of difficulties I was having emotionally dealing with parts of my story from my past	1/16/2017 6:57 PM
6	Childhood trauma and struggles with anxiety and addiction	1/16/2017 2:07 PM
7	Grief (death of child by suicide after long struggle with mental illness), anxiety, depression, involuntary twitches	1/16/2017 12:32 PM
8	I suffered from anxiety that made it difficult to perform daily functions	1/14/2017 8:37 PM
9	I wasn't as happy as I wanted to be and I struggled with anxiety and other negative thoughts and feelings.	1/12/2017 9:45 PM
10	Trauma	1/12/2017 10:57 AM

Q10 How would you identify yourself in terms of spirituality and religion?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	Christian	2/27/2017 1:47 PM
2	Christian	1/20/2017 9:24 PM
3	Believer, Christian, Protestant	1/19/2017 9:40 PM
4	Very spiritual and religious	1/18/2017 11:47 AM
5	I am a gospel-believing, relationship-with-Christ Christian	1/16/2017 6:59 PM
6	Non-denominational Christian	1/16/2017 2:10 PM
7	Christian, conservative presbyterian	1/16/2017 12:34 PM
8	Christian, no denominational preference	1/14/2017 8:51 PM
9	Christian / Protestant	1/12/2017 9:52 PM
10	Christian with a leaning toward mystic spirituality	1/12/2017 11:02 AM

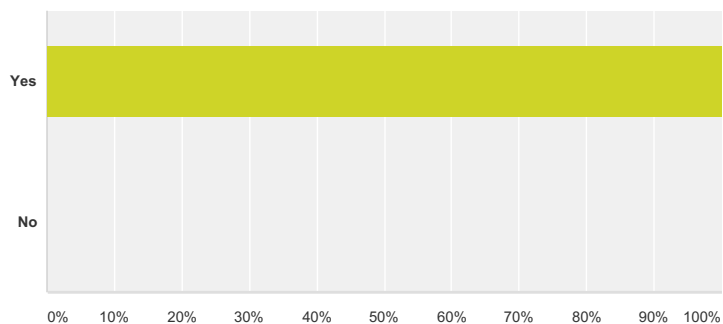
Q11 How would you describe the significance of spirituality and/or religion in your life?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0

#	Responses	Date
1	very important	2/27/2017 1:47 PM
2	Foundational influence on my life	1/20/2017 9:24 PM
3	Highly significant	1/19/2017 9:40 PM
4	Central to who I am and my identity	1/18/2017 11:47 AM
5	It is extremely important to me	1/16/2017 6:59 PM
6	It is the number one priority in my life.	1/16/2017 2:10 PM
7	important, key, foundational	1/16/2017 12:34 PM
8	Identifying as a christian has often it difficult to process certain life events. Because I was raised to believe, it's I've always struggled to understand how God fits into my painful life events.	1/14/2017 8:51 PM
9	Religion has played a significant role in my life. I was raised in the Christian faith, and it has shaped my morals and the way I understand and perceive the world. I believe the teachings of Christianity are true.	1/12/2017 9:52 PM
10	I am defined by my identity in Christ. I aim to be intentional in how my faith holds, leads, and follows me in all areas of my life.	1/12/2017 11:02 AM

Q12 Did spirituality and/or religion impact your selection of a counselor?

Answered: 9 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	100.00% 9
No	0.00% 0
Total	9

#	Other:	Date
1	Not primarily - I considered it a bonus	1/18/2017 11:47 AM

Q13 If you answered yes to the previous question, please describe:

Answered: 9 Skipped: 1

#	Responses	Date
1	I wanted a counselor that would help strengthen me mentally and emotionally, as well as spiritually	2/27/2017 1:47 PM
2	I preferred to have counsel of someone who was familiar and warm to the good/bad/ugly of my faith and the cultural norms surrounding it	1/20/2017 9:24 PM
3	I wanted to be sure my counselor would offer biblically based counsel	1/19/2017 9:40 PM
4	I wanted to go to a counselor who was a Christian because it was important to me that the person walking with me through some of the deepest parts of my story shared the same faith. I wanted God to be a part of the counseling process.	1/16/2017 6:59 PM
5	I had previously seen a counselor who did not share my faith, nor did she include my faith in my therapy process. I made no progress and was very dissatisfied with my progress and felt as though my counselor was ignoring about 80% of my concerns.	1/16/2017 2:10 PM
6	I wanted a counselor that wasn't hostile to religion, and would be open to talking about that part of my life and grief.	1/16/2017 12:34 PM
7	I wanted to have a counselor who I felt was safe enough to wrestle with who God is.	1/14/2017 8:51 PM
8	The first counselor I went to in San Diego had no religious affiliation. While he helped me a lot, occasionally I felt like he couldn't understand my point of view on issues that involved religion since he himself was not religious. When I decided to seek out a new counselor after moving to San Francisco I decided that I would like to try going to a Christian counselor because I thought that this might allow him/her to better understand me and even help me grow spiritually.	1/12/2017 9:52 PM
9	Part of my decision to begin counseling was a spiritual one in which my relationship with God and how I viewed his presence was affecting my sense of purpose, hope and care. I specifically sought a Christian counselor that could help me to process that and guide my spiritual formation.	1/12/2017 11:02 AM

Appendix O

Interview One Guide

Presentation of Study Purpose

Thank you for your time in participating with this study.

“I am interested in learning more about the experience of spirituality and religion during the counseling process. The experience of spirituality and religion will be generally defined as the contributions made by the spiritual and religious experiences of the client to the counseling process. These experiences may happen in or out of the therapy room, be engaged implicitly or explicitly, and may or may not have been shared with your counselor. I am most interested in your experience of spirituality and religion and what your experience has been with spirituality and religion during your counseling process.”

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Conduct First Interview

Interview questions:

1. How would you describe the role of spirituality and religion in your life?
2. Describe how you experience spirituality and religion in your counseling.
3. How were spirituality and religion involved in your counseling change process?
4. How did you experience your counselor in relation to your spirituality and religion?
5. What else would you like to tell me about spirituality and religion in your counseling process?

Conclude First Interview

We are at the end of our time. Thank you for all of your contributions up to this point. I will be emailing you in order to schedule our second interview. Do you have any other questions for me at this time?

Appendix P

Interview One Transcripts with Coding

Participant 7606001

00:12

Johnny:

Hey Participant..!

Participant:

Hi Johnny, how are you?

Johnny:

Good. I'm Johnny, it's very nice to meet you. Is it, do you go by Participant or Participant?

Participant:

Participant.

Johnny:

Participant...! Umm.. Well thank you so much for making some time to do this with me. I greatly appreciate it.

Participant:

Yeah, you're welcome.

Johnny:

I'll start out with. Jump right in. I like to frame our time, get us pointed in the right direction. But before I do that, just want to open up to see if you have any questions for me about, our time or the research, or me?

Participant:

Um.... I don't think so unless you want to share like your background or you.... have you done counseling before or?

Johnny:

A.. received it or given it? Ha ha ha...!

Participant:

Given it. (chuckles)

Johnny:

Um... I've done both.

Participant:

Yeah.

Johnny:

I've actually... I've actually been a professional counselor for, gosh, it's over 10 years now.

Participant:

OK.

Johnny:

Graduated with a master's degree from Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando and started a counseling center there and then came out to San Francisco where I joined a counseling center. So it's yeah... I... I've done a lot of counseling. And I've received a lot of counseling, both me and my wife.

Participant:

Is that how you met [Counselor]?

Johnny:

It is. I met him in Orlando through counseling and then as a professor at RTS, as a supervisor, as a colleague and then eventually joined him out here in San Francisco and can now count him as a friend.

Participant:

OK.

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

Great, yeah, he's an amazing individual.

Johnny:

He is... he is. He's great. So, yeah I've.. I've spent a lot of time in the counseling chair.

Participant:

Alright.

Johnny:

Yeah, anything else?

Participant:

No, I think that's it.

Johnny:

Awesome. So, I may take a few notes..

Participant:
Yeah, go ahead.

Johnny:
Just for my own purposes. Um... so let me frame our time before I open up with a kind of broad question. But the thing I'm most interested in is, um, you know it's how... how clients experience their spirituality and religion in really in relation to their counseling process? And so, there's kind of a nuance that I've.. I've spent my time digging into that I'll be driving us toward where it's it's not just the counseling process we're interested in and it's not just talking about spirituality or religion in counseling. It's really kind of how the two interact with each other.

Like how does a client experience their spirituality or religion in... in relation to that change process that's going on. Um, so that's going to be.. you know that's going to be things that happen in the counseling session. It's going to be things that happen outside the counseling session. Some of these are implicit some of these are explicit. Some of these may have religious practices associated with them. Many of them may not. Um, I'm kind of looking for that whole sphere.

Participant:
OK.

Johnny:
How that experience happens for you.

Participant:
OK.

Johnny:
But the question I'd like to start with to help move into your experience is just how would you...how would you describe the role spirituality and religion in your life?

Participant:
Um... I think... the way that I have approach the.... well OK so I'll back up. Um... I grew up in a Pentecostal home... a Pentecostal church and... I experienced some I guess some disappointment in the church when I was in high school. And then went off to college in the early 90's and ended up walking away from my faith for about 20 years.

Context: History with Spirituality/Religion

And.... really a... about three years ago I just... ah... I felt call back. I'm very a feeling. I guess is not exactly what it was it was like a slap in the face ha ha ha.... from a lot of different, different places in my life. And so a few years ago I started attending church again. I was attending alone apart from my spouse at the time and my

children um... and so my... And that... that happened right before I started counseling.

Context: Identifying as S/R Person

05:04

So, it was like God was telling me you know it's time to look at this stuff. It's time to look at how your wounds have kept you from me. And so as far as my spirituality I don't like to refer to it as religion. It's more of uh... my faith and kind of seeing that as, how does that, how does that interact with my whole being, mind body and soul. So, I guess that is really a little bit of like, the historical view and then also kind of where I am right now.

Context: History with Spirituality/Religion

The role of it of spirituality for me is really helping to define who I am and why I'm here. What role do I have to play in um... you know my, my community this little sphere that he's placed in. And um... you know and as I dig deeper into that, I learn you know new places of brokenness and healing that are really keeping me from doing what I'm supposed to do. So you know I guess the role of spirituality for me is um...is all encompassing.

Context: Identifying as S/R Person

Johnny:

Ok. Yeah. So, it sounds like you have a pretty.... I'm gonna use the word a robust story, when it comes to your own journey with faith.

Participant:

Mhm... Yeah absolutely. Yeah, robust story, that I'm learning to articulate I guess more and more as I dig into it.

Johnny:

Yeah. And now you sais, you said you tell me the order again you began attending church before or after attending counseling.

Participant:

It was right before counseling.

Johnny:

Right before counselling. And what.. then it seems I'm making a presumption you sought out a Christian counselor.

Participant:

Yes. Well I'll tell you what happened, I ended up having a dear friend of mine, who was my former employer. I had asked her to kind of be a spiritual adviser so to

speak. And then she has a... her son works at the Seattle school with Dan Allender. And she told me about this story workshop. OK I'll.. I'll check it out. That feels right. I'll check. Check that out. And came back from that weekend like completely raw. Ha ha!

And I realized that I really needed some help with you know as far as counseling goes. And so after returning from there I e-mailed them and I was like, "hey, I need to have some help finding someone that's in my area that kind of aligns with the teaching that I experienced and what I experienced there that I would get it". And and so they actually, Dan Allender recommended [Counselor] who lives not lives... he works at Western theological seminary as you probably know. And that's a couple miles away from me.

Context: History with Spirituality/Religion

Johnny:
OK.

Participant:
So um... but yes, specifically seeking out a Christian counselor to kind of help me navigate the trauma um.. as well as the how... how my faith has... was impacted by that, my whole life.

Context: Identifying as S/R Person

Johnny:
Yeah.

Participant:
So, I wanted someone that um... specifically knew my God and would also be kind of a spiritual director as well as a counselor.

Relating in Therapy Process::Feeling Known

Johnny:
OK. That's all... that's helpful context. I um... I won't. Uhh...this is a rabbit trail that I won't go down but I will.. I will say it fascinates me to hear your own story with your faith and knowing... I've been to Western cause I teach there occasionally.

Participant:
Okay.

Johnny:
And that is... that is a very... that is a very Christian neck of the woods.

Participant:

Yes ha ha... it is ha ha...! Yes... this is west Michigan area. It's... it's interesting.

10:05

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

It's certainly interesting there's... there's a broad spectrum of what being Christian means and looks like.

Johnny:

Hmm...! Yeah I would imagine it could be a unique experience there. To walk away from your faith in that region.

Participant:

Yeah it was. Yeah, it was... it was an interesting experience. And you know coming from a family that is very strongly rooted in faith in this area was, it also you know made that walk very lonely for twenty years you know.

Context: S/R History

Johnny:

Yep. Yeah absolutely. And you know I can I can imagine. So there's a lot of there's a lot of texture to your story around faith.

Participant:

Ha ha yeah.

Johnny:

And then I want to... let's take that and zoom into a.. your counseling.

Participant:

Mhm...

Johnny:

How would you how would you describe how you've experienced your spirituality in your counseling?

Participant:

Well. I think. You... you have the benefit of knowing [Counselor]. So you may kind of get where I'm coming from on this. But he is... he's never really pushed me in any direction. But he has certainly provided resources for me um.. as he saw that I was like ready or thirsty for them. Specifically with the Christian mystics ha... and I tend to have that's umm that kind of thread through my spirituality where I'm really drawn to that mystic spirituality.

Engaging S/R in Therapy::Exploring S/R

And so. Um... you know I think what he has how he has kind of married two with spirituality and counseling for me specifically is through my creativity. I am also an artist and I sing, I sing on my church's worship team.

And so you know as he's gotten to know me... he's helped me to kind of see my faith through that lens as well. The lens of you know my creativity and how that can help to center me to ah.... I guess provide some... some... ah... greater focus and coping skills for some of the stress and trauma that I had been processing.

So, I think being able to understand more deeply my identity in Christ through the reading that he has suggested and also some secular reading... he's helped me to kind of see like um... I guess more the mainstream approach to psychotherapy and how that can live alongside faith.

Context: Identifying as S/R Person

Johnny:

Hmm... Yeah. That's helpful. That's helpful and part of what I hear is. Um... there's a lot of [Counselor] in that.

Participant:

Mhm...

Johnny:

Which is good and we won't be able to like separate out fully. But take me through again. But like this time I almost picture like if we could you're an artist so I'll use this if we could imagine there was this mural, that was your counseling process.

Participant:

Mhm...

Johnny:

And it was this intricately painted thing that showed what had happened over time. And if you were to stand there with me at the mural and go there was my spirituality that was an experience of spirituality. This is a thread of spirituality. What... what things would you point out to me?

Participant:

OK. Yeah, I guess that's... that's a good way to frame that up. I think through... through my counseling what I have... I've identified just my life in general with my faith and through the counseling process is a journey. And that goes alongside you know the biblical journey and how I'm able to see.. the um... I guess the seasons of darkness as just that a season.

Engaging Spirituality/Religion in Therapy::Exploring S/R

15:30

Johnny:

OK.

Participant:

Um... and being able to see the hope in that, um through my faith. And I guess so specifically my...I recently went through a divorce and being able to um... I think look at my... the struggles that I have had through out that whole process and then leading up to that going back to my faith processing cognitively ha ha... and verbally in my counseling and then being able to put that side by side with, that I am not alone in the storm that the storm will be over eventually.

Engaging S/R in Therapy::Exploring S/R

And that each decision that I make is done through a prayerful process and that prayer sometimes happened right within the counseling session if I requested it. Um... yeah I don't know if that's more of what you're talking about but I know specifically in the counseling in the past few years if I we look at some I guess guideposts or I don't know some markers of kind of specifically where my faith has been integrated.

It has been like through my divorce process and processing my trauma and looking at how my body has responded and how that feeds into the shame and then keeps me from God and it all kind of goes back and forth back and forth like with every conversation.

Engaging S/R in Therapy::Experiencing S/R

Johnny:

Yeah. So, yeah... Yeah exactly. Yeah. It's what it's why you'll hear me asking from different angles. Not... not because you're not because we're not on target but because it's so becomes so intertwined it is hard to like say yeah here's here's how my spirituality plays into my counseling process. Here's what you know it's like I'm just going to keep leveraging the fact that you're an artist and keep using metaphors.

Participant:

OK.

Johnny:

Um... it's like you know if I think about it if you made a recipe you put it in the oven and then you pull it out and you go oh I used baking soda not baking powder. And so it changed the outcome because that ingredient wasn't there.

Participant:
Right.

Johnny:

And so that's what I'm I'll keep circling and I've appreciated your reflections so so far I hear the journey piece of it, your spirituality puts make... it like turns your process into a journey that there... it actually is heading somewhere and that, that heading somewhere can go through very challenging difficult times.

Participant:

Mhm... Well, and I think that um, the other piece of spirituality is is it's helped me to identify like what am I really longing for. And when I'm... when I'm falling, which I often am I'm looking for I don't know I guess they would be considered even addictions in some cases just like how am I going to fill the space how do I fill the space how do I fill the gap that I'm experiencing and when I'm able to look at my journey my story as a whole...

Engaging S/R in Therapy::Exploring S/R

I'm able to look at the times when I... I wasn't desperately seeking to fill the space with other things. And I can go back and reflect on OK this is where my faith comes into play. And when I was feeling more whole and grounded and centered This is what I was doing instead. I was praying I was reading, studying, scripture. I was meditating or you know what have you.

20:20

Johnny:

Mhm... Mhm... Yep. And those are... sound like ways that you express or live your spirituality. Um.. what would you say they would what impact would you say that they have on kinda at any given moment whatever it is that you're working on in that particular leg of the journey what how do those things influence?

Participant:

Well I know that um... as far as my art goes my art has changed, my style has changed to be more of a meditative process. One that I don't necessarily think about um... the piece as a whole but rather just the process. And as I'm in the process of creating something and I'm focused on. Yes this is the process is why I'm doing this because it is a meditation and it's more grounding and centering for me.

And it reduces my anxiety. It um I just what I have seen is that I'm healthier like I'm not as sick with colds and what not. I sleep better and I feel closer to God. So, I guess that would be one example of how I'm living in that through my art.

Receiving from S/R in Therapy::Peace

Johnny:

Yeah and so there's a lot of... I don't particularly like the word impact, result. It sounds to formulaic. Um... and yet there there is something that happens for you internally when you engage these practices. And it and it seems like that that something that happens is like it's either right in the middle or it's like it's right in the same space as what you're working on in counseling.

Participant:

Mhm...

Johnny:

Is that, is that accurate?

Participant:

Yep, it is accurate and it's something that I'm encouraged to do when I'm feeling like I'm off track, emotionally. And I'm getting pulled into like unhealthy spaces. I'm encouraged to you know read David Whyte and John O'Donahue and the authors that I love the poetry and.... and to do more art. Spend more time just doing rather than as I tend to do everything in my head.

I'm very much a five on the Enneagram ha ha.... so I am just doing writing poetry and creating art work and listening to music, singing all of those things... do directly connect an impact from my counseling sessions into my daily practices.

Johnny:

Mhm...! And if um... let me turn it around, when you think about your time in counseling. If you if you somehow could remove those, those experiences of connecting spiritually you could somehow just remove them from your counseling or your life. How would your counseling then look different?

Participant:

Oh.... I think I would be really dependent on my counselor. I think, I would really see him as the answer.

Relating in Therapy::Experiencing Closeness

25:00

Johnny:

OK.

Participant:

The.. yeah, the solution um.. which I think I've probably been guilty of over the past few years at different times. But depending more on external sources of... of um... comfort or connection rather than those internal sources.

Johnny:

Hmm. So, if it was even possible to remove your spirituality from yourself and just kind of mute it for a moment. You feel like it would just there'd be a lot more chance that you'd be dependent on your counselor and looking to him for...

Participant:

Yeah. Absolutely. You know and I think about my, the years that I had walked away from my faith... those years were also completely void of creating. I wasn't creating, I wasn't painting or drawing or doing any of my creative things that I do. I wasn't singing. I wasn't really making space for any of that stuff because it , it directly for me.. directly connects me to God. And I was avoiding Him. And so in that time I was looking for things outside of myself to feel better. Whether it was relationships or addictions to work and people and other things... so...

Context::History with S/R

Johnny:

Yeah. And so, putting your spirituality back into the mix. In your process. Um... it change... it kind of sounds like it changes the fabric of the counseling relationship.

Participant:

Mhm...

Johnny:

And it connects you to parts of yourself that you're disconnected from.

Participant:

Yeah. Yeah because I see that I have the resources within me to... um... experience the healing that I need to experience. The healing is not coming from my counselor. My counselor is not healing me. Ha ha...! He is more of a guide or a coach even depending on the session. And a mirror I actually referred to him as that recently just ...he's a good mirror of, who I really am.

Receiving from S/R in Therapy::Healing

When I get stuck in these places of you know where I'm distracted and disconnected. So if I didn't have those other things I think I would constantly be seeking outside of myself for the solution. Whether that would have been from him or other people in my life other things in my life. So...

Johnny:

Yeah. Yep... and you said the word healing.

Participant:

Mhm...

Johnny:

Could you put a few more words around that for me?

Participant:

Yeah I think. Um.... huh... (sigh) like in what context do you mean like what healing am I seeking or like how is that, what is that healing process like for me or?

Johnny:

Yeah. I'd love for you to just talk about it a little bit because um... you know it's a key word that can pop up around our spiritual experiences. And I'd love for you to just tell me yeah, what uh... what's getting healed? Where does the healing come from? How do you know that something's been healed in you?

Participant:

Hmm... Yeah, those are big questions. Yes. So um I think what is getting healed for me would uh.... it would have a lot to do with. How I define myself. I've been a victim of sexual abuse in many different times of my life. And I think that has really shaped how I see myself.

Experiencing Healing in Therapy

30:25

Um... how I see what I am worthy of or not worthy of. And that's I think something that I will... I don't think that healing is ever going to end ha ha... until I'm on the other side. But um... I think how I know that I'm experiencing healing is that, I can... I can identify the truth from the lie, now. I'm still I still experience a lot of.. a lot of messages internally and even externally on occasion about um... huh... (sigh)

What... a... why, why that happened and that I'm never going to be healed I'm never going to be OK I'm always going to be a mess I'm always going to be broken. I can identify that those lies where I as I couldn't before. It just that that felt like the truth to me. And um.. and I think as far as where the spirituality comes into play I am able to identify that as you know there's a lot of shame wrapped up in that. And shame is what has kept me from my relationship with God.

Engaging S/R in Therapy::Addressing S/R/Exploring S/R

And I have um, I have hidden in that for a really long time. And when I when I've tasted the truth and I've been able to stay centered through my practices whether it's art or reading or writing or singing or whatever... I'm able to experience the truth. And um... replace the lies with the truth. When they happen. So I guess that's my evidence.

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

And just feeling more whole feeling more like I have what I need and I really have always had what I need. A... and not because I am all powerful but because I don't know because he lives in me. And so.

Receiving From S/R in Therapy::Wholeness

Yeah I don't know. I also do a lot of reading. So when I when I read something that whether it's a more spiritual kind of text or a academic type of text, because of how my mind works. I'm able to a... just kind of like translate that into my life and go OK yeah that's true for me and that's true for me. So I'm able to really see I don't know, I feel like I'm going off on a rabbit trail but yeah I don't know if that answers your question?

Johnny:
It does. Yeah.

Participant:
And I think the... specifically the relationship in my counseling has been healing because I believe that you know if we're broken in relationship we're healed in relationship. And so experiencing that um the type of relationship that I had with a male counselor has been healing through... through the way that my faith has intertwined in those sessions.

Relating in Therapy::Developing Trust

Johnny:
Yeah. Just... just the nature of the relationship and that relationship being with a male counselor and your faith intertwines in there. And one of the things that comes out the other side of that journey is healing.

Participant:
Mhm...

35:00

Johnny:
And that healing relieves shame, it changes how you define yourself.

Participant:
Mhm...

Johnny:
It helps you feel more whole.

Participant:
Mhmm. And I've also been able to...have more confidence in the decisions that I make that um...and trust my own gut in those decisions um...whether I, whether it

was the right decision or not is kind of irrelevant. But being able to have some even some faith in myself is evidence of healing.

Johnny:

Yeah. And so all this... all this stuff that you've talked about in the past couple of minutes about healing and the places that you can see it inside yourself and... it seems like all that has unfolded during your time in counseling. And it seems like your faith, your spirituality has been what in that how what role how key has that been for you?

Participant:

Um... I think that is the key for me. I think... my counselor has been a really good conduit of that. Of my, I don't know, what I needed to receive and what I needed to see. And if my faith was not part of this I know I probably would have quit counseling a long time ago because I'm certain that I wouldn't have gotten what I needed.

Engaging S/R in Therapy::Experiencing S/R with Therapist

Johnny:

OK.

Participant:

And I wouldn't be where I am right now. I, by no means have I arrived but I'm certainly in a much better space than I was three years ago.

Johnny:

Hmm... Yeah... And so the faith and spirituality, it's not the it's not the only part of the process. It's not exclusive but it sounds pretty critical like, if I, if I pulled that out, I really don't know how the counseling process continues on.

Participant:

Well I had, I had experienced counseling mm probably, it was in college I went a few times and it was... it was not a faith based type of situation. It was not a Christian counselor very much from.. I would even say a Freudian kind of angle ha ha... but I did not. There was no depth there for me, it wasn't reaching the longing that I was feeling.

Even though I felt needy and like I wanted to go to counseling because I knew I needed something. What I experienced and it wasn't that I didn't like the counselor but what I experienced was so disconnected from where... now when I look back where the healing needed to happen um, I just, I stopped going. I think I might have gone five times.

And it just was like yeah, I'm not getting anywhere. I can talk about my stuff all day long but and I can understand why I feel a certain way. But if I don't have anywhere

to go with it in my soul I'm not, it's not going to make any difference in my life. But I have that language now. I didn't have it then, I didn't understand then. But now having this experience in counseling you know compared to that one it certainly it would not. I wo... like I said before I would not have continued I'm certain had...

This is more of a negative case example of what was missing without S/R in her therapy process.

40:14

Are you still there.

Johnny:

Hey no. Yeah I lost you for a moment. I'm back now.

Participant:

Oh, right.

Johnny:

You said I would not have...

Participant:

I would not have continued counseling when I started a few years ago if there hadn't been that faith piece and honestly, I probably wouldn't have gone to counseling if I couldn't find a good Christian counselor.

Relating in Therapy::Developing Trust

Johnny:

Hmm... Yeah. Yeah. I, It's.... these are great reflections. Um... something I think about may I may have even said this on the phone when I was speaking with you is um, I have these I have these opportunities with clients I've met with to stop in when we start to come to an end. We start to look back on their process and you know throughout our time there's these moments where we talk explicitly about their spirituality, their faith.

And then there's other times where it's not as explicit... but then it's it's always interesting to me to look back with them and say you know what are the key what are the moments that really helped move this process into deeper places for you.

And many times... what I will hear, you know I might hear some certain things like a book or you know a particular session or particular conversation they had with a friend or something but then there will be these stories of spiritual moments that may have happened in or out of counseling, that for them, it's like the process wouldn't have been the same without it.

Participant:

Mhm...

Johnny:

Um.... in a way that's kind of unique. It's like you know this book was significant but it could have been a different book. But these experiences of spirituality I don't I don't know that I could swap them out for anything else. And I hear some of that for you of like. There's this really integral role it plays in turning my... turning my like reflections into it into an actual process journey like I'm not just talking about what I am struggling with but there's actually something is actually unfolding.

Participant:

Mhm... Yeah, I think... when I, when I first started going to counseling I had basically experienced like, like re-traumatization when I was in Seattle and came back with having flashbacks and hiding in the storage room at my where my where I was working I was in pretty... a pretty bad place. And when I started counseling I was very guarded. And I think even for the first year and a half. I didn't, I wasn't ever really connected to my own heart to my own story. Never cried. I was very intellectual about everything. Every conversation every session and.

And that changed when I started going through my divorce. And after all of that time of a spiritual guidance and the sharing of the stories. I had a moment where my husband refused to bring my kids home. And... I was... it was one of the darkest days probably of my life. Just the fear and the powerlessness and that.... that night he I just wailed like I don't think I've ever cried like this before. And I just kept saying, I am not in control, I surrender. I'm not in control. Um... and for me I think that would be.

45:00

I mean there were other smaller ones along the way but that was a huge turning point for me spiritually in this healing process like there... I have limitations. And there are things that have always happened in...myself and outside of my reach that I haven't had control over. But I thought I...(broke up) but this situation in particular was very clear. I have no control, no power. I've made this decision and now I need to walk and trust that I've got the best attorney on my side. And it's not someone that I hired.

And so, for me like my, my faith my spirituality in that very moment was pivotal. Otherwise I would not have kept going through the process. I would have stopped. So, I mean there are so many moments where I could think of like, I could go yep, if I didn't have (fades) my faith... I would not be here right now.

Engaging Spirituality in Therapy::Experiencing S/R

Johnny:

Yeah. Yeah. It sounds like, it's... no go ahead.

Participant:

I was gonna say to bring that back to my counseling and is something that had come up many many times over the year and a half that I'd been going that... basically (fades) and I don't know that he directly said those words to me.

Johnny:

Oh I'm sorry. Hang on... I want to... we're breaking up again and I really want to make sure I get this.

Participant:

OK go ahead.

Johnny:

Sorry.

Participant:

Go ahead. I'm gonna to grab a cup of coffee real quick.

Johnny:

OK.

Participant:

I'm sorry. I'm just going to get my coffee.

Johnny:

Do it. Yes.

Participant:

Is that alright?

Johnny:

Absolutely.

Participant:

So, what I was saying is that that theme of I'm not in control, had come up many times throughout the year and a half. In different ways mostly in that I couldn't have prevented what happened to me. But that I'm also you know as much as I try to keep a handle on things there are some things that I just I can't. And that's where my faith has really come into play because I can be my own God in so many ways and probably I have a lot of blind spots. Even still about that ... but um, yes so that all kind of intertwined in right in that moment.

Johnny:

Yeah. And so it was like. Yeah that's another great example of where they come together. It was a counseling it was a process in counseling that had been going on, a conversation but then there was this poignant moment where it kind of culminated

and part of that culmination or that not even part of that culmination was deeply spiritual.

Participant:

Mhm... Yep... and I was able to draw on my faith and, and my own resources whereas and I may have e-mailed him or texted him I don't remember. [Counselor], my counselor, but I wasn't I wasn't seeking anyone like any like person to fix it whereas that would have been something that I would have done before.

Relying on S/R during Therapy Process

50:02

Johnny:

Hmm... Yeah, so that that has come up a few times that your spirituality in your process helps you connect more deeply to who you are and not seek answers from other people who ca...can't give it to you.

Participant:

Right.

Johnny:

Yeah. Gosh I am. Let me slow us down because I'm aware of our time. We've gone 50 minutes already. I'm incredibly grateful for all these reflections. But before I move towards like closing us out and talking about what will come next. I want to make sure I open back up this broad question of as we've talked, is there anything big or small that you would like to share with me about how you experience spirituality in your counseling process?

Participant:

Um.... you know I kind of touched on this before but I think the suggestions for (fades) how to connect spiritually and how to get centered... and how that connects with the body (fades) historically and really up until very recently have existed outside of my body as if it's you know insignificant to the healing process. But understanding the impact of experiencing my spirituality through my body, rather than just in my head.

And in in my counseling specifically we've spent a lot of time in the past several months focusing on being present and what presence means and how that intersects with the spirit or the soul or whatever you want to call it. And in being able to be moved where I... has to start with being present physically. So I think that's been a big part of that journey as well for me through my counseling and through my spirituality as what does it mean. What does it mean to be a human and be spiritual? (fades)

Engaging Spirituality/Religion in Therapy::Exploring S/R

Johnny:
Yeah.

Participant:

I know... I was just reflecting on this, this week with my home group from church and how how worship is really a space where God can speak to us because we're... in order to worship through singing and um... you know whatever else you're doing with your body you have to be present in your body. A... and that's at least significant for me and that also plays into the whole idea of creating in the way that I be and how it's you know the physical process and how that connects me to my body.

And the meditation and the you know all of the things that I do in that meditation process is about getting connected whether it's breathing or sound or whatever. So, I think that that's a piece that I didn't talk about a whole lot but that was a really important part of the counseling that plays into the spirituality for me as well.

Johnny:

Yeah. Yeah I can.. I can hear the thread of that in different things that you've talked about.

Participant:

And then how trauma interfaces with all of that.

Participant 7606002

Johnny:

Um.. so to kind of lead us off. Let me start with a pretty broad question, which is how would you describe the role of spirituality and religion in your life?

And I'm going to take a few notes.

Participant:

Yeah you do you.

Johnny:

All right.

Participant:

Am.... That's a huge question. Ha ha...! Um... I would say it's arguably the biggest piece that helps me understand my identity as a person and also that forms my worldview. Um, yeah. I mean it's it's hard. You know cuz I grew up in the church and so it was so much a part of how I was formed as a person. But obviously there was...you know, came a point where I had to internalize that for myself.

Um... so yeah it's really kind of, kind of almost a lens through which I filter everything too. And since now I work for a denomination, it's an integral part of my work as well and I, I need to as part of my job to filter everything through that lens as well. So it's become pretty holistic in terms of how it affects my functioning on all kind of primary levels.

Context: S/R History

Johnny:

Yeah. So it's... spreads pretty far and wide.

Participant:

Yes.

Johnny:

In your life and touches a lot of different places. And, two questions, one's a little bit more concrete. When you hear these words that I use spiritual, religious, my faith, my relationship with God. Which ones resonate the most with your experience?

Participant:

All of them, I think for different reasons. Um... because I think I've been very mindful of the words that other people use. And so I will actually morph my language depending on who I'm talking to. And I really kind of come to understand them as different sides of the cube. We're always talking about the cube. It's just, what language do you want to attach to it. That's going to communicate the most clearly with whoever I'm speaking with.

So I think. Like when I, when I trying to think of what mean to me...I'll start with religion...religion to me is very much kind of your traditional liturgical church structure. Um... and kind of the practices and knowing the reasons for why we embody our faith in a particular way. Which I definitely identify with that.

Spiritual, I think in this individual, postmodern society that we live right is much more of this feeling. Right and it is.... it is about practice but much more individual than communal. Right it's much more about my practice and what's going on inside of me in this personal relationship too. So it's a little bit more of that which I also identify a lot with that too... again just I think speaking a different side of the same reality. Um... you used my faith and one other term... what was the other one

Johnny:

My relationship with God...

Participant:

My relationship with God. Yeah. So my faith generally depending on who you are talking to, that can have a broad range that to me is kind of an overarching term. My relationship with God feels pretty evangelical to me...probably just cause of my background.

Context: S/R History

Um... So that to me is probably a little more. And I just in my last couple years people I've interacted with if they're outside of the evangelical subculture they just don't use that language. This is the only place where I hear that. So I think that there's an.

I mean doesn't necessarily have a whole lot of meaning for me now but it's very, I don't know...it can be very descriptive of how I grew up and understood my own faith journey and it very much so communicates something to you about where the other person is at in terms of their journey. So it's that's more of an indicator for a patient later is that I would probably use in.

Johnny:

And is there any other language you would add into the mix?

Participant:

Hmm....! Those are probably the big ones. My faith journey... I sure like that.

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

Ha ha...! But yeah.

Johnny:

And I have a few other questions but I'm actually going to move straight to... How have you experienced this aspect of your self? This faith journey, spirituality religion, how have you experienced it in counseling?

Participant:

Hmm...! Am...! It's been in a number of different ways. So, I've had five big therapy sessions.

Context: History with Therapy

Johnny:

OK.

Participant:

Am.... my first one was counseling center that was I had a relationship with my church growing up and that was where I first issue was psychologist I think was her training but they had a christian counseling center. And then my main therapist in college so I went to Hope which is an RCA school. Um... so she was obviously a professing christian.

And then my therapist through seminary was the counselor in residence and had her MDiv and is a trained spiritual director. And then my therapist I moved out to Denver for my MSW and there I had the first non-christian therapist that I'd had. Which was really cool but just a totally different experience from what I had. And then now I have a trauma therapist in Grand Rapids who is trained by Allender. So kind of back, full circle. So I think it's been interesting because they all I mean except for the one been Christians and I've known that like it was in the struck... With the exception of against my current therapist.

It's been in the structure of how we know each other. And so it was never something that really had to be established or um... had to. It was just assumed I guess from the get go all of that I was a person of hope or a person of faith and that was something we shared and how we would articulate and understand that might be different. There was this common thing.

Context: Identifying as S/R Person

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

And so and so I just I think naturally a part of how I processed things from the get go. And I think particularly as I was going through seminary there were a lot of things in my therapeutic process that I needed to process specifically theologically. Um... which I'm sure is not like normal but like you know ha ha.... being a seminary

student like I needed to figure out what I believed theologically about some of things I was going through... or you know, processing.

Context: Identifying as S/R Person

Johnny:

Yeah. And you know as a side note it's having counseled people who have either been to seminary or are pastors. What I think sometimes the Christian counseling room can... It can become a place where they can sort through that in a little bit of a different way like you have context for what it is I'm talking about. And actually this is kind of an emotional topic for me. And so there's, I don't need to just like get my head around it I've got to get my old self around it.

Participant:

Yeah, yep. Yeah, that was a big pull. I mean it is ... good thing in some ways depending on. Yeah. So, to get back to your question. Um.... yeah it was just it was interesting though had always been assumed. And then I think I really noticed that the most when I had my therapist I wasn't a Christian. Because I kind of had to come in and explain myself and my background and explain it in a way that would make sense to her because I couldn't use all this like Christian jargon that I had grown up using and that everyone previously understood.

Context: History with S/R

And she was really great about asking questions about it just to make sure that she understood and actually she... I for some reason felt hesitant to bring it up, not hesitant, but I just. Yeah it was a different dynamic I think and I needed to feel it out there a little bit. And she was really disciplined about incorporating it in for me, which was a good thing. And so it worked with me as it should be like. OK so how does this relate to your like how you understand how to. And I would just be like. Ah, great question. Ha ha... you know.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Exploring S/R
Engaging S/R in Therapy: Addressing S/R

A... so and then the little things that she didn't assume. I remember noticing this, that other like Christian counselors just assumed. So, like I remember when I was... I'll pause to give you an example.. I remember when I was telling her the story of my ex-husband had been looking at porn. And he told me that and I was describing the pain that I felt in him disclosing this to me and she was like I, that makes so much sense. I totally get it but can you articulate to me, what about porn is bad?

Ha ha ha....! I was like, "oh..." like no one's ever asked me that before. You know, and it's not necessarily that she was saying that she you know she disagreed(fades) she didn't really you know offer an opinion obviously but I just had never had to articulate because there's this assumption right that porn is terrible.

Johnny:
Mhm...

Participant:

And that porn destroys marriages like that's an assumed cultural norm in Christian subculture and for her it's like yeah some people think its bad, some people don't, like so just tell me what what it is specifically about that, that was so hard, or that with you know and I just was like... it was really difficult for me but it was really good having to articulate that because I hadn't had to do that before.

And so I was just realizing that there are things that she just didn't assume about how I saw the world or about how I engage with particular things that had happened because we didn't have that same base and that was really helpful.

Relating in Therapy Process: Feeling Known

Johnny:
Yeah.

Participant:
Yeah.

Johnny:

And so that was kind of two sides to that coin. On one hand it wasn't part of the structure. When shared faith wasn't part of the structure. And so it sounds like she came with a different set of questions and assumptions.

Participant:
Mhm...

Johnny:

That were good, eliminated different things. Now was also though this is hesitancy on your part and this like needing... needing to explain make sure you explain it in terms that she...

Participant:

Right. Yeah, the hesitancy went away (fades) that was just really initially.

Metasynthesis: Fear

Johnny:
Mhm..

Participant:

Because, once she kind of normed it for me in our sessions that it was OK and it was like not an issue after that. And she actually um... I mean, I know people have different opinions on how much of themselves therapists are supposed to bring. But she actually shared with me a couple different times, particularly as we were ending and I was moving away. That she shared with me how she how much she enjoyed like being able to hear from me and knowing that I was a pastor and she was like you know she is kind of agnostic or whatever.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Introducing S/R

But honestly she's like honestly, listening to you gave me a lot of hope. Like wow great you know it was at the end of our relationship so was probably more appropriate but that was just... that was really kind and you know I just um... that meant a lot to me I think that after you know being willing to listen to my shit for months.

Relating in Therapy Process: Experiencing Closeness

Johnny:
Right.

Participant:

That she could you know say that and that not that I felt guilty about bringing it in. But that you know that's not necessarily a part of her norm in her practice but that it was a part of our therapeutic relationship and that she really enjoyed that aspect of it.

Johnny:

Yeah... so circling back in terms of how you've experienced your faith journey here this kind of spectrum of you... you've had... it's ranged from just being a part of the implicit structure of the counseling women to conversations about things that are like explicitly theological or related to your own understanding the experience of God all the way to you've had some experience that went away feeling hesitant about bringing it than over to feeling like yeah she was actually very curious and was very good about wanting to understand how that lens operated for you.

Participant:

Yeah. I also remember to add to that like or working through the theology piece, because I knew like my therapist in seminary, I knew we had the same theological background. Like... So, there was just a lot I could assume about or I just I didn't have to hesitate when I think to articulate certain things theologically. Whereas, with my therapist now I remember noticing when we first started working together because I didn't I knew there was some kind of theological background but I didn't know what it is I was and being a pretty pretty liberal theologically in a very conservative town. I was very hesitant to articulate just how liberal my theological views were because I didn't want it... I mean not that I thought he would but I think I was just

like back in a kind of like this conservative culture shock almost like coming from Denver, which is super liberal.

Relating in Therapy: Feeling Known

And being back in West Michigan, that's conservative. There was this hesitancy of like I don't want to say that, I think I have a theological reason to think this liberally about whatever the issue is because I didn't want to get in a fight about that. Even though, I knew if I stepped back and thought about it, that's not what was going to happen and I knew that but I think that was me kind of gauging my safety. Right, cuz like so much of what I process theologically had been healing for me and I didn't want to feel like I had to justify that to him. And so it was like this ... thing and again I've gotten over that as we've had time to work together but there was that.

Metasynthesis: Fear

Metasynthesis: Freedom

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Addressing S/R

Johnny:

So, actually there is a hesitancy with a non-Christian counselor and with a Christian counselor maybe for different reasons. But I hear that same tentativeness.

Participant:

Mhm.... yeah..!

Johnny:

And let me ask you more on the... let's say experiential side where you know there's some.... Sometimes when I when I think of people that I've had the privilege of working with there's the um.... I don't know assumed or expected ways that people will experience God in their counseling. It's like when you ask someone if they experience God in their counseling or they do Christian counseling it's like almost everyone starts with oh do we pray or not pray. Do we talk about the Bible or not talk about the Bible. Do we talk about the theology or not. But what I find is that sometimes those things may or may not be pretty far removed from the places in the counseling process that the person experiences God the most. I'm curious what your reflections are on that?

If you think of your counseling as this timeline and you thing I've gone through this process from whatever point A to point D and when I think back over it here are the tears the moments when I can look and go that's where I experienced my faith journey that's where I experience God in my counseling.

Participant:

Hmm... um... that's a good question. I think it's more... Just a feeling, like I've never read the Bible, I've never prayed with any of my therapists, never done any of those like, super tangible things. But I think it's just, you can feel the space ... I think...and

part of that has been in times where I've recounted stories when God has become tangibly present to me. And telling that story and then getting to process it with them. You get kind of the sense again, right, in the retelling of the story and...

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Exploring S/R

Johnny:

So in that instance you were telling your counselor your process with your counselor about a moment a story when you could feel the presence of God.

Participant:

Yeah. Yeah. Well for an example if that would be helpful. I went and did the Camino de Santiago in the northern part of Spain at the end of August and I was walking and it was like my fifth day there, and I was walking and this has happened to me a few times in my life where God basically like, 5 feet from me kind of at an angle like showed up basically, and I knew like, God was right there. And like, because I'd been praying and God was kind of been responding to me, and was like, you know we need to talk about some stuff and I was like, "uuhhh, I really, I'm not sure what to do," and you know, I'm like crying.

Context: Spiritual Experiences

And normally when God has come to me it's been very clear that it's the spirit. And she's taken like a particular shape and there's a particular color that I can feel when she comes to me and... um... But this time it was very apparent to me that it was Jesus. And that has never happened like it's always been the spirit and so... but it was very clear to me that it was Jesus. And he appeared and then he kind of walked in front of me and then came to my right side and we just walked together for a while and kind of camped a little bit.

And then after a while we just kind of were silent and we walked and then it just kind of dissipated. Christ's presence. And so I've told that story to him, obviously with much more detail than we... obviously there was a lot more to it. And he like, his reaction to it, where he was just like, "wow" he's like "I have goosebumps" you know from hearing that.

And that just feels really powerful... you know and just having that process but it's like telling that story and then processing what all was there to process with him. It was like I felt it again like like the spirit was present in that room and in retelling of that story because it was such a healing experience for me. And then being able to process it with my therapist on a deeper level because he had been the one helping me process all the things that were going on... you know like, it was another level of healing and another level of God's presence. And that's not necessarily super tangible but it felt tangible to me.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Exploring S/R

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Experiencing S/R with Therapist

Johnny:

Yeah. I mean. Yeah. Oh man. OK. I only have like 30 minutes. I can't I could like spend the rest of the afternoon. That's great. That's all I know. Thank you for sharing it.

Participant:

Yeah.

Johnny:

And in seeing this experience with Jesus you've also had experiences with feeling the presence of the spirit in you. And have you.... would you share those with your counselors when you could feel her presence.

Participant:

Like, like when the Spirit shows up in the room? or like...

Johnny:

Hmm.. in the room or other times in your life when you have really felt her presence.

Participant:

Yeah yeah yeah... So, I told another big one the last big one I had was a couple of years ago. I was in Cambodia and we went to the killing fields museum... I don't know if you know the killing fields or anything like that. It was like, one of the worst genocides in history, in Cambodia.

We had gone to this memorial anyway at the end of the memorial they had this like huge glass display basically in the middle of memorial and.. it's skulls of the people who were murdered there and the different... categorized by the way in which they had died or been... Yeah. So like some of them their skulls were bashed in by a particular instrument or like they had been raped, so anyway. So all these skulls and obviously, it was like horrible and it's after you take this like hour long tour where you hear all these horrible stories about how people were murdered.

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

And I walked up and it kind of did like a circle around and I was standing in front staring at these skulls. Same thing, right the spirit kind of a similar angle or a little bit further away, kind of in a murky shape-ish. But, kind of not with harsh edges and like bright gold like almost kind of this color like... more yellow.... beaming. And whenever, whenever God shows up to me like that I mean it takes all my energy out of me like I can't stand. Like it's so overwhelming to feel to be that close even though

it's such a small way. So I kind of like fell over which is pretty normal and was just sobbing uncontrollably and I heard God say to me like I'm gonna emote through you like you are going to embody the pain that I feel from this.

And I was like OK great. I'm just going to stand then...and this stranger this girl who walked by me I'm not even sure she spoke English, umm, just handed me a tissue and, which was very helpful, practically. And so I just stood there crying, kind of doubled over... feeling very weak. For about 30 minutes or so and then kind of spirit banished and I got a little bit of my energy back but I was in a fog and again, this is pretty normal, fog for several hours and even the rest of the day I can't really orient myself.

Context: Spiritual Experience

I have a really hard time talking. I don't think I spoke for another three hours which is a lot for me because I talk a lot. And yeah. And there is something kind of thing...we had to go to dinner was part of one of our seminary trips actually so there's a whole group of us that we're doing.

And so I told that story to my non-Christian therapist in Denver. And she just kind of looked at me like kind of ha ha... holy shit... and she had a great reaction. She was like super intrigued by it and asked me all these follow up questions so it ended up being a really good experience. But, again with that hesitancy I remember being like, "she's going to think I'm bat shit crazy..." if I tell her this you know but it just you know she had had such good reactions to me before and I felt safe enough where I could and it was relevant to whatever we were talking about.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Exploring S/R

Metasynthesis: Fear

Relating in Therapy Process: Developing Trust

And but yeah, I was just. But again her curiosity felt a little bit different than my other therapist... it wasn't bad, it was just like I think she really had no paradigm in which to process that at all. So it was just very... she wanted to affirm me but I don't think we necessarily like... yeah, her reaction was just different and not sure I even know how to articulate it. But....

Johnny:

Let me ask you this. I think what I'm interested in and partly interested in her reaction what I'm even more interested in is what did it mean for your counseling process that you were able to experience that with her.

Participant:

Am.... it was huge. And I think again the biggest part of it was that it validated that it was OK for me to open up about stuff like that. And to... to allow my body to re-experience what it had experienced that day in a much smaller scale. And to...to

connect that with other parts of my story. Um.... I'm trying to think yeah, and just, kind of depends on the context too like how it's helpful being able to recount some of those stories because some of them do (fades).

Receiving from S/R in Therapy::Validation

And I think part of it too as I'm thinking about it, these are deeply, I mean as everything is in counseling, you know, I mean these are like...these aren't stories I tell very many people and not because they're particularly hurtful I mean it's not like me sharing, "Oh I was abused as a kid," and that's really hard to talk about so I just don't tell people. It's just it's deeper and personal in such a different way than something that violating you know what I mean nothing about this was violating this isn't bad, this isn't...

Relating in Therapy Process: Feeling Known

But it's just not something we talk about. And so I think to give voice...more voice to those parts of my story. It just feels different but it's... I want to hold on to those like those are deeply formational parts of my life you know and especially in...in the way that God appears to me in this way has been um... shaping in how I... try to.... um... channel the way I embody my relationship with God if that makes sense like... like it teaches me something about how I can um... function more fully going forward. Right like like these aren't just like one off events.

They've started to happen more frequently. And I've started to be able to manage them better. Right, there's some kind of relationship now that I have with these stories or this way that God and I relate. And so I think being able to talk about that in a therapeutic setting is like giving voice to that process as well and helping me learn how to utilize it. Does that make sense?

Johnny:

Yeah. I mean this is it does seem seems like also that this is... These experiences are so uniquely personal not just like you're not just not even just like I don't mean like individually to you there's something about the way you're describing like it's personal in a different kind of way from other personal things.

Participant:

Yes.

Johnny:

And it's hard to put words around exactly what that feels like and what it means to be able to bring it into your counseling. Let me ask.... let me ask the reverse question. What would have been lacking, how would your process have been impacted had you not been able to share these experiences?

Participant:

I think it would have just felt like I was hiding up my self. You know what I mean like there's this one corner deep down in my heart tucked away somewhere that wants to be given you know, breath, wants to be able to breathe a little bit and it just can't. And I think it would've... it would've just felt like I was holding back in some way.

***Context: Identifying as S/R Person
Relating in Therapy: Experiencing Closeness***

Johnny:

And with you holding back or hiding this part of yourself. How does that impact the process you're going through in counseling?

Participant:

Yeah I think it's, when you're talking about...you know, something faith based... It's not like it's just some experience that you don't talk about. I mean as I initially described right, this is how I understand my identity this is how I understand my worldview this is the lens in which I process everything in life. So it's one thing to tuck away something that isn't so foundational to how you understand yourself and the world. It's another thing, you know, when it's like this it's literally the thing that influences every other part of my world. And so to tuck that away and not give that space to breathe, you know, is I think a particular type of hiding.

***Context: Identifying as S/R Person
Relating in Therapy: Feeling Known***

Johnny:

Yeah. I'm curious about that not just with you but as I've had these conversations that one of the pictures that's come to my mind has been a.... is a recipe like...

Participant:

Hmm...!

Johnny:

That like if I was going to go home and bake something and I left out chocolate chips.

Participant:

Ha ha ha....!

Johnny:

Like now the cookie doesn't have chocolate chips it still could. But it doesn't have chocolate chips. But if I left here. For example if I left it like baking powder it's like now the whole thing fundamentally changes.

Participant:

Mhm...!

Johnny:

And it's kind of some of what I hear you saying is it's not just a periphery experience that I chose not to share but it's a very it's an experience that's connected to a very fundamental part of who I am and so if I if I take that out of the counseling relationship looks the process looks very different from.

Participant:

Yes.

Johnny:

Do you resonate with that? Is there a different way you would describe it?

Participant:

No, I think that's a great analogy. It's interesting because I think at points, I've processed my relationship particularly between like each therapist and how like spirituality, or however you want to call it, plays a role. And it's because it's not necessarily something that's always tangibly present. Right, it's not like every week I'm talking about like oh this is what I think theologically or this is how I was...God was talking to me this week..it's...it's not always that present. But the fact that it's an underlying part of how it's structured, like, that makes a difference I guess. And knowing... knowing I can talk about it or can incorporate it when I need to.

Engaging S/R in Therapy:: Experiencing S/R::Exploring S/R

Johnny:

Right.

Participant:

You know.

Johnny:

Yep... Can I circle back to another word you used. Tell me if you can about healing?

Participant:

What about, great question ha ha ha..!

Johnny:

Yeah. You mentioned as you were talking about as you were describing the experience you had with Jesus on the Camino and then recounting that to your counselor as you were describing it. You used the phrase talking about this healing that took place um.... so maybe in relation to that story or maybe just in general like tell me where the idea the experience of healing fits into your counseling process.

Participant:

Yeah, great question. It will be easier if I tell specifically, and then we can draw themes from it. So the big thing with that story. So a little bit of background. I recently got divorced and over the Camino was trying is one of the things I was trying to discern was whether or not I need to get out of my marriage. And I had been asking people, some of my closest mentors and friends in the weeks before I left, if I do get a divorce, will you still love me? And most of them said yes. A couple of my family members said no.

And, so when I was walking that day, what I heard God say to me was, "you need to ask me this question." And I was like, nope. Ha ha ha....! I really don't want to. And that's what started...I started crying. I was like, I was like God I was like I've been asking everyone else because I'm too scared to ask you. I can't.... I'm too scared of the answer. I'm too scared you're going to say no, I can't, I can't.

And God was like no like we really need to talk about this. You need to ask me this question. And I was like, OK, I was like, God, if I get a divorce, will you still love me? I mean I couldn't even really form the words at this point, you know, because I'm crying so hard. And I just heard God say, "of course. Of course, I'm going to love you." And we talked about that for a little while and I just umm, and...

Context: Spiritual Experiences

And that was when shortly after that when Jesus came and you know was like I'm gonna walk with you. Like, you know, we need to work through this. Basically. And so I, you know, that helped I think articulate the particular kind of shame that I was feeling right and where that was coming from right. That was so much of the oppression that I had internalized from the church I grew up in right that told me that women aren't as valuable as people... that women's value comes from being a wife. And if.... I would no longer have value as a person. (fades)

All of that. Gosh you are so in and really and what (fades) basically once told you that went away. (fades)(fades)(fades)I mean not entirely. And since then, I've noticed that shame but not nearly to the same guy (fades). And just like that.... it's just like he (fades)(fades)(fades)(fades).

Johnny:

Oh I'm losing you for a second. And I really... I really want to make sure, I hear all this yeah.

Participant:

Sorry.

Johnny:

No it's all right.

Participant:

(fades) better?

Johnny:

Yes. There you are. OK. Yeah. And so you said not I want to make sure I get all of it. You said not nearly to the same depth and then you went on.

Participant:

Yeah like still had (fades) you know God I think was just kind of confirming to me that that was not like what I understood was (fades)(fades) what...none of that was from God, and I just needed to let that go. Um... And so that was that was a big thing in my (fades) and my therapist and I obviously had been having a lot of these conversations.

So to be able to retell that story to him and to process what that meant in terms of like how I engage myself even, much less how I engage my family and my friends and my community that you know were all kind of dealing with this too. Yeah. So I think it was just like that turning point...and, um, I think a lot of the power is in being able to name what the shame is and I think the fact that that happened in context of talking to God about it you know, um, just really really affected how I experienced the feeling.

***Engaging S/R in Therapy::Exploring S/R
Receiving from S/R in Therapy:Healing***

Johnny:

Yeah. And thank you for describing that specific and that experience that you had asking God your question hearing God's answer. Experiencing Jesus presence. Was the example you gave of healing. Well tell me what was healed?

Participant:

Huh... (pause) (fades) So this isn't it but I'm trying to figure out what it is... what I want to say is the need to stay in an abusive marriage for the sake of other people but it's it's more than that. (fades) This feels too simple. But I think...(fades) it feels almost just like feeling so fully loved and fully know.

Receiving from S/R in Therapy: Love

Because I think, you know I'll be the first to stand up and preach that God loves us fully and God loves us completely in our brokenness in all parts of our soul. Right? I mean I can't count how many times I've said that to other people. But then when the rubber hits the road sometimes you can't always say that to yourself. And so I think I come to this place where I was like I know God loves me and I know like you know, we have this good relationship and I know that God's, you know, at work in my life and you know. But there was, because I had internalized so deeply this shame from the church I grew up in and I didn't even realize the depth of it right, it was like I, I knew that God loved me.

But I was like there's no way God can love me even in this. You know, there's got to be something still that God would say, "I can't forgive that." Granted my sister basically said that to me verbatim, so I think that's part of where that was coming from. But, like it just it always felt like I did have to hold some part of myself back because God could... there's no way God could love even that. You know what I mean. And so I think by bringing it out into the light and... and realizing wow even in this which I was taught was like literally the worst thing ever. Even in this, God still loves me. And I'm still accepting, and called and beloved and...

Context: Spiritual Experiences

Johnny:

Yeah. Yeah. And... Is that... is the term is the term healing an important one to you to describe that experience? Or is it like getting early that.

Participant:

No, it actually feels important, because (fades)(fades) the way I've come to understand these (fades) things that I felt shame about, what I would say are internalized oppression. They feel like wounds. And so in that sense I think healing is a very appropriate term. I also I think in some ways they feel like wounds and in some ways they also feel like oppressive structures. So, I'd say the particular way I was feeling like shame about getting... being someone who is divorced felt like a wound.

The ways in which I've come to understand the church I grew up in as oppressive toward women in that sense it feels freeing, right or feels empowering or feels... you know like the chains are being taken off. You know I always had this weight on me... I also had some kind of something holding me down and that just got blown off. And it felt both ways I guess, in that moment.

Context: Spiritual Experiences

Johnny:

And i guess so now take take that for me and bring it back to your process in counseling. I guess what is it. What does it mean what does it add to the mix.... to understand for someone to understand that part of your counseling process is a process of healing and freedom. What is that... What's the significance of that? Or reverse it the other way if you what would be lacking if you could describe all of this experience but you didn't feel comfortable to describe it as healing.

Participant:

Then I just feel like it wouldn't, I wouldn't be describing the experience. You know what I mean like, it just wouldn't, it would feel like you'd be talking around it the whole time but not actually being able to talk about what had happened.

Johnny:

Yep. Yeah make sense. Um... I'm aware of our time and that we have like 10 minutes left and you've given me so many great examples that I'm like I should but I'm going to I want to make sure I give plenty of time for the last question because I think you have something.

Participant:

I'm so not on a timer thing so I'm glad if you are, no problem.

Johnny:

Thank you. Um... I am mostly because I'm supposed to keep these structured.

Participant:

Right. Sorry.

Johnny:

But I could talk like so as you think about our conversation your experiences in counseling what else do you want me to know about how you've experienced spirituality faith religion in your counseling process. And this can be big, small, anecdotal, concrete, abstract like open field what else comes to mind that you want to go that this is a relevant part of the experience.

Participant:

Yeah... I think... I think it's just felt important that it's an action on the table always and I've really appreciated when um... my therapist been mindful to bring up, like the big questions, in terms of my faith, you know what I mean? Because I really am, I'm very resistant to this kind of functional, "we have to talk about Jesus" or we have to pray together we have to read the Bible... like that just feels so like almost violating in some ways like just cheap, shitty spirituality.

Engaging S/R in Therapy::Addressing S/R

But, like you know, I just remember there were a times when where I'm processing something that doesn't even remotely feel spiritual to me. But then the counselor asks "How does that affect the way you view God?" "How has God been present to you or not and as you've been thinking about this," and, you know what I mean, like some of the big, just, overarching questions of like oh yeah like maybe the fact that my church always presented God as a very masculine figure. And the fact that I've been abused by men. Maybe that has... like, you know what I mean? So, like big things.

And just to give voice to that um... and I'm not sure I would have you know at least not when I was younger. Been able to have articulated... have articulated that if there hadn't been prompting me or um you know helped give me some language and words to process that. You know, even though I wanted to and I almost didn't even realize at the time how much I wanted to.

Ya... But at the same time it's kind of funny when I was looking for a therapist in Denver, I was so paranoid. If I don't know the Christian counselor, I trust secular counselors more if that makes sense, and so since I didn't have a Christian base that I knew I could draw from, I intentionally chose the secular counselor, because I'm so... because of what I grew up in and like the whole Biblical counseling movement. That is so fundamentally abusive to me.

And so I almost like swung the other way like I'd rather it not be a part and all. Then for you to try to push whatever on me (fades) me and like it's all very important to me than it was organic in how it was incorporated. If that makes sense.

50:15

Johnny:

Yeah it makes a lot of sense.

Participant 7606003

Johnny:

Yeah so. So let me... let me frame just a little bit. As you know from you know the document that I sent in probably the initial interactions you've had with this research I'm I'm really interested in how clients experience their spirituality and religion in their counseling process. And there's sort of nuance that I'm going to be kind of trying to drive us toward of... essentially like, "OK if their spirituality and their religion is they do experience getting counseling" like what exactly does it do to their process.

Participant:

Mhm...!

Johnny:

You know how does it how does it interact with their change almost, what role does it play for them and try to try to put some words around how that operates for people in their counseling process.

Participant:

Yep.

Johnny:

What I need from you is, I need you to just kind of freely reflect on the questions that give you and I'll offer some rejections and refinement to to get us pointed in that direction.

Participant:

All right. Sounds good.

Johnny:

Awesome. So let me start with a pretty broad, pretty broad question which is just how would you describe the role of spirituality and religion in your life?

Participant:

Sure. Ahem..! Um... well I would say that my relationship with Jesus is how I would characterize my spirituality and religion, really for me it's more of a personal relationship em... which I know isn't really like Christianese kind of thing to say in terms of like that kind of the non-denominational evangelical terminology. But I really do feel that personally.

Context: S/R History

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

That that's just you know em words that have been given to me necessarily to describe it I think that's uh probably how I would characterize it just em on my own too. Em um so, that being said, it is a very big part of my life and my relationship with Jesus and um... my spiritual journey, my spiritual walk is the most important thing to me in my life and I consider that to come before just about anything. Em I think of course I'm not perfect and I try to prioritize it but it doesn't always become, it doesn't always.... um it isn't always my first priority even if I wanted to be and even if I aim for it to be.

Context: Identifying as S/R Person

Em but that being said, I think going back to your original question and just how I characterize that in my life and then where it all my life I would say that I... um... I want to make the most important thing in my life. And if I had the choice that would it would be the most important thing in my life and you know I do have the choice but I also am constantly fighting against my own will now aren't I. So um ahem I guess does that answer your question?

Context: S/R History

Johnny:

Yeah. It does. You also highlighted something that I have found important which is there is in this area there's different words that really resonate for people. And what I heard from you was relationship with Jesus and your spiritual walk.

Participant:

Mhm.. Yes...!

Johnny:

Because the words that you feel like really capture your experience with this.

Participant:

Yes absolutely.

Johnny:

So it's a... it's a very high priority for you. Even when you struggle to prioritize it.

Participant:

Yes.

Johnny:

I think, I'm all, I'm curious, how is it, where do you see it in your life and that that can be like values, practices, commitments, like where do you see your relationship with Jesus your spiritual walk in your life?

Participant:

Mhm....! Oh yeah on a practical level I would say. How I spend my time, it determines who I spend my time with. It determines how I respond to bad things, how I respond to good things that happen. It's determined where I work. I'm a, I'm a teacher at a private Christian school. And I don't do it for the money. Ha ha! But I it determines you know, the kinds of activities that I choose to participate in. Um... so I guess that would be related to my morality. And em how I believe, em I want to live my life, it determined who I married.

Context: S/R History

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

You know it's it's really something that has affected every single area of my life. In and I want it to end it's not I you know I don't say that in any way as a negative thing. It's just that's the extent to which I have wanted my relationship with Jesus and my spiritual walk to influence my life.

Johnny:

Yeah, yep..! So, it's... uh, the picture you paint it you'd be... you'd be hard pressed to find an area of your life that it doesn't touch.

Participant:

Yeah. Hum hum hum...! (Giggles)

Johnny:

Yeah. And so it's... it's very central to your life it's determines how you live what you value what you prioritize how you relate. What else would you add to that picture of the role your spiritual walk plays in your life?

Participant:

So, I'll definitely say that it also as influenced my relationships... like you said how I relate to people. That's a big one. Because, I think as a Christian and somebody who I see myself as also representing Jesus, I think there are so many different people who claim to represent Jesus. You know in this world and so many different things that people who don't know Jesus, they just see the Jesus sticker on it and it doesn't matter to them who put it there. They just see that and they're getting lots of different messages.

Context: Identifying as S/R Person

And so it's very important to me um.. as somebody who I believe represents Jesus on earth that, I am representing him accurately. And that somebody who um.. treats others with meets them with love and respect and grace. And I don't want to be the

kind of em I guess cartoon that is often a... that Christians kind of often kinda get they like get stuck in I guess. You know people like see Christians as cartoons of just like judgmental, Bible thumpers or prudes or like you know don't relate to people who are not Christians or something like that.

So, when I say that it affects how I relate to people it affects my relationships. That isn't to say that I em that I only choose Christian friends or something like that in fact I think that em being like... following Jesus has made me seek out more people who don't necessarily know him because I want them to know him. You know. I guess that's one way it's affected many relationships. Also ahem, kind of probably more relevant to what you're studying is even.

I've gone through a lot of really difficult things in my life em and a lot, a lot of trauma and em like in my childhood and I struggled with a lot of like mental illness now as an adult. And so having a relationship with Jesus has definitely colored how I've seen my treatment and recovery for that and em in ways um... um... that em has made it really important to me to seek out somebody who acknowledges my faith... somebody who acknowledges it more than just acknowledges my faith in therapy but actually makes it a part of therapy.

Context: S/R History

So, that was why I specifically wanted to work with somebody like Tim um because, initially I actually saw a counselor who... um..... claims to um be somebody who would incorporate faith in with therapy and even said like herself that she was a Christian, which you know I mean maybe she was or whatever but I just didn't think that she did a very good job of integrating my faith with my therapy and more like most of the time my... my faith was just completely ignored.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Addressing S/R

Em so, I actually didn't end up staying with her for very long because of that because even though she said that she would do that. And maybe occasionally you know it would be like we have this whole big long therapy session. Um... and I guess this probably moving into the next question, isn't it?

Johnny:

Yeah, do it. That's great.

Participant:

Ha ha ha...! Um... well.. instead of, so we'd have like this big long therapy session and you know we'll be doing like talk therapy and like CBT and stuff. And then and never once really even mention Jesus or my faith at all and then kind of like as an afterthought at the end she'd be like, oh by the way like how, how has all of that affected your relationship with Jesus. And then she'd listen. And then she go "OK

well..." oh, you know just like kind of just, just a very neutral reaction this very natural response that didn't really I don't know.

Relating in Therapy: Feeling Known

It kind of was seemed like she was just kind of asking that question so that she could fulfill her, her advertisement of like oh I'll include faith in your therapy, you know. Where Tim was different in that he really and truly I mean it was like a faith based therapy, where Jesus in my faith, in my relationship with Jesus was involved in everything. Every conversation that we had.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Addressing S/R

Johnny:

OK, Yeah. So, yeah that you're... you're totally right that does fit into that next question of how you experience your spirituality, your relationship with Jesus and in your counseling problem and so with Tim you feel like it's been... it's been a part of every conversation can you. Can you give me some examples of like how does how has that shown up for you?

Participant:

Yeah! Em okay um... so, a great example is, um so I grew up in an alcoholic household. My dad was then... my dad was an alcoholic and my mom was actually a narcissist. So, it was kind of like a double whammy. And so I had a lot of, a lot of mixed messages from both of my parents about how i grew up. And you know just about how the world was, and how I was supposed to be and what I was supposed to be doing and all these things. Well ahem, a very big theme for a long time in my counseling was what were the messages that I got from my parents em that told me like who God was. How did that work?

How did what my parents do and how they responded to me as a child influence how I characterized God in my mind. And that was significant part of my therapy for a very long time. Most of my therapy was centered around that big question and deconstructing all of my beliefs both true and false about who God was true and false. Based upon what we know as truth in the Bible. Um... and meeting the lies with truth from the Bible or you know or from work from other, other moments of pretty much undisputed truth form my own life.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Exploring S/R

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

And things... You know, so uh that I mean you know that alone is like it's answering a question. The question that I'm answering is how has all of this stuff that you're

dealing with like affected your relationship with Jesus which is the central thing that I'm concerned about in my life anyway. Right. So, you know rather than seeing it as just kind of like this other aspect of who I am you know I felt like my first counselor who you know said that she included faith or whatever in her counseling. It was kind of like she saw me as a child of a narcissist and an alcoholic.

Context: Identifying as S/R person

Where Tim saw me as you know a child of God in a relationship with Jesus and wanting to make it healthy and wanting to you know have the best relationship with him that I could. And seeing you know the things that I have gone through in my life is affecting my relationship with Jesus but not as like the central part of who I was. You know! I was just like a patient or something you know to the other counselor.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Experiencing S/R

Johnny:

Yeah. And so in that's.... that's a great kind of parallel with the first with the first counselor she really saw she saw your your issues first she saw you react to things that have been painful for you. And saw those as kind of like part of who you were.

Participant:

Mhm...!

Johnny:

Whereas Tim seems like the the start for him has been seeing you as a child of God and everything else it's around that.

Participant:

Exactly. Mhm...!

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

Right. Which I think is really an important distinction because, you know there is... there is in my mind and I've seen this in my husband also sees a counselor too... and em for different stuff but he actually just like ended his counseling with this one because of the same thing where this counselor said that she would include faith in his counseling but it was really just an afterthought. So in my mind I see that, in my mind I see two different distinctions of quote unquote faith in counselors.

Relating in Therapy: Developing Trust

Johnny:

Hmm...!

Participant:

There are the ones who, it's just lip service. And they don't really see you first and foremost as a follower of Jesus. You know or you know a Christian or I guess in general if you're talking general spirituality, you know a practitioner of whatever religion it is that you ascribe to. There are the ones who just who just see that as a secondary facet of who you are kind of like I'm female, I'm white, I'm middle class. I'm you know all of these things like oh and I'm Christian you know so it's kind of like there's the ones who give lip service to your faith. Ahem. And then there are the ones who are like Tim, who see you as like that's the central most important aspect of who you are when everything is, everything else is kind of surrounds that, you know.

Johnny:

Yeah and so you have this... you have these two experiences that are very distinct, very different for you in counseling. And I think the place that I'm really interested in is you know how does it. What role does it play in the counseling process or for your experience with Tim. You know one of the... one of the things, one of the metaphors that I've kind of chewed on has been faith, relationship with Jesus, spirituality as a ingredients as it as if we are doing her a recipe. And it's you know it's like... if you leave you leave chocolate chips out of a recipe is missing chocolate chips. But if you leave your baking soda out of a recipe the whole recipe changes.

Participant:

Yeah.

Johnny:

And so I'm kind of curious like what kind of an ingredient has it been in terms of your counseling process?

Participant:

Um.... so, I would say, if you're making baked chicken, and you take out the chicken, all you have is the stuffing. Which might taste good. And it might... leave you satisfied for a short period of time but, at the end of the day you need your protein. And a baked chicken isn't a bake chicken without a chicken.

Context: Identifying as S/R Person

Johnny:

Right.

Participant:

And so I would see my faith and spirituality like the chicken ha ha in the recipe. It's really the most important part and without it it's not completely worthless.

Johnny:

Mhm...!

Participant:

Em, you know like it has some worth maybe just for the short term like I said I might feel a little better, I might be able to gain some you know like strategies for dealing with anxiety or some ideas for boundaries to have with my parents. Or something along those lines. But if I'm never dealing with the root of the problem which for me has been deeply spiritual because, it's affected how I view God and how I relate to God. Well then you know in a long term sense, there's not really much. It doesn't really do much good.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Exploring S/R

Johnny:

Mhm..! And so without... without your relationship with God in the mix it's like I hear you describing where counseling can still be beneficial.

Participant:

Yeah.

Johnny:

You'd still gain things there. You might learn strategies or tools but that's the counseling that includes your relationship with God is driving at something much deeper.

Participant:

Mhm... yes. Yeah.

Johnny:

Yeah, say if you can say more for me like, how does it, how does it change knowing that that is present in your counseling process?

Participant:

Em, so, I think, where, when I was in counseling and that really wasn't central, I think that the goal was just to feel better. And there's nothing wrong with that being you are goal necessarily you know especially if you are just feeling so bad. Because the initial thing that through that drove me to counseling was like more acute senses of anxiety and things like that. And it was pretty, pretty quickly determined that like you know where my anxiety came from. You know it doesn't take long talking to me, asking me about my child did to go like wow, yeah it was pretty screwed up. Ha ha...! You know..!

And it makes sense why you have anxiety. So anyway. But the main goal of that seemed to just to be to feel better, to get me functional again. And to give me the strategies and tools kind of like what you said. And all of those things are fine. And

honestly they're even good on their own. Um.... but...! I was in counseling with Tim and the goal was really to like almost deconstruct these lies that I believed.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Exploring S/R

And reconstruct truth. It set me up for more than just feeling better. It set me up for true healing and true reconciliation even. Because I could then not only just have strategies for boundaries with my parents but even like forgive them and truly mean it. Because I could. Because at that point you know I had gone through so much healing that it was possible.

Johnny:

Yeah...! You know this is... you hit.. you hit on a word that comes up a lot around spirituality, Christian spirituality and even these conversations I've had which is which is healing.

Participant:

Mhm...! Ahem...!

Johnny:

If you can um... think about think about healing in terms of your counseling process and if you can tell me a little bit about it what gets healed. How you know when it's healed what what's the catalyst for that healing?

Participant:

Hmm... em so what gets healed. I would say that my ability to relate honestly and to relate based on truth um.. and it includes my in my relationship with God and also with my relationship with others. (coughs)

Receiving from S/R in Therapy: Healing

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

And especially my parents because I can, I can still honor them by telling the truth even if the truth is not necessarily the best. Now, that doesn't say that like I'm going to go and just like slander them to everybody or something like that. But, I think that one of my, one of the ways that I was very broken was that I was in so much denial for a very long time.

Um... am... just how broken they were and how much that had affected, affected me that I couldn't even really admit it to myself. Until somebody else actually like... you know I was I was to the point where I was so desperate to just feel better because I was so uncomfortable in my anxiety and my depression and my dysfunction as a person that when finally I woken up and started telling the truth. Um... then

somebody that you know the counselor who heard it was like, yeah, that's not normal. Like the way that you grow up isn't healthy that's you know it makes sense everything you're saying is actually it makes sense.

That you have problems because of that you know. Em and anyway so I think that what has been healed is my ability to no longer hide from truth for one. Not that I'm always great at it, but I think at least now I know when, when my initial reaction is to hide from truth. He he.. (Giggles) And so, I think um being able yes in that kind of I guess the same, the same thing you're saying it in a different way it's just be honest with myself, um about where I am and where my relationships are. And what's going on in them. Ahem.

Context

Johnny:
Yeah.

Participant:

And so you asked what was healed. So, I think it's really important for me to make the distinction that when I say that I have experienced all that a lot of healing em that doesn't necessarily mean that like I've just everything's great with my parents and things are peachy and like some kind of a movie or something because there are not. Em... But I think that part of healing for me is also em finding peace that that might never happen. Um... And that, that's OK.

And that part of em choosing to, part of choosing to break cycles of things like alcoholism and narcissism is making choices that are different than that of my parents. Because, one thing that I've seen from siblings is that they haven't made choices that are different than my parents. That's part they're in denial of what is actually going on themselves I think. Um... ahem.. so yeah, I'm, I'm probably always going to have to have boundaries with my parents and I think I've finally gotten some peace about that so I think that's like probably... the what even though I guess I didn't really give you a tangible one.

Receiving from S/R: Freedom

Johnny:
I mean it's hard to define right.

Participant:
Yeah it is. It is hard to define.

Johnny:
And yet what I hear from you is like there's these significant words that go around this idea of healing. This experience of healing, denial... denial was present before healing happened.

Participant:
Mhm... yep.

Johnny:
And as a result of the healing you're able to live and relate more honestly around what is true and and you're able to have. What I heard was kind of like before it was denial that there was healing and then there was acceptance of what it is.

Participant:
Yes. Ahem!

Johnny:
And then with that peace.

Participant:
Mhm..! Yeah, I think that's... that's really true. And another thing too that I want to bring up on that I really am drawn to the concept of truth, goodness and beauty. Which is kind of the three classical.... Um... The three classical aesthetic.. em focuses I guess.

Receiving from S/R in Therapy: Truth

Johnny:
Yeah.

Participant:
So..... so, I think that em, when I think about my relationships and how they've changed since I've gone through counseling and experience some healing on this is that em I can feel the truth a lot better. It's not so much obscured by the lies I've been telling myself or by the rose colored glasses that I've wanted to put on and just kind of you know not see or choose not to see the things that have been harmful.

Em ahem.. and I think that it's also helps me to see what is truly beautiful and truly good alongside of that because I think when, when you are ignoring the truth or when you're allowing your, when you're allowing truth to be obscured em what it then leads you to believe is good and beautiful is completely different than what you find to be good and beautiful when the truth is no longer obscured. That makes sense!

Johnny:
Yeah. And so there's this as that.... As that key piece of spirituality your spiritual walk is that gets undressed in your process. It's it splinters out into these. Now... now that I am accepting truth more I can now see true beauty and true goodness.

Participant:

Yeah.

Johnny:

Yeah!

Participant:

Yeah, I would.... I would say that em because I think the things that I for example before the things that I would think were good and beautiful were things like just this false peace of OK.. Nobody is in conflict at the moment. Um... you know... kind of I'm meeting all of my expectations and I'm making everyone happy, no one's mad at me. I mean things like that.

Johnny:

Mhm..!

Participant:

And so it was all very self focused too. And that actually was kind of setting me up to become a narcissistic ha ha.. in some ways. You know not that you can just become a narcissist because, you think a certain way I know there's a lot of other things that are going to like true narcissism in a psychological sense. But if you know if you want to talk about it in a spiritual sense, a lot of sin is generational. And it's cyclical. And if you want it to end with you, you have to make choices. You know in order to make it end.

And I think that, even though I maybe would have consciously said, well of course there are so many ways that I don't want to be like my mom. You know after a lot of prodding and denial of the truth I think that inwardly there are a lot of ways that I said I you know I want this to end with me. But it never could have ended with me. Because, when I saw goodness and beauty as just very well when I am OK, but everyone is OK with me, when my life is fine. When there are no crises surrounding me that's good and beautiful.

Well commented on me and that's like you know kind of that's the center of narcissism too. So, I think it helped me to also open myself up and see oh... yeah... there are other people and relating with other people is a form you know that's good. And there's a lot of beauty in it too. And it can also really, it can also really show truth about who God is too. And um... anyway, a lot of other things too that's just kind of one example is like talking about relationships.

I think that being able to see relationships even when they're imperfect. Even when things are not OK all the time as still being good and still being beautiful. And still portraying truth even um... that's something that I probably wouldn't have really been able to do before.

Johnny:

Yeah.. I'm going to call it a change process. You have this change process that's gone on in counseling.

Participant:

Mhm...!

Johnny:

Like from point A to Point B. I'm different than I was. I see things differently or I understand things differently or um... and that process is intricately interwoven with your spiritual walk and your perspective of your relationship with God, your relationship with Jesus. Um... and I think I wanted to bring us right back to that intersection, between the two of..

Participant:

So like the process?

Johnny:

Yeah in it's.... you're.... you're you're giving me all great reflections. My my job in this process is to keep turning it around. And coming back to it to get more and more words around it.

Participant:

Yes sure.

Johnny:

So, I just... yeah, I just want to bring you back to that intersection of your.... your faith in the counseling process.

Participant:

Mhm...!

Johnny:

If someone if a friend came to you and said OK, "I don't understand though like you can go to another trained counselor" and they can help you learn these things. Is it is it really about your faith. It won't. What would you tell them about like what why your counseling process has to have your faith in it?

Participant:

So, I guess I have a couple of the answers for that. And one of them is kind of going back to explaining the role that faith plays in my life. It's really the lens that I see, I see everything through... my whole entire life through the lens of faith. I see and it's something on some degree of course I've chosen it. Em but by choosing it you've also chosen to make it that first lens. It's kind of like going to the, you know going to the eye doctor and the put lots of different lenses in front of you to try to figure out what prescription you need or whatever.

And they put the first lens in front of you and that's the lens that you see everything through. And then I have another lens and that's the lens that I see the world through you know growing up with an alcoholic father. And there's another lens... growing up with a narcissistic mom. And then another lens, which is you know seeing the world as a woman. And then there's another one you know and it just kind of goes on and I think even if you're not choosing the right prescription I guess and some I don't know if that's a great analogy but em certain ones will make the world clearer than others. Em depending on how much they obscure your vision in a certain way.

Context: Identifying as S/R Person

So, em, so, I think that, my counseling process had to address the first lens through the lens that wasn't going to move anywhere. You know, I can.... I can take steps to like I said um.... address certain truths about my parents or truths about the way I grew up or truths about my femininity. And that would change things a little bit. But it wasn't going to change quite as much as if I addressed the very first lens through which I saw everything. And that's my faith. So, that answers I think the first question.

The 2nd question I guess more about the process then is that um... in the process of counseling and kind of what I refer to earlier is that the big central question that we were constantly... that I was constantly being asked then was how... ahem what I had gone through and em my... a... my grievances and my anxiety and mental health and things. How was that. How that made me view God and what I believe therefore about God because of those things.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Exploring S/R

Johnny:
Mhm...!

Participant:

And it was not only just (fades) but the believe that I had, where the believes came from, where they were founded in and... and a lot of that ended up meaning that I had to tell a lot of stories and I had to talk about some of the things. And sometimes I didn't even know. So, that's why I needed Tim with his expertise in counseling and his experience and things like that to kind of speculate and kind of ask like OK, well you know it sounds like... so great example is like um... I believe that God's will was really kind of not personal to me.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Experiencing S/R

You know that as a part of just like as the grander scheme of God's will, I was just kind of another cog in the watch. God didn't really see me as an individual with... with em even though I... I believed that He.... that I had a personal relationship with...

with him. When it came to his plans for my life, I felt like he was very.. very hands off. He was like, well now that my will is set that and that's what's going to happen. And maybe I guess you know this is like another discussion maybe on a theological level but that, there might be some truth to that.

But, also I think that it's important to acknowledge the nuance that's there too. That even though that there might be like some slight truth in that statement like God is still a personal God. And he chose me for certain parts of his will because, he made me for it in a very personal and intimate way. Um.... but anyway...where am I going with this? Em, oh, so that was an example of like a lie that I believed about God.

Receiving from S/R in Therapy: Feeling Known

Johnny:
Yeah.

Participant:

So the lie was that he was kind of hands off and like he just kind of like plopped me down in the world and said, OK that's what you're going to do. All right. And so that whenever.. whenever anything.. anything wrong happened or anything bad happened. And there were lots of bad things that happened to me that it was that he didn't really care or like he knew it was going to happen but he didn't do anything to stop it. It was just kind of like uh.. you know well that sucks. Kind of like... kind of a thing. Um and so it wasn't I think until counseling that I could actually also just see my relationship with God in the way that He did put me into the world and created me to be.

That there is some nuance to that and that it's not true, that he's just this cold unfeeling God that is kind of like, "Oh well plop me in the world and whatever happens, happens". And the reason why I believed that, which I would not have necessarily known before counseling was because my dad was an extremely passive father. He just, he was like "oh whatever, whatever." You know I could do something awesome, I could do something really bad, I could do something you know whatever, it didn't matter. And my dad was just have this very, you know he is very passive about it.

So, that you know translated into my beliefs about who God was. And so even though on some levels I believed that he was a personal God and I wanted to have a personal relationship with him. There is a very large part of me that also like couldn't really that couldn't really allow myself to interact with him as if he were a personal God. Because, this little voice in my head was saying, no, he's actually pretty passive. And he doesn't really care about you. Because this is how you've experienced your father and if he's your heavenly father, well you know that was my model for father. So, that to me was what a father did.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Experiencing S/R

Johnny:

Yeah. Yep. And so the two again that the two that the counseling process the relationship with God they just weave back and forth.

Participant:

Yes.

Johnny:

And they weave back and forth. I continue to hear some of the same key pieces that I'm helping to see truth as opposed to denial. Kind of accepting vs. denial. Like here um... I kind of heard you talked about the personalization God becoming more personal. Um.... I got the sense that. I got the sense that bringing your faith into your counseling process like brings more of your presence into the counseling process?

Participant:

Yes, absolutely. I would say that's a statement that accurately describes my experience. Ahem. Because, em I think if my faith hadn't been involved you know as it were with the first with the first counselor that I had I think I could have almost seen myself in third person as like another as a patient you know just trying to fix my problems but in a very impersonal way. Because, that was something that I struggled with going into counseling too, was kind of dissociating from myself in a lot of ways and just kind of that I'm.... I'm a pretty analytical thinker.

And so I tend to em if I'm having a problem I go "OK emotions you're going to go over here and I'm going to think about this rationally and logically and you know philosophically and solve the problem," anyway. Em but when my faith was involved, it was impossible to separate the two anymore. You know because, at that point I can't talk about my faith in third person. You can't talk about your faith in third person. You just can't.

Um.... you know and I can... I could talk about my emotions in third person though because I could go well, it makes sense that I was angry because, I you know I was in a situation in which I was in danger ha ha (giggles) and so I felt, I probably felt fear and fear is something that leads to anger. So that makes sense you know my, my favorite phrase when I first started counseling was "that makes sense." I was trying to make sense of everything. You know, and I wasn't really actually letting myself feel things and I wasn't really letting myself process emotions. It was just thoughts.

Relating in Therapy: Feeling Known: Experiencing Closeness

Johnny:

Yeah. So you had that makes sense and thoughts versus feeling the emotion. And did your spirituality, your spiritual walk play a role in moving from A to B?

Participant:

Yes absolutely. Because, like I said when you're talking about your spiritual experience, that is so personal. And it's not something that can be applied to everyone. Because, you could say something like well everyone gets angry, everyone gets sad. Lots of people feel anxiety. You know emotions, we have words for them because on some level they're universal.

And while we do have words for spirituality, one of the things that makes it unique from strictly emotions or thoughts is that it is so individual. I experienced God in my life... My relationship with God is completely different than the way that you experience God or the relationship that you might have with him.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Exploring S/R

Johnny:
Yeah.

Participant:
Even for the person that I'm closest with on the planet. My own husband may experience God completely differently, you know. And that isn't to say that He, that it's a different God because I don't believe that it is. It's just that our relationships are different. And so when you, when somebody asks me to talk about my relationship with God, um... yeah, we might have some shared language. But we don't have shared experience. So, there's no way that I can talk about it, em divorced from my emotions, divorced from my own personal experience, you know.

Relating in Therapy: Developing Trust

Johnny:
Yep... yeah..!

Participant:
So it kind of naturally leads to emotion because then you know that's what comes next, I guess. That's like the next personal thing. So it's almost, it's almost like going backwards to what you think. Because if you have spirituality as like the basis for your counseling, you're not going from thoughts to experiences that led to those thoughts to umm the. It's kind of like Aristotle's, his line of formation.

You know a line of formation is not necessarily infinite. It has to stop somewhere you know or a line of causation. So there's like you there's thoughts and those are caused by experiences and the experiences are caused by actions and the actions are caused by emotions and emotions are caused by spirituality. If I had to put them in a line like that. And I would say that in like conventional counseling it goes that way. Starts with thoughts and as you go deeper, it goes to spirituality. But when spirituality is the center of your counseling, it starts at spirituality and it ends with thoughts.

Johnny:
Yeah. That's helpful. Um... I'm aware of our time.

Participant:
Hum hum hum (Giggles)

Johnny:
And want to be respectful of yours. And so I want to.... I want to make sure I know you've talked some about Tim in about previous counselor. But I want to float this question of you know how did you experience your counselor in relation to your spirituality.. your spiritual walk?

Participant:
So, could you clarify, are you talking more, like our personal relationship like as counselor and client, or yeah, OK.

Johnny:
Mhm..!

Participant:
So, I should be honest, I really never connect with Tim personally very well ha ha ha at all at the beginning. Uh.. Because, he is a very 'feely' person. He has a lot of emotions. He is very emotional. He is very... um he is very raw and honest about his emotions. And that completely freaked me out, at first. Because actually the first time I ever really met him was actually like.

I mean I'd met him before but, the first time I ever really had a conversation with him more related to emotions and my faith and things like that, it was at a trip that my church had put on that was through. Em, they were going through the journey book, I don't know if you're familiar with the journey or soul journey. I don't know, they called it that too.

Johnny:
I'm not.

Participant:
It's like a group therapy program that's very... it's like an intensive group therapy program. Em that its over the course of 12 sessions and normally they're weekly sessions. But in this trip we went to this like big mansion over on the west side of Michigan. And like that was like on the water and stuff. And we stayed there for like a week. It was like a bunch of people from my church who chose to kind of be the guinea pigs for this. And then did an intensive 12 sessions over the course of the week in just like kind of dealing with lots of different things.

And this was between counselors. This was after I had talked with the old counselor and I was still trying to figure out who you know what to do and I was trying to find a counselor and so I was trying out lots of group stuff seeing that maybe that would be better because, I wasn't super thrilled with my experience with the previous one. And then I met Tim there because, he was actually my group leader.

Context to Therapy

And um... and yeah, like I said, I didn't really connect with him super well. He freaked me out. But I liked, actually I liked how he integrated em well not just integrated but I liked how he was very much the core of his counseling practice seemed to be faith and spirituality.. um.. and so, and that was what I was, what I knew had been missing from my other counseling experience. So, I started counseling with him a few months later after being on his wait list for a while.

Relating in Therapy Process: Developing Trust

And yeah, same thing. I struggled at first to relate with him. Uh... because there were certain things that he did that made me really uncomfortable. Um... and it was not like a personal thing necessarily, It was just the way that he related, the way that he talked and the things that he said and you know where I wasn't used to that, I wasn't used to him saying things like em you know or like waiting for me to talk and just staring at me. Like he did that a lot. Ha ha ha....! You know. And and. It ended up, it was all fine and everything.

Em but I think I wouldn't have stayed in counseling with him for almost two years, had faith and spirituality not been the central part of my counseling because, em regardless of whether personally we would have necessarily been friends or whatever. But like had any kind of relationship, I'm actually good friends with his wife ha ha, Jess..! And I relate much better to her. But anyway em I wouldn't have probably chosen him as a friend necessarily. Uh... you know and so we probably wouldn't have had a relationship, if it hadn't been for counseling.

Johnny:
Yeah.

Participant:
But I think we... he grew on me. Ha ha ha...! He is my counselor. If he didn't, I wouldn't have stayed with him for so long probably. So yeah, he was fine at the end. Ha ha!

Johnny:
Yeah. And you're, you... you made a statement in there that, if it wasn't for faith being very central to the counseling you probably wouldn't have stayed in with him.

Participant:

Nope, probably not. Ha ha ha! Probably not at all. Probably wouldn't have stayed for longer than like 2-3 sessions. I probably would have been like, thanks, I don't think this is gonna to work. Bye! Ha ha ha!

Johnny:

Yeah. What about your faith being in the mix made you stick in there with him?

Participant:

Because that was exactly what I knew I needed I think. I think that was exactly I didn't know at the time that that was what I was looking for exactly. But when I, when I started talking to him and the questions that he was asking were making me squirm in all of the right ways, is that makes any sense? That sounds weird but, but that's really what it was. And I knew that I needed to stay. And I knew that it would be really good for me.

Receiving from S/R in Therapy: Guidance/Direction

Johnny:

Hmm... yeah... yep... and then before we move toward wrapping up our time as we've talked, as you think about your counseling, the role that your spiritual walk plays in it. Is there anything else you want me to know? This could be clarification and it could be an anecdote it could be something that came to mind.

Participant:

Um... I am not done yet. I wouldn't say that, I am like all better now and things are fantastic. But and in fact I think I'm actually still em I still want to continue in counseling probably with somebody else. But, I think that, I'm... I'm much more equipped to not just be functional but actually to have a very... have a very joyful and fulfilling life on a more, on a less spiritual level even.

I think I feel a lot more secure in my faith and in my relationship with Jesus. And a lot of it has to do with the work that Tim and I did together, in my counseling. But again that isn't to say that everything is perfect because it's far, they're far from it. I still have a lot of things that I'm dealing with, I still have a lot of healing that needs to happen. I'm not always good at employing my strategies that I've learned necessarily. And I still on a, on even bigger level, I still really struggle with a lot of the same lies. You know that I believe about who God is. But the difference now is that when I find myself kind of falling into those lies I go "oh yeah that's a lie." Where before I never could have done that.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Exploring S/R

Participant 7606004

00:51

Johnny:
Hey Participant

Participant:
Hey Johnny, how is it going?

Johnny:
Good how are you?

Participant:
Good thanks.

Johnny:
A... is now gonna work?

Participant:
Yeah its good.

Johnny:
Excellent.

Participant:
No problem. Sorry, I just had it, it took me a minute to get a room at my office.

Johnny:
No problem. Looks like you set up now. you've got the bows. You've got the noise cancelling going. You're like ready to go.

Participant:
Yeah yeah dialed in. Totally rolled in.

Johnny:
Um... well hey, first let me say thank you very much again, appreciate you making time.

Participant:
Sure.

Johnny:
I'll start by checking in and see if you have any questions for me and then I'll move to framing our time and getting us pointed in the right direction.

Participant:

Okay, sounds good.

Johnny:
So any questions before we start?

Participant:
Nope, nothing so far.

Johnny:
Alright and i'm probably gonna write a few notes to myself as we're chatting. If you see me writing that's what i'm doing.

Participant:
Sounds good.

Johnny:
But i'll jump right in and we're gonna go right to about 2:55 and then we'll be done for today.

Participant:
Sounds good.

Johnny:
So I... you know and I talked a little bit on the phone. Am... there is this specific space, that I'm interested in researching that isn't just you know what's it like to address spirituality and religion and counseling or how do clients feel about their spirituality. it's really the specific space where a client's process and counseling overlaps with their spirituality and religion. and so I'm gonna ask some questions to you that are really geared toward gathering your reflections. And then I'll be asking follow-up questions to keep us pointed at that particular target.

Participant:
Am... sorry you just cut out. I am not sure if there's a network connection issue. But you'd cut out when you said you're going to your focus specifically on.

Johnny:
Okay let me grab a hard line and then, I'll repeat that.
[silence]
Alright got an Ethernet line plugged in now, hopefully that'll give us better connection.

Participant:
Cool. Sounds good.

Johnny:

Let me know if we have any other issues. But yeah, I was saying really specifically focused on the overlap between someone's counseling process and their spirituality and religion.

Participant:
OK.

Johnny:
One of the ways i like to think about it is like, if you were putting together a recipe a meal or if you're baking something and you have this ingredient of someone spirituality and religion, i really want to know what kind of ingredient it is. what is it do to the counseling process. How does it alter it? Is it, you know is it like sprinkles on top or is it like baking powder, baking soda that affects the whole thing.

Participant:
Gotcha.

Johnny:
So, with that in mind, I'm gonna keep us targeted toward that place and for you i just need your reflections about these questions.

Participant:
Okay awesome.

Johnny:
So lets start...

Participant:
I like the analogy that's gonna be helpful for me.

Johnny:
Oh good, good. Um.... so, let's start with a broad question which is how would you describe the role of spirituality and religion in your life?

Participant:
Um.... I would say it's a foundational, it's very foundational to how i make decisions whether or not i'm aware of its role, it influences almost all of my decisions and influences my perception of life, so and often for better for worse. I think part of my spiritual, part of my counseling process has been to peel away any of the the layers of the unhelpful dynamic that, maybe it might be more Christian culture or incorrect spiritual interpretations or whatever how those have negatively impacted my ability to make decisions or my ability to make a good judgments about the way the world is.

Context: Identifying as an S/R person

Johnny:
Hmm... okay...!

Participant:
So, yeah definitely good, definitely bad. But i would say it's very fundamental to my life.

Context: Identifying as S/R person

Johnny:
Yeah and so you use the words that kind of describe and then give these like gradients like its foundational. Sometimes it's visible, sometimes it's not visible. Sometimes it's implicit, sometimes its explicit. And then it sounds like you almost gave some different spheres like decision making perception of the world judgment making good judgments things like that.

Participant:
Mhm...!

Johnny:
Um... two questions to follow up on that. One is when i spit out these words; spiritual, religious, faith, God or add some for me which words resonate the most for you?

Participant:
Uh... I think they, they all resonate on.. on some level and they can be used to describe the same thing but there's connotation that each holds that I have done a lot of well a bit of work in re framing of words like religion. Um... and I think the, yeah my upbringing was such that religion was a bad word. Am... and it was more faith. But now I look at religion is a lot more of a beautiful term.

Context: History with S/R

Johnny:
Okay.

Participant:
So.... um... but... but yeah that the words that may be like have the most meaning are probably faith, spirituality, God and then religion in that order.

Johnny:
Okay, yeah. And when you think about that picture you you painted of its foundational, it's there even when you may not see it.

Participant:
Mhm...!

Johnny:
Am I cutting in and out still?

Participant:
No you're good, we're good.

Johnny:
Um.... I'm curious you know what what are the moments what are moments that you think of when the experience is very kind of tangible or present like when your faith feels very visible to you.

Participant:
Um..... [silence]
I think when life gets more difficult, when.... I'm faced with challenging decisions or I'm less comfortable and upset or angry about something, that's when.... that's when I think my faith starts to surface. That's when I start to ask questions that are more faith based. wWhere I need to respond like maybe I'm stuck in some cycle uh.. of some pattern of thought or action that is not helpful and I recognize, I'm very uncomfortable and the pain or this is a difficult decision or whatever uh... that's when that's..... that's.... that's when faith definitely surfaces. Faith might surface before that point but that is when I'm you know when i'm waking up in the morning I feel uncomfortable like I need to pray.

Context: S/R Practices

Johnny:
Hmm...!

Participant:
Or I need to sort this out from a faith perspective.

Johnny:
OK.

Participant:
I said too general or...?

Johnny:
No, that's helpful, um... I'm.. i have a curiosity but i'm gonna name it and then move will move into the counseling context is um... part of what I'm curious about is you know when you encounter those difficulties or challenges and you find yourself asking questions of that are more faith oriented and then you know i'm very curious about that process of what what does it do what does it change what is it how do you experience it internally. I think we're going to float that but I think we're gonna

run into that as we move into the counseling stuff.

Participant:

Definitely. I mean that's really... it's really part of my experience so okay probably won't avoid talking about that.

Johnny:

Good... okay so yeah let's move into the you know how would you describe your faith your spirituality in... in counseling?

Participant:

Um... [silence]

So given the fact that it's... it's so fundamental to me in my course of selecting a counselor I knew that I would need to have someone who has more than just an openness to the goodness of Christianity.

Relating in Therapy: Developing Trust

Johnny:

OK.

Participant:

And... and maybe like a deeper knowledge of some of the strengths and pitfalls of being a Christian in 2017 or you know in this day and age. What that might entail because there's nuances that... that maybe once you're in the fold you start to recognize a little bit more um.... so the role that... that my faith plays in counseling is... um.... I'm able to bring up the challenging subjects, a difficulty and you know describe it in very commonly relatable terms that anyone in any vernacular...coming from any background would be able to, to relate to.

And then touch on a... the facet of faith and how my faith or my... my spirituality or my religion or the you know some of the tendencies of there of has influenced my perception of that event or that... that feeling.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Exploring S/R:: Addressing S/R

Johnny:

Ahan.

Participant:

So uh.. ya.. and I guess you know, I ...I find myself to be fairly unique in a way... well I don't know maybe not terribly unique but a little bit more spiritually attuned.

Johnny:

Okay.

Participant:

Then uh then even you know a lot of my peers who have a rich faith. A number... a number of years ago I went through an experience that could be categorized as a bipolar split, that was really um.. it lasted about six months and was really traumatic. Um... internally, externally it was... it wasn't quite as like I didn't have this huge wake of disaster that I think some... some people's lives can... can have but it was scary for friends and family for sure. Because I was not myself.

But the... the most notable aspect of that was there was a undeniable spiritual dimension to that experience. So, that being able to talk to a counselor about spiritual... spiritual forces, like the spiritual dimension of life, the way that maybe angels and demons or things like that might... might be there, might be a part of our life experience, it's necessary for me to be able to have those kinds of conversations with some credibility.

Context: History with S/R

Johnny:
OK.

Participant:

Umm.... So having I... I think, when finding a counselor, I was... I was careful to find someone who had openness to that world and I think even some Christians might categorize that in a certain way that I was unwilling to you know I was unwilling to negotiate on... internally, you know... on this being a a reality of my life.

Relating in Therapy: Developing Trust

Johnny:
Yeah.

Participant:
So....! Em..!

Johnny:

That's amazing. I mean it sounds great it sounds very hard like obviously like it sounds like this what you said bipolar split was very long lasting and presented challenges but there's.... there's also this piece that you pull out of it that yeah you experience things spiritually that it sounds like for you it's like no no, these were spiritual experiences and..

Participant:

Mhm..! There's no.. like there's no scientific way to describe some of the things that I experienced.

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

Other than it... it happened I can't repeat it you know like I couldn't repeat you know... science relies on repeatability, those events happened and you know or this experience happened and it's unrepeatability. So, if I am to have a conversation with... uh.. with a counselor who falls under a very you know which commonly are our medical community tends to fall under very regimented scientific mindset, the modern mindset that.

I knew even at the time I didn't want to go to a counselor. I just couldn't because it was I just didn't want to be medicated. And.... and I didn't want just to like turn down that sensitivity which I think medication can do because, it was challenging. And I think given the fact that I wasn't... by and large I wasn't terribly dangerous to myself or others and there was moments where I definitely was.

It was... it was a wise choice ha ha... but I... I... I needed, yeah in counseling I need to have given the fact that this is it's you know a very large component of my life and it's been a large component of my experience in this bipolar split. I don't even know how to categorize, what to call it but that's how I might use it in this... in this type of conversation. Was about seven years ago. And it dramatically changed my life. And I... and the way I interpret the world so, I want to be able to have a counselor that I can bring that up.

Relating in Therapy: Feeling Known

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

With you know some comfortability and and.... and not like em.. yeah not run the risk of just sort of falling into a.. into a box of... and I don't know those fears may or may not be valid but those were the fears that I had and kind of still carry.

Johnny:

Yeah absolutely, um... yeah I'm appreciating it now even as you're jumping right in telling me about this experience knowing this sounds like a very personal it was very personal part of who you are.

Participant:

Mhm...

Johnny:

And when you experience and you do have fears around I don't want to put this out there I don't want to share this spiritual sensitivity that I have and the spiritual experiences i had and have them looked at as well I don't know maybe that was like

a hallucination or something or maybe about yet wasn't real or like you wanted to be able to talk to someone who can say which is my next question. Tell me about this spiritual sensitivity?

Participant:

Um... [silence]

Actually i guess, where to start, I guess, I've always been a bit more of a sensitive person, like you know ever since I was a kid. Um... sensitive in terms of, I could get my feelings hurt easily but also sensitive in the terms... in terms of em... more more thoughtful, a little bit more attuned to what might be really going on or what might be really being said. Takes me a little while to arrive at a conclusion but when I do I think in class my teacher.....

Context: Identifying as S/R Person

16:25

Participant:

Yo....

Johnny:

Hey.

Participant:

Okay cool, we're good?

Johnny:

Yep.

Participant:

Alright, much better.

Johnny:

Cool so, I lost you when you said teachers in school would...

Participant:

Ah... okay...! Um...! So, I think I am still.... I'm still figuring out what... what spiritual sensitivity means as as opposed to just being a sensitive person. Um.... but I and I don't know if there's much difference really but I think.... [silence] I think there's a... there's I'm I in yeah in class I... I think I think of like conversations in English class for example where we're interpreting some literary work. Teachers would note that my insight on... on whatever was happening in the work was... was just a little bit deeper than most of most of my peers.

Johnny:

OK.

Participant:

Not and that's I think... I think that's just because I tend to be a little bit more thoughtful and attuned to what is true. I think and I've experienced that the feelings of expressing myself in those situations tend to feel like the same feelings as when I have a sense of the spirit, a sense of, yeah spirituality.

Johnny:

Okay

Participant:

Um... I don't know that I can I don't know, I think I might but I might make comparisons there to myself but ... so when I talk about some specifics, ways this spiritual sensitivity looks to me... I... um a bit before this... this experience that I had a little over seven years ago would hear you know have senses of "do this" or "say this" or "look here" or not in like a not in a real like overt or powerful way but just sort of like little nudges I guess, that are yeah... that were... that felt very you know very much something other than myself.

Context: History with S/R

Johnny:

Okay..!

Participant:

In the.. in my time of um... yeah my time of of trial or my time of difficulty that I had seven years ago, it was much more like fre... it was like daily... multiple times daily that I would get those types of senses and often it was from what felt like a spirit of darkness. Um... and the voices that I... that I heard... the senses that I got were very were often very negative um and... and heavy and dark to the you know to the point where yeah to you know to the ends of where I thought I was supposed to kill myself type of stuff.

Johnny:

OK.

Participant:

So since then, um... I've had a few... a few brushes with... with that type of... that type of sense. But it was it was definitely like, during that period it was definitely like a you know like a switch got flipped where this operating on like a normal plane and then something... something like switched um.. where... where I had a different a very different sense of what what the... what was going on in the world or a different sense of input then just might my own interpretation.

Context: History with S/R

Johnny:

Yep, makes sense. So you've gotten, tell me if I this is accurate it sounds to me like you have a the word that's coming to mind is you have a pretty robust spiritual experience.

Participant:

Mhm...! Yep..!

Johnny:

Like you have you have these examples that you can go to you have these a.... instances where you've been able to sense spiritual forces sometimes good sometimes dark. You have this some sensitivity to what is true and what is one of them part of the spiritual realm. And I'm appreciating hearing just about this and could have you like kinky just say yeah Participant keep talking but I want i'm gonna point it really quickly toward when you think of all these experiences and you think of this part of yourself....

Participant:

Mhm...!

Johnny:

What does it mean to have that involved in your counseling?

22:48

Participant:

So, those experiences have shaped so drastically my sense of reality, you know what... what actually is, both you know just my.. my physical interactions with the world but also how... what might be going on underneath the surface.

Johnny:

OK.

Participant:

That um.... in counseling I need to be able to.. to reference that to some degree. And in that... in that time that I had seven years ago, I made a conscious decision that I live in the physical world. And so I need to approach my life as though that were the most important thing, the things that I can see, taste, touch, smell, feel or you know, yeah, hear. That's...those were the most important things because, that is.. that's the most true true part of my being right now.

Relating in Therapy: Feeling Known

So, in a sense I don't necessarily need a counselor to be able to relate to the to the extra stuff I can kind of filter it through my sense of reality. And I guess you know the physical world but to be able to touch on that stuff and be like this is kinda confusing I don't know what like so with my recent counselor my current counselor I brought up something to him where I have this... can't actually remember this specific event but I was like yeah and I think I've woken up in the middle of the night and my... my heart had started beating rapidly.

And in in a way that was very familiar where like that switch got flipped where I'm in a different place like somethings a little different right now and to be able to relate that experience to him and say hey..... [cuts]

Johnny:

Nope.... I lost you for a second. to be able to relate it to be able to relate that experience to him and...

Participant:

Um... so yeah, to be able to relate that experience and have him have him reflect on it in a.... in a thoughtful way that was that was deep and experienced... so his background I mean I don't know can I tell you who my counselor is that kind of...?

Relating in Therapy: Experiencing Closeness

Johnny:

Yep.

Participant:

My counselor is [Counselor].

Johnny:

Ahan.

Participant:

And he... he um, i don't know if you know him personally but he's, his background is a pretty pretty rich in the.. in the... in the broader Christian spectrum. So, I related this to him and he gave me some things to think about from the Ignatian school of thought that were just, it was immensely helpful. I was just so.. so.. so thankful that he had that depth, that he instantly was like, hey have you thought about this ... this is what Ignatius said about testing the spirits.

Um... and I deeply wish I had that at the time that I was going through this challenge that I was 7 years ago. But just the fact that I was able to have him give that back to me helped put so much into perspective and it was so simple it was really really simple... and he gave me a book to read which has been immensely life changing.

Receiving in Therapy: From the Counselor

Johnny:
Yeah.

Participant:
Er yeah, just deeply impacting for me and also some of my friends too but that was like that was the proof was in the pudding right there. Like it was it really since... since my experiences it's so you know influenced by this can be so influenced by the spiritual world and you know who knows what it's going to look like moving forward but at least up to this point um, my interpretation of the world is...is a lot more nuanced and I needed someone to be able to give me that kind of input to and wisdom to help put things into a better a clearer perspective.

Johnny:
Yeah.

Participant:
And Ignatius his life and his thoughts on this stuff we're like it's just like it's awesome.

Relating in Therapy: Experiencing S/R

Johnny:
Yeah, that's some, is a great example. And i wanna i want to drill a little bit right here and I and if I ask any questions that sound like they're redundant it's just because i'm trying trying to turn the experience around a little bit.

Participant:
Ahm..!

Johnny:
Um... and so, as you describe this i hear you talking about you know being able to talk about your experience of the spiritual, as something significant I hear you deeply appreciating your counselor being able to have input not not even just receptivity or acceptance but like really actually be able to have input into your experience ahead and then I think what I'm curious with is to like zip focused in on when you think about these experiences you have in life and maybe those same times similar types of spiritual experiences happen in counseling. I want to know how those play with your own counseling process?

Participant:
Hmm...! Um.... can you... can you give me a little bit more leading there in terms of how they play wit my own counsel process in the midst of being counseled.

Johnny:

Yeah, so i'm actually it resonated for you i'll return to that metaphor from the beginning on one hand it's like I hear you talking about experiences that you've had in your life. But then you bring them into the counseling room and what I want to know is what kind of ingredient is that for your counseling process?

Participant:

I mean it's... it's.. it's essential like I don't know it's like you... you um... I mean it's funny use the term you used the word baking soda. It's essentially like it's what you know would be the difference between like putting a cake in the oven and it comes out like flat bread or you know like kind of really thin to like a fully-formed like structured cake.

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

So, that analogy it totally... it totally works, it like it gives it gives life to breadth...breath and depth to something that otherwise I was...it just wasn't it wouldn't have totally been there and and I actually had been to a counselor three years ago I think about maybe two years ago who was a Christian had you know, yeah.... a lot of experience as a Christian counselor but just didn't.... didn't resonate on that spiritual level with me. And once I met this current counselor who had a bit more a bit more depth in that way and bit more openness it was like it yeah, it was like giving leaven in to my, to my bread.

Relating in Therapy: Feeling Known: Unknown

Johnny:

So, when you think of that other counselor you had that there wasn't that resonance is you know this is something I've heard a lot of folks do is they find as they talk about their experiences and counseling they end up doing some comparing and contrasting um.... and who.... what was missing what what ended up missing from your counseling process. Because you weren't experiencing your spirituality the way you desired.

Participant:

Well I think I think in a very practical sense and this would happen regardless of his his spiritual nature, is there was a lack of engagement there's a lack of... depth of questioning. And it felt like more I you know I was just verbally processing and it felt good I you know I got a release from that but there was less engagement and you know on a spiritual level I think that really that... I didn't get he didn't draw out that... um.... that spiritual dimension.

Relating in Therapy: Experience Closeness: Distance

Johnny:

OK. So, you paint another contrast there of like I'm.. I'm... I'm verbally processing i might even be sharing the same experiences i would share in another setting but there is something missing that didn't hook as deep.

Participant:

Mhm... Mhm... Yeah definitely...! And... and he you know he had some helpful things to stay and ways for me to understand things but it's uh but it felt like.... it felt like that you know he... he totally missed the the richness of my spiritual experience.

Johnny:

Okay. yep...!

Participant:

Which really in the end it was like he missed me, you know.

Johnny:

OK. Yep.

Participant:

And I saw him for probably six months.

Johnny:

OK.

Participant:

So I saw him for a while, it just it seem, I've seen my current counselor, [Counselor], for six months and yeah it's like night and day... night & day like night/day.

Johnny:

Good. And so there.. yeah so it's like you said felt like he missed the richness kind of makes sense to me why the baking soda met metaphor works it's like what went through my mind was you have this rich robust spiritual experience and it's like it got flattened.

Participant:

Mhm...

Johnny:

Um... ya and let me ask you as you're thinking about this up to this point we've talked a lot about you as a spiritual person special experiences you've had in your life. And I want to zero in on is there an intersection with when you think about your counseling process, so you've been with this current counselor six months I've gone from point A to point B and I feel a huge difference like I can tell there's things that I'm that are changing inside me.

Participant:

Mhm...

Johnny:

Where does spirituality show up on that landscape?

Participant:

Am.... inside the counseling experience or outside?

Johnny:

Um.. it's.. this is this will sound nuanced and semantic, within your counseling process like what you're really growing on in counseling that maybe in the counseling room it may happen outside the counseling room but kind of in relation to that.

Participant:

OK. Um... you know my... I think since I believe that we're we're all you know we're mind, body, heart we're spirit too, so there's a fundamental dimension of our beings that is spirit. That we... we don't know much about um... but that... that component of ourselves really effects how well we live. And um... going through this, the counseling process and being able to have that part of myself acknowledged administer to through truth and through just you know standard counseling practices of family behavior or whatever family model stuff like all that stuff all those, kind of standard processes but have that spiritual component being touched on. [cuts]

Relating in Therapy: Feeling Known

Johnny:

No.

Participant:

Sorry we just cut out.

Johnny:

All right, having the spiritual component be touched on..

Participant:

Yeah so having that spiritual component be touched on in the process of counseling.. I don't know it's just like.. it's like it's inescapable that... that um... that I given the fact you know like as i said i believe that I'm multi-faceted I multi-part some body soul mind and I'm all these these different components on this and to have to have that be spoken to in the process of counseling.

Relating in Therapy: Feeling Known

I've grown just immensely over the last six months I... it's been so so rewarding. I am in a totally different place than I was six months ago. Um, circumstantially much has changed. But, my ability to walk through those circumstances with a sense of wholeness and acknowledged wholeness where in counseling... you want your counselor to be a mirror to you. And you know hopefully there's more there's... there's even more than just a mirror they're able to insert themselves or insert anecdotes or interpretations that are you know outside of just you know what is strictly a mirror would be.

Receiving from S/R: Wholeness

But I want my counselor to be able to see that spiritual facet of myself in addition to all the others to experience that... ah... [cuts out] good... to experience that and reflect on it um and and comment on that. Because it's so, yeah again, it's inextricable, inextricable dimension.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Experiencing S/R

41:30

Johnny:

Yes and let me.. let me do a leading question fill in the blank. Because my counselor sees that part of me can speak to that part of me my counseling becomes....

Participant:

A... em... more complete, more whole.

Johnny:

OK. Um.... man I'm... I've aware of our time. Um... i could very easily keep chatting with you about this for easily another hour... partly because i really appreciate the... I kind of appreciate the picture I'm getting of you as a person it and you're you know it's like yeah i mean i really i think it's like some people literally have better eyesight than others and some people have better hearing than others and some people have better taste than others.

And.... and some people can in that very same way they can sense the spiritual layer of life and I hear that as you describe yourself um.... so, I'm appreciating that I'm appreciate in time. But I'm also want to be respectful of the time commitment we have made.

Participant:

Yeah, I do have a call and in about five minutes yeah.

Johnny:

Cool so then let me express, oh, you still there?

Participant:

Yeah yeah yeah.

Johnny:

Express my gratitude and then let me make sure I tell you practically what is what comes next is, I'm taking all of these all of these transcripts and I'm gonna analyze them. And i'm going to start my process of qualitative analysis that's going to produce it a second round of questions, that are going to target in a little bit tighter on the things that seem to come up across these different stories.

Participant:

Mhm..!

Johnny:

That process will take me hopefully... hopefully a month and you look here for me again where I'll say here's the next round of questions. Can we please set aside a time to like focus in on on these that will then push the the theory further even more.

Participant:

Cool.

Johnny:

The other is practicality you may have noticed in the information that i sent that there is there's compensation for each completed interview.

Participant:

Hmm...!

Johnny:

And the proposed plan is that, I email you a amazon gift card.

Participant:

OK.

Johnny:

If that does not work for you, i can make other arrangements. Um... do you have a preference of that versus something else.

Participant:

Um... no email is fine. Yeah, that works.

Johnny:

Awesome. Um.... is there anything else you want to say or want me to know before we end?

45:22

Participant:

Aaaam.... no yeah I'm just I'm happy to talk about this with you have you know looking for the chatting the next time so...

Johnny:

Awesome.

Participant:

Yeah yeah.

Johnny:

Very cool. Thank you so much for making time, I'm sorry we had some connection issues but I feel like I know my and I was still able to get some fantastic stuff.

Participant:

Awesome good. Glad that's helpful.

Johnny:

Yeah, alright.

Participant:

Cool.

Johnny:

Have a good day.

Participant:

Yeah you too. Chat later. Bye...!

Participant 7606005

00:15

Participant:

Hey..! How's it going Johnny?

Johnny:

Hey Participant..! Nice to see you this morning.

Participant:

Yeah you too.

Johnny:

Yeah. Thank you so much for making time to do this. I really appreciate it.

Participant:

Yeah of course. No problem.

Johnny:

Um... do you have any questions , before I kind of frame our time and we begin?

Participant:

No. I think a... I read through the emails, I think a pretty much know what's going on so yeah let's just jump into it.

Johnny:

Awesome. So.... as you read the emails and have seen in the of or consent like the the thing I'm interested in today is your your experiences with spirituality and religion. During your counseling process and my questions are kind of designed to hopefully.... hopefully get us pointed at the target of like how how.... those things in your life really interact with your change process in counseling.

Participant:

OK.

Johnny:

So, with that as are very general backdrop, um..... what I'll need from you is just I'll just need your reflections and how it might feel like kind of a targeted kind of a targeted counseling session I'll be doing a lot of reflecting and stuff. But I think to get us... to get us going I'll start with that first question. How would you describe the role of spirituality and religion in your life?

Participant:

Yeah. Am..... Yeah, feel free to sort of steer it anyway you want but I'll just kind of riff on that. Yeah I mean I grew up in a religious household. Both my parents themselves were raised kind of in the Christian/Protestant faith and so kind of like a pretty

early age, that was sort of you know conveyed to me that that was something that was really important. And so.... So yeah, you know grew up going to church grew up believing in God believing in Jesus things like that. And um.... you know I think that one of the things the one of the areas that really you know had a large impact in from the beginning was just kind of like morals and values.

How do you figure out what's right. How do you figure out what's wrong. You know just kind of how do you think about those things. You know how do you treat other people like why won't you... why will you do this thing why won't you do that thing. So just kind of that moral framework I think is really just been a primary area where it's sort of you know shaped me and made me who I am and stuff like that. Um.... trying to think you know I would say since you know becoming an adult and like moving out on my own I feel like you know it's been a little bit of a challenge sort of figure out um.... you know what it looks like to... to kind of be like you know a Christian without having my parents kind of in the equation like you know kind of expecting me to go to church and doing it in their way and stuff.

So, you know for a while you know I was going to City Church like when I moved up to San Francisco, did that for a few years and then um... more recently I have kind of been going to Reality off and on, still definitely consider myself a Christian. Um.... sometimes, I found it difficult to be as engaged kind of in religion as as I would like to be or sometimes I feel like you know it isn't quite as big of a piece of my life as I think it should be. Yeah... so, that's kind of where I am right now you know. Still very much believe it. You know try to you know kind of like, read the Bible on my own and pray and go to church. You know I think about it a fair bit so...

Context: Identifying as S/R Person

Context: History with S/R

Johnny:
Yeah.

Participant:
Yeah.

Johnny:
So kind of been there.... Been there from childhood.

Participant:
Mhm...

Johnny:
Maybe taking on some different forms, different look now.

Participant:
Mhm...

Johnny:
As you kind of own it for yourself.

Participant:
Yeah. And I feel like... I feel like I'm kind of like in the process of making it my own. And really choosing it as something that I want to be like a defining kind of principle in my life rather than just being something that I grew up with you know.

Engaging S/R in Therapy Process: Exploring S/R

Johnny:
Yep. Yeah. That makes sense. And what... as you..... as I spit out some of these terms my my religion my spirituality my beliefs my faith which way which ones fit the most for you?

Participant:
Huh.... Um...I would probably say you know religion and faith you know spirituality to me like you know maybe because it's like a more popular word sometimes like that like different kind of connotations for me... not to say that they are negative. But you know sometimes I almost link that more with like just knowing yourself or being in touch with your self or something like that and a little bit less about like kind of like Christianity.

Context: History with S/R

05:14

Johnny:
Yeah. And so with that, your religion, your faith, you know I heard you draw this kind of timeline from time to now. Wherever you're at with it right now however you're demonstrating in your life. Where would you say what are some like examples of the places you experience that the most in your life?

Participant:
Am..... Ahem... let me think. I would say..... probably you know like one area would be like times of hardship. Um.... ahem.. you know when things are going poorly you know I think that I will try to lean on you know religion more than when things are going pretty good and I sometimes can get more complacent. So, that would probably look like you know just having God on my mind more, feeling like you know hey I can't do this all by myself you know. You know I you know I want God to help me. You know more prayer and stuff like that.

Receiving from S/R in Therapy: Support

So, so yeah I think that that's sort of a time for me and you know through periods of hardship I think that that's what made me kind of really think about kind of

my religion more than you know at other times when I'm sort of maybe just kind of floating through life a little bit. You know I think that sort of in the context of like romantic relationships I feel like you know religion definitely kind of comes out because, you know it's... it's important for me to you know I want to be somebody who kind of shares my same you know religious values and faith and stuff like that.

And so from that context also just from like you know how do you kind of want to conduct to the relationship you know like in terms of like you know how physical do you want to go with another person and I think that that is kind of one of the sort of the main that kind of like for better or worse you know kind of like values of Christianity. But like you know sex before marriage stuff you know that has kind of stayed with me through you know from childhood to now on about how that's not something that you want to be doing. Um.... even though that's kind of like very common in societies though.

Context: History with S/R

Johnny:

Yeah. Yeah. That makes sense. So like... times of hardship, times of hardship and romantic relationships each of those struck me as like um.... you know people places potentially where we may really want to understand or understand have a sense of meaning and values about...

Participant:

Mhm...!

Johnny:

About what we're experiencing.

Participant:

Mhm...!

Johnny:

I'm also curious maybe the hardship will that piece of the times of hardship or other relationships will link to your story in counseling.

Participant:

Mhm...!

Johnny:

I'm curious if you could describe how you experience spirituality and religion in your counseling.

Participant:

Yeah for sure. And let me just make sure I'm not jumping ahead here. Um.... Okay cool. Yeah, so, basically you know just sort from the start I think I've mentioned this

in the intake form so I won't go too much into detail of it but you know even just like selecting a counselor. You know I had.... I had gone to a secular one before.

Johnny:
OK

Participant:
Coming to [Counselor]. And kind of your guys counseling center. And so I didn't know this this time around. I kind of wanted to sort of see what it would look like to go to somebody who did have kind of that that shared faith. So, yeah from the get go that was sort of something that was like hey this is really cool that this is offered through this church I'm attending.

Johnny:
Right!

Participant:
You know I think that, that might lead to some some more understanding or maybe some new insights that I wasn't able to get from somebody who didn't really share that. But kind of moving on from that point. Um.... yeah... I mean, I would say just from my own like thoughts on personal development you know I sort of see them like being kind of hand-in-hand. I probably you know it's like you know... I... I see them both you know both kind of like that just like Western psychology and you know religion and spirituality both being things that could really like enrich my life help me to be a better person.

Relating in Therapy: Feeling Known

You probably know to just you know like lead a more kind of like flourishing life. And so. Yes. I mean I think that. You know when I feel like I'm struggling with something that you know is both kind of on my mind you know in terms of like something I would bring up a [Counselor]. You know that same thing I could definitely I definitely have you know also like in the context of church like prayed about and been like hey you know gee you know like help me through this God kind of thing.

Receiving from S/R in Therapy: Flourishing

10:10

Johnny:
Right..!

Participant:
Um... and yeah, I mean I'm trying to think like exactly and I'm just sort of brainstorming right now.

Johnny:

Yeah. And some of these could be like, it could be um... it's was interesting as I was trying to like zero in it's like could be explicit or implicit, it could be like during the counselling time or not or when counseling time it's pretty I think there's a pretty broad net of where your religion and faith are going to intersect with the counseling... your counseling process.

Participant:

Mhm...! Yeah I mean I'm trying to think... I feel like sometimes, you know it's...I feel like religion comes up a fair bit in kind of just like my counseling sessions.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Addressing S/R

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

And I don't know if we necessarily like go into it that much. I feel like you know that was something I kind of like interested to see I was like before I kind of even started coming to [Counselor]. I was wondering like hey will you know will you know we spend like an entire session like you know sort of talking about like I don't know like a relevant passage of Scripture and like how that relates to this situation or something like that which you know I you know and I didn't really like know which one to expect or which one I even wanted if I wanted that or didn't.

And in my experience with [Counselor] like we haven't really done a whole lot of that I feel like Typically it's felt to me like our sessions have been you know probably like 90 percent kind of like Western psychology, 10 percent you know kind of like religion and spirituality. Um.... so you know um.... yeah I'm trying to think like even at time I feel like at times and this isn't a criticism it's just like an observation I think that at times like I maybe even have sort of like asked some questions about you know like for example I think that the topic that I usually bring up the most is I will sort of like say hey you know I'm sort of unhappy that I feel like there's this thing that you know there's religion that is supposed to be this like really big piece of my life.

But in reality I don't think that it is as big of a piece as it should be and it seems like something that I'm kind of like punting on and delaying and you know I say I say it's like a thing and it's not. And you know. And so. So maybe I kind of list that out is something that is kind of like a failure or shortcoming on my end. And typically I feel like you know when that kind of conversational thread comes back up, typically we don't take that in the direction of oh like well here is kind of like what God says about you know like following him.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Exploring S/R

Or you know like I feel like typically [Counselor] kind of has his like my counselor or psychologist hat on and doesn't necessarily like take that off like put on the like pastor hat and just be like OK here we go like you're like let me just like you know go down this alley. So you know. And like I said I don't think that's like good or bad. It's just been interesting to me that I feel like we typically will sort of either talk about you know potentially talk about that a little bit, talk about like childhood or say some of the implications of that or maybe how I arrived at that. So... So that's sort of been something that I kind of was interested to see that I feel like we don't typically go super super deep into the kind of like religious school at least so far when we come together.

Johnny:

Yeah. And I'm curious am.... you've had your time with J and you also had a time previously with a different counselor.

Participant:

Yeah.

Johnny:

And were you able to speak about your religion faith with your other counselor?

Participant:

Um... I definitely did bring it up. I sort of at times felt a little bit though like misunderstood um.... I'm trying to think... for example.... I don't really remember. I think that like, I remember that this had been quite awhile ago but I think that some of the topics we talked about there were maybe maybe the same topic but I don't know if he really had anything he could kind of weigh in on related to that. I think that we also talked about it though in the context of like relationships and I could sort of just tell yeah that he just kind of didn't really have like a whole lot he could offer there just because that really wasn't his experience he wasn't religious. I don't think that he kind of like you know knew, knew of religions more in the context like oh world religions and stuff like that but I don't know if he could fully appreciate like you know maybe some of the conflicts around you know. Um.... I don't know like you know.

Relating in Therapy: Feeling Known-Unknown

15:00

A religious person trying to like live... be in a relationship. And kind of do that in a religious context when you kind of have like you know the pressures of you know society or just kind of your own desires to sort of maybe like not really do things kind of in a Christian way kind of again with the... related to the kind of physical stuff I was talking about. So yeah I think that um...that's kind of the main memory there that sticks out that that I feel like he definitely did his best to like try to understand but sometimes, I sort of felt like well I just don't know if he really like gets it because he's not religious.

Relating in Therapy: Feeling Known-Unknown

Johnny:

Yeah. Yep. It makes sense. And so I hear in each one some conversations about your religion.

Participant:

Mhm...!

Johnny:

I think I'm curious with the theories with your time with J. It seems like that when your religion maybe has felt a little bit more at home in the first one. Am.... yeah. How else have you experienced, your religion, God, during.... during counseling?

Participant:

Yeah. I mean um... another thing that kind of comes to mind is I know that um a few times and I don't know if there's necessarily been a pattern as to when this has happened. Um... but you know there has been a little bit of praying in my sessions with [Counselor]. You know where he's where he's you know been like hey like you know is it is it cool if I pray for youyou know. And and you know I've always said yes.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Experiencing S/R

So that's probably happened maybe like five times am.... around over the time that we've been seeing each other which has been a number of years now. Am... and yeah so that's been that's been cool you know I've... I've appreciated that. You know I think that just off the top of my head you know I think that you know [Counselor] has also mentioned to me before that that he you know that I think he said to me like I'm like I'll be praying about that I'll be praying for you kind of thing. So that's kind of nice too.

Relating in Therapy: Experiencing Closeness

Johnny:

What does... what does that piece mean to you?

Participant:

Um.... you know I think that that just sort of shows maybe like that that conveys kind of like I don't know. Probably just like you know a pretty you know deep level of caring for a person if if you know if you would you know pray for them kind of like outside of the of you know kind of the session. So yeah.

Relating in Therapy: Experiencing Closeness

Johnny:
Yeah.

Participant:

Yeah. So so so that's kind of a way to...I'm just trying to think about the sort of other other parts of our time together that maybe kind of have something to do with this. Yeah, I mean the biggest thing that kind of comes to my mind which you know is probably something we've already touched on is just the fact that it has been nice to sort of feel like somebody understands a fairly significant portion of your background without you having to just like completely paint the picture for them you know I think that you know just, okay cool. Like we're on the same page here. So we don't really have to like say that much about that at times at least in the beginning. And there's already kind of an understanding I think that that's been important to me.

Relating in Therapy: Feeling Known

Johnny:

OK. Yes. I hear a lot around the.... huh.... being able to discuss it having kind of um... present as a shared value a feeling understood you talked about feeling misunderstood by your previous counselor in this area.

Participant:
Yeah.

Johnny:

And as we like have those kind of pieces in place there's this.... is this little slightly deeper slightly further place that I'm kind of interested in getting some picture around.

Participant:
Yeah.

Johnny:

You know I almost sometimes in my mind am just picture it like two gears like there's the counseling process that's turning and there's your your experience of religion and faith. And I want to know how one turns the other. You know....

Participant:
I see, I see, I see what you are saying.

Johnny:

So, I'm curious how how has your way you think about you've been in counseling for a couple of years and you've had.... I presume you've had an experience there of change in a very broad sense understanding yourself better.

Participant:
Mhm...!

Johnny:
Understanding life better. Maybe some healing maybe some... any any number of different things that like from point A to Point B in the counseling process you'd say, I'm changed.

20:06

Participant:
Mhm...!

Johnny:
And I'm curious where your experience of religion... how has it played with that.

21:33

Participant:
OK. Interesting. Yeah, I mean umm... OK. So I think that a.... potentially one area and I can't fully remember, if this is the case but I believe it is. I mean I think that you know for example one of the things that I talked with [Counselor] a bunch about initially was this particular relationship that I was in that I'm not in anymore. And I think that you know one of the big takeaways from that sort of period of time was just like understanding myself understanding kind of like relational dynamics how I kind of like interacted with this person in a way that wasn't really that effective.

And at times you know I really just kind of like deferred to her. And and yeah you know it just sort wasn't the healthiest relationship and so I think that I sort of learned how to become a lot more assertive. Kind of throughout that process and I feel like potentially I also sort of carried that same kind of like understanding of relational dynamics into maybe say like my prayer life for example where you know I felt more comfortable trying to like kind of be more honest or like assert myself. You know that...that sounds a little bit weird to sort of assert yourself with God or whatever but you know just like.

Johnny:
Yeah.

Participant:
But yeah, maybe.... maybe just being a little more like in prayer and willing to sort of you know say things or pray things that you know I in the past kind of would like sure or would that's not like appropriate to say or or think or do so. So that's a kind of you know one area that I think that one place where there is some overlap in..

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Exploring S/R

Johnny:

Yeah.... yeah, I love that as an example of it because, it's.... it's been interesting for me to reflect on going through this process because it's like there's the, there's the, there's the ways that our spirituality faith religion show up in the room. And things that we can point to like here is and here are examples of it. Part of what I found is that for a lot of people the stories of where one interacts with the other is much more complex and narrative.

It's like well this happened and it happened and and then there was this moment and then there was this kind of change over time and so I hear a little bit of that in this that your time in counseling affected your religion your relationship with God. I'm curious, did that work in reverse?

Participant:

OK. So, did my relationship with God affect my... my time in counseling.

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

Aaamm....! That's a good question. Ahem... I'm just trying to think about how you know how that might have been the case. I mean on the one hand you know. I mean on the one hand I would say that I think it has but not necessarily in like a, "oh, in this particular moment." You know this thing happened I think that you know for example you know I think that an hopefully this isn't like oh this is theoretical and not like my experience but it sort of feels like you know you know I would say that I believe that you know that you know there is some serendipity just in the whole process where you know it's like I, you know, sort of for whatever reason you know I don't even fully remember how I found out about the counseling center like must have probably just been on like a Sunday.

And you know and I was like hey, that... that sounds like a good idea you know. And so I sort of have definitely felt like you know God was in this process with me. And and that you know that God does desire for kind of his followers to you know be more effective and to kind of like work through some of these issues. So, I definitely do feel like God has been a part of the process and that um... you know that potentially you know he has been using you know [Counselor] and just counseling in general as something to you know to basically you know as a tool to change me rather than just like beaming down some kind of like, healing powers or whatever just this to sort of a mechanism that he's using to kind of facilitate growth. Um... so that's sort of like just at a high level something like in the back my mind where I'm like I do truly believe that that is happening. Um.... but I could try to get more specific too.

Receiving from S/R in Therapy: Experiencing God

25:06

Johnny:

Yeah. That's... that's helpful. And so there's like. Sounds like you use the word serendipity it sounds like there's some.... you feel God's activity just in you. Coming to counseling. There being a counseling center at your church. And one thing that actually stood out to me was you in a lot of the descriptions so far you talked um.... somewhat more maybe concretely or. You used like moral language and thought language.

Participant:

Mhm.

Johnny:

And this seems like the first time I've heard you say. A... I just I just felt I felt God being present in the process. Could you say more about that?

Participant:

Ahem. Um...It's hard to say because I... I mean, I think that one of my struggles with religion in general has been that you know it has...it's been something for me that has been more kind of in the thought land rather than in like the feeling land you know it's like um... you know like kind of like cheesy like Christian lingo people talk about being like on fire for God. You know that's not been something that's been very much my experience of any of my religious life and that's in some ways kind of been a struggle.

And so yeah you know I mean I guess kind of what you know... just to expand upon what I was saying. I sort of... Um... yeah I guess you know it wasn't, at least to me... it hasn't necessarily been as much of like oh like I really felt like God in the room with me or you know or is like me [Counselor] and like you know God are in this together. It's been more... it was almost just like you know a given or something. I'm like yeah of course like you know god like knows that I'm in this process and I believe that he is working through it you know kind of you know in ways I don't understand you know in the background to you know use this to facilitate you know whatever it is you know... maybe maybe something that's sort of in line with like my goals.

But ultimately it's part of his plan that you know that this is kind of like you know you know it's being sort of used for his plans. So that's kind of what I meant by that. I don't know if I necessarily had a big kind of like you know experiential kind of like feeling where I'm like yeah like you know I feel like presence or I feel like you know security or or you know I don't know if I have fully felt that.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Exploring S/R

Johnny:

Yeah...! There's three words that you used now, felt, serendipity and being given. And some others feel like maybe they were kind of describing the same experience.

Participant:

Yeah, I mean. Yeah. To try to like expand on those a little bit. I think that um yeah I like... So, I think that that's just sort of a part of my belief system where I just think that you know that God does play a pretty hands on role and in every person's life. And that he you know he has a plan and I'm not saying it's like every single minute he's like, "No, don't you know don't take a left at this stoplight take it right," you know. But I think that you know that I don't kind of believe in like the great Clock Maker thing where it's like God just kind of like set things in motion and now we're just sort of like he's like OK well whatever you just do... do whatever.

Context: S/R Beliefs

Johnny:

I like that, he is not clock maker God and not.. not GPS God.

Participant:

That's right yes. Somewhere somewhere in the middle where it's like OK you know I think that you know I'm not sure exactly what my thoughts are on like you know exactly the degree of free will but I do believe that he's like very invested in...in just like our you know day to day activities or day to day struggles. And that also he in some way does have a hand in guiding us. And you know allowing things or maybe forcing things to like you know sort of happen and you know ultimately for our good.

And and so in kind of this example I think that he is very much aware of you know much more than I am of like you know kind of like my struggles or my you know painful experiences or whatever. That have kind of brought me to...to believe that I, you know, need you know some help from counseling and I think that you know he is he is interested in that... in me growing as well probably in a slightly different way than I think I want to grow. But I do believe that you know that sort of, we kind of have a common goal and that we both you know sort of see you know counseling as a means to sort of achieve that. And so yeah when I sort of say oh that's a given. You know I kind of feel like you know God's kind of like omniscient you know he knows everything. And in my mind I'm like of course he would be you know using this as a kind of means to...to heal and develop.

Receiving from S/R in Therapy: Healing

Johnny:

Yeah yep. That makes sense. And it leads to another question I have which is a little bit of kind of our question in reverse.

Participant:

Mhm.

Johnny:

Which is... I'll just put it out there and we'll see where it goes. What will happen to your what happened to your counseling process. What would happen do like how you've experienced change in counseling if we could extract and remove, no God, no religion, no faith. It's no longer a given that God is hands on and present.

Participant:

Mhm... Hhhh... Let's see. Um.... I think that, I think that that would maybe like cast some doubts on the process a little bit for me because you know one thing that I like about the given being there is that I can be like, cool, you know, this thing you know is sort of a little bit above you know my own ability level and [Counselor]'s ability level to sort of diagnose this thing. I would I would you know it feels like you know because you know I do believe that you know God is a...is a part of the process that kind of gives me some comfort and hope to say hey like you know I don't have to get this perfectly right and neither does [Counselor] like.

Relating in Therapy: Developing Trust

You know we kind of have some additional help to sort of like guide this process. And you know we're both showing up every week to kind of like do the work. But you know yeah, the responsibility of like completely like trying to like diagnose and solve the problems. You know it's not on our own. Whereas you know on the flip side, if that wasn't the case then I think that, you know, I would... potentially like get more anxious if I'm like man, it doesn't seem like the sort of like little strategy that we've been employing over the last like couple of months. You know it seems like maybe it's not working or something like that. I think that there will be more doubts like that that would become more.... a... I don't know they could maybe get like kind of more aggravating like overtime where I could just go OK like now I'm concerned and you know I think I'd maybe want to sort of micromanage the process a little bit more. Um.... but since I do believe that you know God's in the mix too I'm kind of like OK you know it just sort of makes me feel a little bit more at ease. And like it you know sort of good things will come from the process. I can just kind of trust that a little bit more. And if I was like oh nope this is just you know. This is just you know to two guys trying to figure this thing out by themselves.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Experiencing S/R

Johnny:

Right. Yeah. That's.... that's helpful. So, if we extracted God religion it would inject some doubt for you.

Participant:

Yeah.

Johnny:

And so if I'm tracking right and we turn that back around. Having God and religion as a given or can. For your.... For your counseling sounds like it helps you to trust the counseling process more.

Participant:

Mhm... Yeah. Because... because I believe that it is you know. Like you know I don't have any empirical evidence for this but I do believe that it is you know that it has already been guided and probably modified you know and you know I believe that it's you know that God has I'm sure made it more effective than it would have otherwise been.

Johnny:

Yeah, yeah. That's interesting. I can I really can appreciate your the way you're describing your experience. Am... yeah. What else anything else as we're as we're talking and it comes to mind of like you know here's a moment that that I Participant, I would consider. You know I can see God I can see my religion I can see my faith here in this corner of the counseling process or in that corner of the counseling process.

35:05

Participant:

Yeah... um... let me think about that. Um... hmm... [silence] um.... let's see I... this you know this is like a little bit of a...I'm sort of figuring this out this one out as I go. But you know one thing that [Counselor] and I have spent a lot of time talking about especially lately has been kind of like my you know family and like my upbringing. And you know my parents in particular. And so you know I wouldn't necessarily say that...I wouldn't say to this has been just like this big overwhelming experience where I've thought about this in depth in detail on multiple occasions.

But you know I think that you know occasionally... occasionally there will be like some small connections between you know things that I've talked about in counseling and things that maybe I hear in the sermon like later on. And so you know I think that one thing that one area where that has sort of been present for me has been you know with my dad you know I think that just give you a brief context.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Exploring S/R

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

You know I think that like at one point like when I was like growing up you know I pretty much like really looked up to my parents and thought that they kind of like were you know you know while not perfect maybe like 95 percent of the way there... like really solid. And um... like really wise and all this other stuff and then kind of as I got older and also through kind of the counseling process... I've actually

realized you know a lot more of their limitations which has been pretty frustrating at times. So anyway you know just like again I don't know if this is like a super profound example but you know I think that has been something that [Counselor] and I've really dug into especially with my dad and just some of his his flaws and his problems and how that's affected me and you know.

You know kind of created some pain in my life and stuff. And so you know one thing that kind of sticks out I don't even remember the specific sermon it was but you know I just remember or maybe I was actually reading the Bible I forget which one that was but I do recall some kind of message around how you know basically kind of like God can be the father. You know that we should of had. And you know how that can be kind of a comfort for.... for us. You know that it's like hey you know like we didn't have perfect parents but you know God can be you know he kind of like smooth that over and he is there to be that you know to fill in those gaps you know between kind of like your earthly parent and him.

Um.... and so you know. You know that that was something where there was kind of like in that moment I feel like there was a little bit of kind of like reinforcement but sort of between the two ideas or the two kinds of things where I was like oh you know this has definitely been a topic that we've talked a lot about um... in counseling for me. And you know that's kind of interesting how there's kind of this connection too between like you know either I forget if it was a sermon or what I was reading and so it was like wow that's kind of interesting and so I feel like sometimes that happens where the two kind of like feed off of each other a little bit. Or... yeah yeah...

Context: History with S/R

Johnny:

Yeah. So, you're in.... you're in counseling kind of in a season where you're focusing on something like your parents your and how you view them. And then you're experiencing these very complimentary pieces in your kind of religious practices.

Participant:

Mhm... Right. And some of the messages are very...are very similar. And you know similar but different. And that can be kind of kind of cool and interesting to oh yeah you know I didn't really I didn't really think about it that way before but you know that...that make sense or you know or you know it somehow makes it a little bit more real to be like oh you know I kind of understand this at a deeper level.

Johnny:

Yep. So to get deeper understanding different perspective. And then now that you kind of do have that now that that piece did emerge from your religious practices.

Participant:

Mhm...!

Johnny:

Where does that intersect back with you...! The process of what you're engaging in counseling.

Participant:

Am... I see. So, so, like it's kind of like first it was discussed in counseling then you know this connection kind of happens after the fact.

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

In the religious practices. And then what does that mean. Or how does that then take the third or the next step.

40:00

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

Am...

Johnny:

Does it?

Participant:

You know I think that... I don't know if in that particular instance I like brought that up to [Counselor]. But you know I do believe at times ahem... I do believe at times I have brought that up I was like hey you know I know I know for a fact, ahem.. ahem... excuse me, that there have been a couple times where you know I came back in because we we meet on Mondays and was like yeah, you know, I heard this really interesting thing in the sermon this last week. You know it was you know they were talking about this and I felt like it you know it you know really related to this other thing. And so sometimes I'll kind of use that to kind of like make a point, and be like yeah you know it was really interesting like how those two things kind of like overlapped.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Addressing S/R

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

And so I definitely know that... that hasn't happened super recently but that definitely there was a time especially like when I was listening to more like sermons online where that would be like a semi-regular thing.

Johnny:

Yeah. And so there are some times where you bring it you may have brought it back in and told J about it.

Participant:

Yeah.

Johnny:

But it sounds like there's other times where you kind of you got this thing going on in counseling that you're working on.

Participant:

Yeah.

Johnny:

And then you have these religious practices that you do that. Kind of move the ball forward on it, with a new a new perspective a new understanding that... yeah it's another it's another great example of where I'm like yeah it's kind of hard to parse through. Yeah was it the counseling process or the religious experience or it might have been some of those gears where they live where they interact.

Participant:

Yeah. Yeah, I definitely do think that both of them. Um... yeah that they do complement each other well because it does seem like you know yeah I've definitely experienced it where an idea kind of you know started on one side... on either side... and then it really kind of like you know was able to sort of you know push something forward on the other side.

Johnny:

Yeah. Yep. And you... you've mentioned understandably you've mentioned you mentioned J a lot. And I'm curious that probably brig's as well to our fourth question how you experienced your counselor, how you experienced [Counselor] in relation to your religion?

Participant:

Yeah. Um... yeah I mean at times I've sort of tried to use [Counselor]. I think initially I expected that um... almost like I think I expected [Counselor] to sort of be like 50 percent counselor and kind of 50 percent like spiritual mentor or something like that, initially. And you know I think that it has that, I think I maybe mentioned I think the split has been probably more like 90 percent counselor and sort of 10 percent on the spiritual side.

I feel like it actually hasn't been as prevalent as I expected. And like you know a couple of years ago when I signed up. And so yeah I think that sometimes... sometimes I've sort of tried to you know... and I think that maybe I sort of trying to

sort of. Ahem.... either get like maybe like validation from [Counselor] because I'm like oh like in my mind I'm like [Counselor]'s a pastor you know [Counselor] like he knows more about this stuff than I know.

Relating in Therapy: Developing Trust

So you know he's kind of like an expert at this or something like that whereas I'm just like a normal person at this. And so at times I think that I've maybe tried to yeah just like kind of be like you know am I doing this the right way or you know or how should I do this. Maybe not like like that explicitly but you know through like various questions and things like that. And I feel like typically. You know we haven't then really had a dialogue around that where where he's been like, "oh well OK cool I'll let m... here's what you should do like blah blah blah" or like let me like throw down some like knowledge on you about whatever that particular subject was or whatever.

I really think instead he typically has kind of like. Kind of you know followed those kinds of questions of mine up with more of his own questions rather than kind of like stepping in and kind of giving me like some kind of like spiritual plan which you know I can I can... maybe in the moments I kind of like would have liked to kind of the other one. But I think that I can kind of understand that potentially um.... you know it wouldn't necessarily be that great for my development if [Counselor] just kind of like you know, was like, "hey, like here's what you should do... like let me give you the step by step plan" and instead it's like kind of like a self-discovery process but you know that's kind of like one way.

45:10

Johnny:

Yeah. Yep. And you touched on this a little bit previously. When you think of your previous counselor how did you experience that counselor in relation to your religion?

Participant:

Yeah. I mean I pretty much viewed those two things as pretty separate. Um... Yeah I... you know definitely thought it was important for me to bring up my my religion just because I was worried at the time that I was like well if I don't bring this up he's not going to understand like where I'm coming from and then you know the things he's suggesting either he's going to have an incomplete picture or the things he suggests aren't going to really be as valid or accurate as they would have otherwise been.

Because you know he didn't understand this piece. So yeah you know I viewed those two things as separate. And I also would say that kind of the... the... at that phase of my life when I was going to the other counselor you know I wasn't...um...wasn't really going to church very often either so um.... it probably wasn't as much kind of spiritual stuff going on in my life just in general.

Relating in Therapy: Developing Closeness-Feeling Distance

Johnny:

Yeah. Anything else about a... from your experiences in counseling. How you a... how you've seen your counselors relate to interact with your.... your religion so you can't do that?

Participant:

Um.... Trying to think. I remember there was this one phase I was going through with [Counselor] and um... yeah I don't know I was like really like in this like kind of like seeking mode where I was trying to kind of like really work on my own. Kind of like spirituality and like religion and stuff. And just like I was really just trying to kind of like turn over a new leaf and just kind of almost like re-dedicate myself to it and stuff and I was I was reading a lot of like John Piper at the time and I remember ...um, yeah that that was just like really on my mind a lot.

And so I remember I was talking to [Counselor] about that and trying to think of like what the conclusion was. I just remember that... I think that I was maybe like disturbed at the like black and white nature of some of John Piper's message where I was like you know he's basically like, "you do this or you're not you know a Christian" and maybe that's like a misinterpretation of like what he was saying but that's kind of the way I was interpreting I think and you know I think that I do remember in that moment [Counselor] actually sort of said to me He's like, "well you know" like, I forget... man, what did he say It's been so long.

He sort of said like yeah you know. You know I definitely think that there's a lot of good things from John Piper but you know like to be honest like. I forget it was something... yeah I'm sorry. I kind of forget exactly what he said but I think that the jist...yeah like he definitely said something kind of comforting in that moment that sort of like trying to help me understand a little bit more either about you know kind of what was being said or or or something kind of that nature just to be like hey you know this might not be the end all be all like you know kind of thing. So... So yeah that was kind of an interesting stand out where we were we kind of like got into some kind of like religious issues. Yeah.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Experiencing S/R

Johnny:

Yeah. And that probably speaks to some of the... you know accommodation of religion. When you're meeting with someone like J where it where it's like well the fact that the what part of what struck me is the fact that you can not just bring up religion but you can bring up a particular religious Christian writer and he's familiar enough with it to kind of process with you like how to put that in context.

Participant:

Yeah. Definitely.

Johnny:
It's not like he's like I don't know John Piper.

Participant:
Yeah he's like sorry man like OK we... we gotta wrap up yeah. Yeah. Now for sure. And another thing to which you know maybe a minor point is. Yeah I think that [Counselor]'s also been able to give me a number of like you know Christian like book recommendations as well um... which has been kind of cool. Whereas like I think that that wouldn't have been like like for example like and kind of like where like Christianity and psychology intersect I believe there's this one think it's called like The Gift of Being Yourself.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Exploring S/R

50:15

Johnny:
Uh huh.

Participant:
That he recommended to me which was cool. It's actually still on my reading list. But yeah you know and so so that's been like another small area where you know it's been beneficial.

Johnny:
Yeah.

Participant:
Yeah.

Johnny:
Yep...! All right. Let me ask you one more broad question and then we'll move rap it up. The broad question is kind of are is our catch on here at the end. As we've talked these different things. What else do you want to tell me about your experience of spirituality or religion in your counseling process. It's really big, little can be clarification, whatever.

Participant:
Yeah for sure. Ummmm.. yeah I mean I would say that overall while I do agree that you know it's difficult I think. Sometimes it's like difficult for me to like really figure out exactly how the two are correlated. I do think that you know overall I have personally found it to be pretty beneficial to you know to have chosen someone who you know a Christian counselor who is advertised as a Christian counselor too. Um... you know I think that. Yeah you know it's just kind of beenn interesting it's been an interesting experience that you know I think has been beneficial and you know kind of being able to go back I definitely would do it again. I'm trying to think.

Johnny:
Yeah.

Participant:

I had something else but it just kind the like slipped away. You know I think that one thing that potentially would have made it even. Well I mean I don't know... maybe this isn't even accurate but I think that one thing that maybe would have made it even more beneficial for me is you know if I actually was a little bit more like spiritual I think that that it would I would reap even more benefits. But I think that you know that has been something I've struggled with so.

And that being said you know maybe maybe maybe like a struggling Christian is kind of like you know the perfect person to be kind of like seeing a Christian counselor as well. It's hard to say exactly like where the sweet spot is. But I think that you know potentially you know potentially one limiting factor for me I think could be just the fact that you know.

I don't know if I necessarily experience that much kind of in the like spiritual kind of like Christian realm like you know inside or outside counseling because at times like that's sort of been something that I've resisted sometimes like you know... my attendance at church has been spotty sometimes, I'm like you know I just don't really want to think about this right now. So I feel like that you know it's like well if you... if I'm not experiencing it anywhere sometimes like you know then then I'm also not going to necessarily experience it that much in counseling too so I think that kind of can go hand in hand too for me at least.

Relating in Therapy: Developing Trust
Engaging S/R in Therapy: Exploring S/R

Johnny:

Yeah. Yeah that makes sense. Which goes, kind of goes back to. You you mentioned as part of your own process over time just even in this hour like. Periods where you felt like you were rededicated yourself or wanting to focus on it more that this is this has been part of your story of faith.

Participant:

Yeah. Definitely.

Johnny:

Yeah. Anything else you would like.

Participant:

Am... Try to think real quick.

[ends]

Participant 7606006

00:00

Johnny:

Well hey thank you so much. It's great to see your face and meet you. Um... I'm Johnny!

Participant:

Yeah you too. No problem. I'm Participant.

Johnny:

Very good. Um... and I've got slated for about an hour. I'll... I'll pay attention to the time.

Participant:

OK.

Johnny:

And take you through... take you through the questions. I'd love to know if there's anything you need me to answer before we jump in and start.

Participant:

I don't think so. I think I'm good.

Johnny:

Great.! Then all... Yeah all I need from you is your your reflections and I'll kind of guide it might feel a little bit like a very targeted counseling session because I'll be focused on just reflecting and really hearing about your experience. Um....

Participant:

OK.

Johnny:

So, why don't we go ahead and start and I'll... I'll start you off um... kind of like get us moving in a bit of the right direction. I like to start us with a little bit of a broader question which is this how would you describe the role of spirituality and religion in your life?

Participant:

Yeah. So.. I would describe it as pretty much the central aspect of my life. Um... I... am a gospel believing Christian. So it's not just about religion for me it's about relationship with Christ. Um... So kind of outwardly for me that looks like being involved in a church um.. serving and being in community. But then inwardly that looks like a daily relationship with the Lord um... in the word, in the Bible and in Prayer. Am... yeah I mean it's... it's the central part in the central part of who I am.

Context: Identifying as S/R Person

Johnny:

So it sounds like it's you use the word central several times. It's like being a Christian and you specified a gospel believing Christian that is a pretty girl integral piece of your life.

Participant:

Yeah it definitely is.

Johnny:

OK. And it sounds like that shows up in um... belief and maybe practice and kind of how just how you structure your world.

Participant:

Yeah um... I mean pretty much every everything flows from that.. you know like making decisions and relating with other people. And then, you know just my own personal growth, help and that type of stuff.

Johnny:

Yeah. Relating decisions your own health your own growth. It's... I think it's interesting as you describe it because with how central it is. I think that's part of even what I'm looking for in some of these questions is our spirituality our religion our faith beliefs can they get really embedded deep within the core of who we are. And so yeah. And so sometimes it can be. It's like there's a lot of words that we can use to describe the roles they play tonight. Wonder if there is any, how else how else do you think of the role of spirituality and religion in your own life. Is there anything else you would add to?

Participant:

Hmm...! I mean, I think it influences how I view things like emotions. I obviously mentioned relating to others um... even like, this kind of gets into the counseling aspect of things, but outside of counseling itself. Um... you know like our stories, our upbringing and kind of viewing those things, at least for me, through the lens of like what did God intend for like healthy relationships to be like... and like healthy expression and like feeling of emotions to be like um... that's something that's been really important in my walk with God. And something that like I think isn't like addressed that much in the church is the role of God in emotion and your story and your family um...not so much like your current family the like you know the family are brought up in.

Context: S/R History

Johnny:

Mhm... Yeah...

05:00

Participant:

So I mean just in my own like reflections you know my own my healing journey. Looking back on like my upbringing and my story and being able to look at the word of God and the character of God and kind of think through and still think through um like what what did he intend and what is actually good and healthy.

Context: Identifying as S/R Person

Johnny:

Yeah. Yeah.

Participant:

The backdrop of that...

Johnny:

Yeah yeah, backdrop. It seems like the key word. Yeah you just as you talk... you talk about you know what you've got to intend to keep her in the word intention or healthy or you know a vision kind of what those things should look like. And it sounds like your your faith is... is kind of the thing that informs those perspectives.

Participant:

Yeah, yeah I would say that, that definitely is the case now. I didn't become a Christian until I was like 13 or 14 but even up unt... honestly up until I went through counseling that wasn't really [fades] like... like Christianity and spirituality and my relationship with God changed a lot through counseling um... just learning to actually like look at those things and address those things with the viewpoint of God as part of the conversation.

Johnny:

Yeah. Yeah. And let's... let's keep following that piece. How this one will probably will probably maybe turn it around a couple times just to get a few different angles on it. But how would you describe your experience of spirituality? And actually I'll just ask you what would you.. when you hear those words, "my spirituality, my religion, my faith" which one fits you?

Participant:

Um.. probably my faith.

Johnny:

OK. How would you describe your experience of your faith in counseling?

Participant:

Um... I will again use the word central... um... when I... decided to go to counseling uh... I had been to a few counselors before and really wanted a Christian counselor because that was the faith that I had and wanted that to be a part of that process.

Um... and so I think it was an integral part of the process. I mean we opened each session in prayer and throughout our conversations would you know discuss examples in scripture of you know certain people in the Bible stories or just even like the character of God in the Bible. Um.... and I think too, this is less like concrete but, I feel like being in counseling is something that is very, like influential to a person.

Like you're you're in a vulnerable place of opening up and sharing parts of your like heart and story that you might not otherwise share in other settings or rarely share in other settings. And so to have the person that you are like building that relationship and trust with to have the same belief system as you. I feel like was really influential for me because it was like OK, "this person is grounded in like similar beliefs about the gospel but also further along in like understanding" um... like how God's word relates to you know our stories and things that have happened to us and the way that we relate to people.

Context: Identifying as S/R Person

Johnny:
Yeah.

Participant:
So I think a lot of... [fades] really influential for me in counseling.

Johnny:
Yeah. Let me digest that for a minute.

Participant:
Yep.

Johnny:
There are a number of key pieces there, you mentioned... you mentioned there. Like actions that were done like reading scripture or tying up the character of God or prayer. You have to Bout's it being just kind of overall central. A... you talked about the vulnerability piece and how important it was that you had a shared set of beliefs a world view with your counselor.

10:16

Participant:
Yes.

Johnny:
And all that, all that is really good. I'm going to dig on this a little bit because this is... this is really like kind of getting into the area I'm interested in is.... is.... there's this sense of like we the ways we can see our spirituality our faith showing up and in therapy. And I... And the thing I'm really interested in putting words around is yeah

what is it. What does it do that it's there in our process. Am... how did, how did it am... how did your faith influence your process in counseling?

Participant:

How did it what? Sorry I missed the last part.

Johnny:

How did it influence your process in counseling?

Participant:

Oh.... yeah. So, um.... I guess I'll say one thing and maybe even more to say after but one central thing for me was um.... maybe this is answering the question the other way around. But I feel like a... in my time in counseling I learned a... to like learn the character of God more and trust God more and a part of that for me was um... allowing God into things like um.... handling my emotions that were really to me crazy and like deep and intense.

And I think learning to view, like I think before counseling I viewed like, my story and the things that happened to me is this one thing like God is over here and they're kind of separate and like realizing OK God is actually like a healer like the healer he cares about these things. He wants to be in on these things. And so I think kind of once I realized that like I approached counseling with what is God bringing up in my life right now and... um... how can I like, respond to that. Face those things that he's bringing up so I kind of answered your question backwards. That's kind of what came to mind right now.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Addressing S/R

Johnny:

Yep.... yeah. Yeah it's I think one of the most repetitive words you used so far is central as we moved through each different question so far. Um... so, you ever been to London?

Participant:

No I haven't, I wish. Ha...!

Johnny:

It's like, I'm thinking of like the map of their underground tube system and how you know there's certain hubs stations that you just can't really get from point A to Point B without going through that station. Um...!

Participant:

Right.

Johnny:

And this is kind of putting this metaphor together as I go. It's like you can't get there without going to that station. Um.. but then there's also the actual tracks trains run on.

Participant:
Yeah.

Johnny:
You know I think of one of the things, I've thought of has been when I get to the end of counselling sometimes with people I've had the privilege of spending a year or two years with them. Am... and we start to reflect on you know what happened. How how have you changed how have you grown how you healed.

Participant:
Mhm...!

Johnny:
They start to describe it and a lot of times some of what will emerge will be that this narrative of yeah that this piece happened and Johnny you played this role. But for many of them there's this but there are these there are these key things with God that either specific moments or thematic moments that had I not experienced them. I don't think we'd be here.

Participant:
Yeah.

Johnny:
Does that... take that from me? Is that descriptive of your experience and could you give it back to me with your your own experience?

15:02

Participant:
Yeah. Um.... I think there are definitely for me was a key moment and shift with God which I touched on just a minute ago about essentially learning I could hand over these things that were really big and intense and painful to God and not have to like control it all and figure it all out and fix it on my own or heal myself. That like, I could be small and let Him be big and that's OK.

That I mean I feel like that's something that I like that God allowed me to learn over time that there was this there was the specific moment that I was able to come to that like, "OK". To receive that. Let him kind of change my heart. So that was a very...!

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Exploring S/R

Johnny:

That was a pretty significant moment. Like your it sounds like your change process in counseling wouldn't have been the same if that moment hadn't happened.

Participant:

Absolutely, yeah. Yeah because I think you know I think a lot of people even probably myself included before I went to counseling kind of viewed counseling as, I'm gonna go and like the counselor is going to fix me or like I'm gonna get fixed and I'm going to be better. And I learned very quickly like that's not what is happening at all. That's not what counseling is about. Like my counselor can't fix me. It's so much more complicated than that.

And I think for me um.... I tend to be like a very controlling I want to control things I want to figure it out. I want to fix it. And so for God to bring me to that moment of... you don't have to fix it all and figure it all out and be God essentially. But I am God and I see these things and want to be the one who heals you and walks you through this process and transform me you was really just transformative for the rest of my walk in counseling because it was like OK what is God doing.

Receiving from S/R in Therapy Process: Healing

And I mean it's not like I had that thought all the time. It was just I was kind of living that out of like, "OK, God is like bringing this up". I like want to you know deal with this or deal with it and it's a weird way of putting it but address it you know talk through it, be in it. And I think if I just if God hadn't brought me to that place of transformation in the way that I like related with him I think I would have spent a lot more time like OK well, I have to keep controlling and I have to fix it. What can I do as opposed to like like who am I and what is God doing. How can I respond to that?

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Experiencing S/R

Johnny:

OK. Yeah. And so there was gosh again there's a lot in there of... Am... it's interesting, this is, it's... doing this interview. Honestly it's a skill I'm developing as the therapist in me gets curious about a number of different directions you just mentioned like oh gosh is this that. But the researcher in me goes stick to your question, stick to your question. And I think the thing that one of the things, I'm curious about is to whatever degree you are comfortable.

Participant:

Mhm...!

Johnny:

I'm curious, when you describe this moment and I imagine it may have been a specific moment or a moment over the next several weeks several months. You described this moment about God handling your emotions.

Participant:
Mhm...!

Johnny:
And handing these things over and could. Could you describe that experience?

Participant:
Yeah, it was a very specific moment. Um.... I was living in an apartment with some other Christian women at the time and my roommate wasn't home and so I was just like spending some time praying to the Lord about, I don't even remember what was going on in terms of you know my healing journey and story at that time but whatever it was. And I was like crying like you know I was sad and um.... I remember thinking back to a recent counseling session and thinking like, "OK, God.... like I can be small and like and be upset and sad and just feel and like be here in this moment and not do anything but to just feel and be" And I just did. And like I remember thinking that and I like I think I remember praying to like, OK God, like if that's true. I want to actually like do that. And so I did in that moment. Um... yeah. That's what the moment was.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Experiencing S/R

20:45

Johnny:
Yeah. That's.... that's really, what's fascinating to me about that is that's it was obviously a very significant moment for you.

Participant:
Mhm...!

Johnny:
Well I can tell by the way you remember it and it didn't happen in your counseling session.

Participant:
No. Ha...

Johnny:
Know what you did. You were thinking of a counseling session that had happened. Um...!

Participant:
Yes, yep...

Johnny:
I think, I wonder if you could even like zoom out for me around that moment.

Participant:

Mhm...

Johnny:

And some of this fits even into the... one of the other questions that I sent you of, "how you... how do you how you experience your counselor in relation to your faith". Like how did you interact before that moment with your counselor and after that moment how did you react. How did you interact with your counselor about that moment?

22:05

Participant:

Hmm... I honestly don't remember um... too much. I mean um.... I was pretty... aah... open with him and very um... like I was the type of client who I was like I came to the session ready to like talk about stuff and had stuff to talk about all the time like you didn't have to pull anything out of me like I had too much. Um.... so, I would assume I probably told him about that experience but I don't actually remember, I think though... I think that experience was influential in me being able to.... um... let myself feel a little bit more in counseling like in sessions.

Relating in Therapy: Developing Trust

And kind of sit like where we were and where God was leading him and I. Um... because for probably like the first year I was in counseling for like three and a half years and for about the first year I like could talk about stuff a ton but I could not like really feel just in the moment and be OK with that. And so, I don't remember exactly when that moment happened along the journey. Um.... it was probably earlier on. But I think that was influential in me.

Then in counseling being able to with my counselor feel and be small and not have to just, I mean and that's even something we engaged with like I'm smart and I um.... you know I'm willing to do hard things and willing to you know do what God is calling me to but also like I'm not God. And I can be like small and not have it all together essentially. And like what does it look like to actually because there's a difference between like saying that, like you know like I can be small and not small like... doesn't matter. But small as in like God is big and powerful and like you know, in control and I'm a human. And so there's a difference between at least for me like saying that and actually like learning what it looks to kind of live that out. So I feel like that was influential in my counseling sessions.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Experiencing S/R

Johnny:

Yup...! It's.... it's noteworthy to me there's something in you know that I kind of recognize about the experience you're describing of as we, did I lose you for a moment? There you are. Sorry I might have been breaking out. Um... there's

something I recognize about what you're describing where am... there can be this moment, that we can recall that is so significant. Am... but we don't... don't even necessarily remember exactly where it fit in the timeline of the counseling.

25:22

Participant:

Yeah.

Johnny:

But it was really, it was really important.

Participant:

Yeah.

Johnny:

I'm kind of, I'm kind of struck by that.

Participant:

Yeah. I feel like, I feel like a lot of my counseling was like that where, and I mean it's been a little while since I've been in counseling. Like a little over a year. But, like looking back, there were so many like things that we talked through and things that God transformed in me and healed in me. And just like amazing stuff that yeah a lot of it is like, I could maybe like look back in my journals and figure out like when that happened but you know so much of it, was certain memories that aren't attached like a certain time.

Receiving from S/R in Therapy: Healing

Johnny:

Yeah yeah.... I think I'll see if I find it interesting because I resonate with that of gosh you know there's sometimes you know when I in my own process or in the process of going through the client will we begin to reflect back there.... there may be a moment they describe. You know I don't remember exactly when this happened but this moment was really at this... this moment. My process wouldn't be the same without it.

Participant:

Right.

Johnny:

And so when I hear that in this, the other thing I hear that I'd love to have some more description from you on is... you've mentioned a motion, you've mentioned like feeling your emotions, God handling your emotions as being key things in your in your process. You've also mentioned the words transformation and healing. And those things seem like they seem like key pieces of your your change process in counseling.

Participant:
Yeah.

Johnny:

And I think I'm wondering you know, yeah tell me I'm going to keep this pretty open and just let you get on with it. What... where does where does your faith. Um.... how does it play with that transformation healing that you experienced?

Participant:

Hmm. Yeah, so, when I think of the transformation aspect of it. I think, I primarily think of that in terms of like the way that I relate to people and relate to myself and relate to God in the world. And with my story. Um... and I think kind of, I think for me in terms of like the relating to people sometimes it's a hard line between, there is obviously psychology involved in counseling. And for me there's a huge aspect of faith too.

So they're very they're very intertwined for me but I think kind of learning the transformation aspect of learning what is healthy relating actually look like what do healthy boundaries look like and of basing that on like what God's word says. And I think just an example of that is one aspect that was a huge transformation piece for me was struggling with codependency and like having no idea what that was or meant at all before counseling then learning what it was. As a result of current relationships that I was codependent in and walking through learning like basically setting up boundaries in that relationship which were extremely that was extremely difficult but like literally walking through that process of OK this is what codependency is. Um.... I'm very codependent. here's some relationships that are important to me that the other person is willing to work through some of this stuff.

And like actually walk through that process. Um.... and now I mean that's that was one specific relationship and one specific example that I walked through but that now it's like OK I like have the I have a living understanding of boundaries and what those things look like. And throughout that journey a lot of that journey for me was going to God and saying, like this is really painful and this really sucks. And like I don't I would rather just be codependent because it feels better.

Receiving from S/R in Therapy: Health

30:54

Um... but I like trust that you know better than I do for like what is actually good for me and healthy for me. And like mourning with him. So, I feel like the transformation piece was a lot of things like that where you know it's real.. relating with you know my parents and unhealthy patterns that were developed there and kind of walking out of those things. Which a lot of that is psychology related. But I think the process for me was a lot of moments with God, you know just daily of

either like whoa, like this is cool. OK, like I understand what I healthy like mother daughter relationship is supposed to be like but also like OK this is really painful and this sucks and you're maybe calling me to like do things like set of batteries or whatever that's really hard. And all of that wasn't just like OK like we're going to I'm going to talk about this in counseling and then go do something it was like a daily walk with the Lord. Um... through those things so that's the transformation piece.

Receiving from S/R in Therapy: Transformation

Johnny:

That's a great description and there's that interweaving again you know of and I like kind of how you introduce. Yes there there's my process and yes some of this is just some of it is psychology. But there's this whole other piece that it was also faith and the faith related to the transformation and one of the thing is about what you just described. If you can imagine this if you if you plucked faith out and took it out as an ingredient.

Participant:

Yeah.

Johnny:

What would happen to your process?

Participant:

I can't even like imagine that um... I think it may be somewhat similar in terms of um... like things I might do. Um... You know like I might walk through some hard things in relationships in the hopes of making them more healthy. But I think like viewing God as my healer and as like as bigger than the counseling process and obviously longer lasting. Um... I think just influenced everything I did. I mean this is a little bit of a side note to explain what I'm saying, like.... I think my time in counseling really helped me to it set a foundation for me to be able to engage with God about. Um... the things in my heart and in my story and in my life long after counseling had actually like you know be with him and those things and talk to him about those things. You know after a counseling relationship has ended. And so I think yeah maybe like I would have done some of the similar things and I probably would have experienced you know some healing and transformation. But like I learned that it wasn't. I mean my counselor was amazing and that relationship was hugely helpful for me throughout this season.

But... it was that like walk with God and learning how to walk with God through those things was like so important for me to be able to end that counseling relationship. And still like engage with those things and not just have it be like OK, I'm not in counseling anymore so I'm not going to think about these things or engage with them or walk through some of these hard things anymore. Um... because for me it was God is my healer like God is the central thing... my counselor is awesome, but like, my faith is bigger than that.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Exploring S/R

35:20

Johnny:

Yeah. And that brings me that brings again back to that one of the other questions that we have is you have a healing process taking place that you see God as as the healer and you also have your counselor who seems like a pretty great guy.

Participant:

Oh yeah!

Johnny:

How.... how did you experience your counselor in relation to your faith?

Participant:

In relation to my faith.. hmm.. um... I mean he was one of the first men in my life who was a like genuine man of God. Um... I have not had very many male... good males in my life. Or hadn't up until that point.

And so. Ah.... Yeah I mean in terms of like how he relates to my faith, I think him being a man who was like had good boundaries almost respectful and like witnessing even his relationship with the Lord in small ways throughout counseling like when he would pray at the beginning or you know some personal stories that he would share or whatever.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Experiencing S/R

Um..... I think it was helpful for me. I don't even know if this is answering your question but it was helpful for me in seeing like there are men of faith who share my faith who are actually like good, safe people.

I...which I don't know how if I'm allowed to share this. But I was abused by a man who was a Christian or who called himself a Christian. Um.... and so for me that was extremely helpful in like, "OK, this was somebody who actually like lives out" or you know I mean I only saw him in counseling but it seems to me and I mean we were in counseling for three years so I could see over time like is actually living out what he says that he believes. So that was really helpful for me I don't know if that answers your question but...

Johnny:

It does. Am... thank you for sharing um... about your views. I imagine that was a pretty integral part of the work you were doing in counseling.

Participant:

Yes.

Johnny:

And so it's a you know you were welcome to share it... It's entirely I want to share Yeah.

Participant:

OK.

Johnny:

It's and I hear again this strong convergence of...

Participant:

Yes.

Johnny:

Yeah there was my faith. There's, I saw the faith of my counselor, I also saw who he was as a man that related to the abuse I had suffered, the issues as dealing with it. It's like it all kind of weaves together.

Participant:

Weaves together, yeah.

Johnny:

It's hard to kind of try to it's hard to pluck out one strand or two strands which is what makes these questions so hard.

Participant:

Yeah.

Johnny:

Yeah and so there was a.... let me ask... let me ask this you got there you had your faith going on in the midst of your counseling process.

Participant:

Mhm...

Johnny:

What would have been different for you, if your counselor had not been a person of faith, or even not shared that they were person of faith?

Participant:

Yeah. Um. I think that would have been really hard for me. Um.... like because so many of my sessions like obviously we spent a lot of time talking about what actually happened and how did I feel about what happened and a lot of those things. But um.... like so much of that was like dialogue about things of faith. Um.... You know I mean I went to counseling briefly my senior year of high school. I was in

coun....this counseling that I'm talking about now was from like halfway through my or the beginning of my sophomore year of college through my senior year college.

Context: History with Counseling

40:32

And my experience in high school the person was not a Christian and it was helpful to a degree just in having somebody listen to you and... you know like hear what you're going through, being able to share with somebody, but I felt like there was like this wall hit in that like we don't necessarily view the world the same way. And so I am like desiring to be able to and I don't think I even knew that at the time. I can say that now but to relate on basically the same playing field um... like that wasn't possible.

And it wasn't really a... like it was OK, it was like helpful but it wasn't like transformative for me really or I think even it was hard to build. It would be, it was and it would be, if my counselor wasn't, didn't share my same faith. Um... to build like trust to the level that I had trust in, in the counseling relationship. Not that I wouldn't trust the person as a person but it kind of takes it from just here like the issues and how I feel about it and the psychology of it from you know the counselor.

Context: History with Counseling

But there's like a whole other level when it's like that base like the foundation is we have the same beliefs and we can talk about those things. And even my counselor could relate to those things or understand what that journey is like, because he is a man of faith or of the same faith that I am.

Relating in Therapy: Feeling Known

Johnny:

Yeah. Yeah. When you.... when you think of that previous counseling relationship back in high school.

Participant:

Mhm...!

Johnny:

Um...!

Participant:

Mhm...!

Johnny:

How did you experience your faith during that relationship?

Participant:

I mean I think I shared with her that I was a Christian but like I didn't really spend a lot of time talking about my faith or my relationship with God. Um... and I mean this thought just came to me that. I actually remember one of my first counseling sessions with my counselor who is a Christian um saying, "OK you know one of the things that I know that I struggle with is like having like false views of who God is" and like struggling in my relationship with God.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Introducing S/R

So, I think we should address that first because that's like a good foundation for addressing everything else. Which is really funny because it's not like you're going to like address that one time and like it's all fixed and whatever. So, I can look back on that now and laugh. But like, I think a lot of my healing happened because my view of God was so distorted and messed up from what I experienced in my childhood and I think there's so many other aspects of healing too but a main one was like healing in my relationship with God. And how I view him and like who is he actually. And so I think like I didn't bring any of that up in my counseling in high school. Because either she wasn't a woman of faith or I didn't know that she was. So I didn't really feel comfortable going there not knowing like is she there is she not like I don't know. So I think there's like a deeper level of like trust and safety for me that I felt in knowing this person has those similar beliefs and we can engage about those things.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Exploring S/R

Johnny:

Yeah. Yeah...! And so you didn't talk about it as much. You didn't offer it as much. You didn't feel as some trusting of her.

45:02

Participant:

Right...!

Johnny:

To replace those pieces of your experience in... Were they still going on. Was God still interacting with our counseling process during that time?

Participant:

Umm..... yeah, I mean I think, I... have always kind of journaled as like prayers to God. That's kind of always how my journaling has been and that was still the case at that time and so. I think I still engage with God, you know about those sessions. And about that time I think our relationship with God was a lot more like tumultuous at that time. So it was a lot more of like, I need to like figure out what to do to fix this or I need to like do the right thing or... so the way I related to God about it was a lot

different than it was in my most recent counseling experience in now. But I was still engaging with him about it.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Experiencing S/R

Johnny:

Yeah, that's... that's... that's interesting to me to think. It makes... it makes me wonder if some you know you you had this process going on for yourself around journaling with God talking with God and interacting with God. And I I wonder I wonder what your first counselor would have seen if she had access to that. What would she have learned about you and your process in counseling, that lived there.

Participant:

Yeah. And I know.

Johnny:

What, whatever it is it seems central, it's a word you've used a lot, deep..

Participant:

Yeah.

Johnny:

Vulnerable...

Participant:

Yeah. Yeah. I mean, I feel like most things in counseling... counseling... are vulnerable. But I think the relationship with God thing for me or just the faith spiritual aspect of it. I think the reason I mention like the trust piece and safety piece is because, um... I think I learned a lot or like experienced a lot of like God's love and character um... through my counselor.

So, through that relationship... so like on an... on an emotional like experiential level there's also like the intellectual level of like talking through things you know praying and being in scripture and talking through things that were going on. And I think the reason why that was so important for me is that like my experiences growing up communicated like this is how the world works. And like this is how people are. This is how I like extrapolated that to God.

Relating in Therapy: Experiencing Closeness

And um... to be able to experience something different was really important for me. And not that my counselor is God or anything like that. Um... the Lord I... am thankful for the Lord's protection of not viewing him as that throughout the counseling process because it was such an influential relationship to me with you know for me and codependency is you know a path that I have struggled with a lot so God totally protected me in that.

But at the same time it was still very influential in the way that I um... like walked with God and have been able to relate with God and like grow in my relationship with the Lord as a result of that.

Relating in Therapy: Developing Trust

Johnny:

Yeah.... yep... that makes sense. A.... I'm glancing at the clock and I'm seeing we've got about five minutes left.

Participant:

OK.

Johnny:

And um... so, I think I want to zoom out just a little bit. Am.... as we talked about your faith, your spirituality, relationship with God.

Participant:

Mhm...!

50:00

Johnny:

Is a part of your change process in counseling. And we've kind of you know turned that around from some different directions to see what's there. And I would imagine different different different thoughts or memories or anecdotes and anything would fall under the umbrella of this final question, which is, what what else what else would you like me to know about how you experience your faith in your counseling process?

Participant:

Hmm... Sigh.... Um.... Ha ha. I guess, this is not necessarily the greatest way to end but I think that one of the struggles that I had or one of the things I've wrestled with a lot through like in terms of my faith in the counseling process and the healing process was like the integration of like the word of God and like emotion and healing ministry and things like that and I don't mean healing ministry as a whole I mean just my own walk with healing. Um...

I think being a part of the body of Christ in the church at large which in my experience hasn't placed a lot of value or like emphasis on you know like healing and emotion and not just healing like fix it but walking with God through heart things and stuff like that. I was blessed to be at a church at the time of counseling that cared a lot about those things and I think that was really influential for me to have like a body of believers who.. who like shared that same value.

Which is... that was just a huge like help in terms of you know being in counseling and then being able to go to people who like me are open to these things and care about these things and they're important and they're valued. I think that was really important and helpful for me and I also think it's also a hard thing because they don't think a lot of the church you know values that or operates that way. And so at the time it was like like why doesn't everybody do this and not counseling but like engage this way like this is amazing it's like so good for my life it's like awesome.

Um.... So, uh.... yeah my experience outside of counseling and the church has been very different in terms of the way the body of Christ and the church at large um... views those things. So, I think that was really influential.

Engaging S/R in Therapy Process: Experiencing S/R

Johnny:
Yeah. It sounds like...

Participant:
It's like a body of believers who [fades]

Johnny:
Yeah...! Yep yep..! And it sounds like the.... making.... making space for and honoring the importance of emotions, emotional healing, emotional change. That's been a.... That's.... that's a key piece in the midst of your counseling faith process.

Participant:
Yeah absolutely.

Johnny:
Anything else you'd.... you'd want to add and please feel free like it can be small anecdotal side thing whatever whatever you want to make sure you get in please do.

Participant:
Yeah, um.... I guess one other thing is just a... learning through counseling how to be like, I don't really like the phrase in tune but I don't have another phrase so in tune with the spirit. Um.... and yeah, I mean, I shared before I am a controller and I like to fix things and I really like things black and white and I think, like I learned a lot in my counseling process that with God like people always say this but you can't put Him in a box.

I feel like I experienced that of moment in counseling where I was like, OK like my counselor, he might be like you know there's a lot of ways we could go with this like I want to take a moment to like pray. And like ask the Lord where he wants us to go. Or like asking me to pray and ask the Lord. Or you know us both pray or whatever. Um.... And just like experiencing God as very real and very like present in those

moments. And I think it's easy sometimes to be like there's all this stuff going on like does...does God see or is he in the details or does it even matter. But like my experience in counseling was like God is very present and he cares. And like he is a healer. I'm not.... um... that was really influential for me too.

***Engaging S/R in Therapy: Exploring S/R
Receiving from S/R: Connection with God***

Johnny:

Yeah. That's great. Okay. It's great. Anything else you want to add?

Participant:

I don't think so.

Participant 7606007

00:17

Participant:
Hello Johnny.

Johnny:
Hi, I'm Johnny. Nice to meet you.

Participant:
Yeah, OK. So, let's hope this works in terms of bandwidth.

Johnny:
We will do our best and if we have to switch over to Skype audio we can do that.

Participant:
OK.

Johnny:
Um...! Yeah. Well thank you so much. First of all for making time for this. I'm greatly appreciative.

Participant:
OK.

Johnny:
And we fortunately since I'm working off of a protocol we we will be done at at five to noon and you can get back to your day.

Participant:
OK.

Johnny:
So, before I jump in and give a little framing of what we're doing. Are there any questions you have about me or about what we're going to talk about?

Participant:
No, I don't think so. I think, I get it.

Johnny:
Great. I'm going to take a few notes while we're chatting.

Participant:
OK.

Johnny:

And if you see me writing that's what I'm doing. But let me frame our time and then I'll introduce that first question. Um...! We've talked some just a little bit on the phone and whatnot but basically you know what I'm looking for is I'm really interested in the.... the place where someone's faith spirituality religion intersects with their council process and how to really play with one another...! One of the ways I come to think about it has been like if I am doing a recipe... or making a recipe at home and I leave out baking powder the recipe is different. It comes out with a different result. And so I mean I'm interested in figuring out what what ingredient what kind of ingredient is spirituality and religion for the people who it really matters to.

Participant:
Got it.

Johnny:
And so I'm going to be steering us toward that intersection point. What I'll need from you is just to reflect with me about your experiences and I'll ask follow up questions and reflections to keep us pointed at that target.

Participant:
Got it.

Johnny:
But to begin, let's start with that first question which is how would you describe the role of spirituality and religion in your life?

Participant:
Ah.... Let's see. OK. And this is questions you asked before, right.? Or was in the Google Forms thing or whatever it was?

Johnny:
Say... I'm sorry, say that again.

Participant:
This was a question you asked before, is that right?

Johnny:
You may have seen this question before on the informed consent document.

Participant:
OK. Got it.

Johnny:
Yeah... yep.

Participant:

OK. So it's... it's an important part of my life. I consider myself a Christian. And every week pretty much teach Sunday school.

Context: History with S/R

Johnny:
OK.

Participant:
And... Yeah.

Johnny:
Yeah. What... what terminology, I spit out the terms, faith, spirituality, religion. Umm. Maybe there's others, what resonates most with you?

Participant:
Um... Let's see. Ha ha. Let's see. So, I go to a Presbyterian church.

Johnny:
OK.

Participant:
I would consider myself or used to an evangelical, after the past year. I'm... I'm embarrassed to be associated with the term but that's probably a good term. Ha ha ha.

Context: History with S/R

Johnny:
OK. Yep. And so as we're... as we're... as I'm referring to it and I ask you how does your blank play into your counseling process...! What term fits there. Your faith, relationship with God, religion, spirituality, Presbyterian...

Participant:
Faith.

Johnny:
Faith.

Participant:
Faith, yeah.

Johnny:
And you gave an example there of like teaching Sunday school. Um Being a part of a Presbyterian church. Can you give me a few other touch points of where faith shows up in your life...? Where you experience it...?

Participant:

Ah. That's.... yeah, I'm older. So, ha ha ha...! I mean it was an important part in who I married. That we're on the same age. Um. Made decisions in terms how we raised our children. Um we home schooled, until high school, and then sent them to a Christian school.

Context: Identifying as an S/R Person

Johnny:

Hmm.

Participant:

So, it's basically part of the fabric of our lives.

Johnny:

Mhm. So it's very involved in a lot of the decisions and how you directed your life...!

05:00

Participant:

And values, Yeah.

Johnny:

Yep. And how about in your... in your personal, internal world. Um....! What are.. what are the moments when you experience your faith the most, find yourself reaching for your faith.

Participant:

Yeah. Aah.. I mean, in terms of prayer in terms of you know difficult times. Uh, Yeah. That's all I can think of.

Context: S/R Practices

Johnny:

Prayer, difficult times.

Participant:

Yes.

Johnny:

Yep.

Participant:

Decisions.

Johnny:

OK. Yup..! Anything... (fades) OK. Yeah. Prayer, difficult times, decisions. So, it sounds like the one thing I hear through a lot of this is... um...! and are you hearing me OK?

Participant:

Yeah, I'm hearing you. Good. I've got a say network (fades) It's affecting the video, not the audio.

Johnny:

OK.. alright.

Participant:

And it's, I know it's my... it's on my end. I'm sure.

Johnny:

Sure sure.

Participant:

So, I'm hearing you good.

Johnny:

Good. Um...! So, the thing, I'm hearing and kind of cutting through a lot of this is how much, um... how much faith is um..... is really a part of directing your life.

Participant:

Right. But yeah, but I wouldn't say it's only that... it's an important part of our lives.

Context: Identifying as an S/R Person

Johnny:

What word would you add beside that?

Participant:

Aa...! Kind of part of the fabric of our life. That's what I would think of.

Johnny:

OK.

Participant:

The warp and woof.

Context: Identifying as an S/R Person

Johnny:

The what and what...?

Participant:
The warp and woof.

Johnny:
OK.

Participant:
Of life. Have you ever heard that term?

Johnny:
No. Tell me what that means.

Participant:
I think that's in terms of not knitting or crocheting It's a term that... the two different stitches. Yeah anyway..!

Johnny:
Yeah.

Participant:
Google it.

Johnny:
I will google it. Ha ha...! Stitches, the fabric. So, it's more than just directing your life, it like holds it together.

Participant:
Yeah, that's a good point yeah. It's part of everything.

Johnny:
OK. So then let's move.... let's move from that into how that you experience your faith in your counseling?

Participant:
Um. Uh. Let's see. And when my so I think I mentioned before that I sought counseling when my daughter died by suicide.

Johnny:
Oh wow.

Participant:
And actually before. OK. So she had severe depression with psychotic features.

Johnny:
Wow.

Participant:

And she and so we discovered that in 2009 when she was stopped at the Golden Gate Bridge by the Highway Patrol. And so she'd had depression probably since she was a teenager, it turned out, we didn't realize that and she didn't tell us. So, during that year she was... she was hospitalized in inpatient and outpatient programs. But then in the end of June 2011, she did die by suicide, jumping off the Golden Gate Bridge. We sought... my wife and I sought counseling, you know during that year before and then afterwards.

Context: Catalyst for Therapy

Johnny:

OK.

Participant:

Together and then sometime separately. And we always... what I always did was try to get somebody... ah... a professional counselor, but who had sort of a Christian background.

Johnny:

OK.

Participant:

Does that make sense?

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

About what you're interested in.

Johnny:

Yeah. No, that's very... that's very helpful. Um....! I think before we keep moving forward I want to.... yeah, just... just acknowledge the the heaviness of what you're sharing. And I just, I actually just had, my first daughter was born two months ago.

10:14

Participant:

Oh well, congratulations.

Johnny:

Thank you. I can't imagine. So, I would imagine it was a incredibly... incredibly intense time.

Participant:

Oh yeah. Yes. I know. Not out of (fades).

Johnny:
Yeah.

Participant:
Including in a spiritual way. So that's why it has been helpful to have somebody who understands it.

Relating in Therapy: Feeling Known

Johnny:
Yep...! Yeah absolutely. Yeah...! Still, I would imagine there. It's hard to even envision it. There will be no day when it's not painful.

Participant:
Ah... that's right. It really changed our lives.

Johnny:
Yeah.

Participant:
In every way. And it really challenges your thinking, faith, everything.

Johnny:
Yeah.. and so when you went through this traumatic loss.. you went to counseling. You've been in counseling but then you continued counseling and you. You wanted somebody who was professional and was Christian.

Participant:
Right. Um I'd actually had a friend when I worked in biotechnology who after he retired and he was a Christian, we actually went to the same church. And he went... he studied (fades). So, I knew him and I got his advice on counselors.

Johnny:
OK. OK. Hey, before we keep going.

Participant:
And I still hearing you.

Johnny:
Good. Would you actually up in the top menu under call you can mute your video as well. Um...!

Participant:
OK. Oh I can close video. OK good.

Johnny:
Let's do that. Let's try. Let's do that.

Participant:
OK sure.

Johnny:
We keep optimizing for the audio.

Participant:
OK well done. OK. All right. I get it.

Johnny:
Excellent.

Participant:
That's what I always do.

Johnny:
So you... So you ended up at a Christian counselor. Um..!

Participant:
That's correct.

Johnny:
And tell me.... tell me this, I'm going to ask you a few different ways a few different times to get us in the zone of where we're interested but how how would you say you experience your faith really in your counseling process? You could start with like what are ways that it showed up in the conversations or the relationship or....

Participant:
Got it. So, I actually worked... have worked with three different counselors.

Johnny:
OK.

Participant:
One was with my wife. Before and after. And then when things sort of got bad for me. I sought out counseling and I've had two since then.

Context: Experience with Therapy

Johnny:
OK.

Participant:

But it sort of depended. And counselors do things sort of differently.

Johnny:
Yeah.

Participant:
And so when my wife and I worked with a... together, with a counselor, it was just, they accepted kind of what we were going through and accepted our faith in the background.

Johnny:
OK.

Participant:
The second counselor I went to separately, he would pray, afterwards.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Experiencing S/R

Johnny:
OK.

Participant:
It was really focused on counseling. (fades) And, yeah I mean just the faith, was in the background.

Johnny:
OK.

Participant:
Of the um.... just in the background for me in (inaudible) and...and really the same for the second, second one. And you know sometimes, one of the things is that you... God and really question everything you believe and so it was good sometimes just to be able to talk about that.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Exploring S/R

15:18

Johnny:
OK. Because what you were going through and what you were talking about in counseling, it struck at... questioning what you believed about God you experience God.

Participant:
Right. I mean that's.... I mean that was some of the time not, you know, not most of the time but that was something I could talk about, is you just obviously feel that very distant from God. And... but anyway, could talk about it... a numbness.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Exploring S/R

Johnny:

OK yeah. And so these counselors that you went to... there was.... because they were Christian counselor. They.... it sounds like the it almost sounds like this faith. Your faith was part of the fabric of the counseling relationship like, it was just it was there.

Participant:

Yes. Absolutely.

Johnny:

And then there were moments where you may talk explicitly about something related to your faith or your relationship with God.

Participant:

That's correct.

Johnny:

OK. OK.

Participant:

Would you like an example of that?

Johnny:

I would love an example of that.

Participant:

So, this is tough to talk about but...

Johnny:

OK.

Participant:

My daughter brought psalms to read as she was taking the bus to the bridge. And we found those and also (fades) and had climbed over (fades) and it was a (fades) there, it was a first time in San Francisco. And she was a Christian. And she actually climbed over the rail and sat on the outside with the (fades) tall tower.

Context

Johnny:

Wow.

Participant:

And so, she left her number with (fades) we could talk to her.

Johnny:
Wow.

Participant:

And.... anyway we have met her and talked to her (fades) and she said her last word was God bless you. Which is amazing and sort of nice in a way, but also you know you struggle with that.... thinking... ah... God if you could do that, why couldn't you have stopped her. I would have actually preferred that.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Exploring S/R

Johnny:
Yeah. Oh absolutely.

Participant:

Yeah, but anyway. So anyway we could... we could talk about things like that.

Johnny:
Yeah.

Participant:

Also my wife and I... I mean Christmas is a difficult time.

Johnny:
Sure.

Participant:

And we have gone to what are called Blue Christmas or longest night services. And those had been very helpful. Um churches put on Christmas and services usually on the longest night which is like the 20th or the 21st. For people who are grieving or suffering or anyway and then you know then that service... that's something I could talk with our counselor about. One of the counselors had a death in his family. He actually came to one of them one year.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Experiencing S/R

Johnny:
Wow.

Participant:
So anyway.

Johnny:
Yeah. Yeah.

Participant:
OK. So how's that?

Johnny:
That's... I...

Participant:
Was it a good example?

Johnny:
Those are very good and... I appreciate you sharing because, I mean it sounds like you're... You mentioned this on the phone with me that you went to counseling aa.... a lot of the reason you were in counseling was.. was grief. Um...

20:15

Participant:
Yeah.

Johnny:
And it seems like your... your faith and your grief process aa.... are pretty intricately, interwoven.

Participant:
You're back. Sorry!

Johnny:
Sorry about that. Would I lose you.

Participant:
Yeah. I think you said the faith is pretty interconnected.

Johnny:
Yeah with your faith in your grief process seem very intricately, interwoven.

Participant:
Yeah. Absolutely, yes. OK.

Johnny:
You having.

Participant:
OK. I'm going to try something here.

Johnny:
OK what's that?

Participant:

Yeah, I'm having problems. What I'm going to do. I'm going to try connecting using my cell phone to a hot spot. And I think that will give us better connectivity.

Johnny:

OK.

Participant:

So we might have to call.... might have to call back, so.

Johnny:

Okay.

Participant:

So, I lose you let's call back each other, OK I'm sorry for this.

Johnny:

No no problem no problem at all. Would it be better for us for you to call me on my cell phone?

...

All right. How is that?

Participant:

That's goood.....! OK and what do I need to do. OK good. I'm off video. There we go.

Johnny:

OK.

Participant:

Great. I think that's working better.

Johnny:

OK. Thank you for bearing with me on this. I'm incredibly grateful.

Participant:

No... no problem. Okay I will. I'll do this in the future.

Johnny:

OK.

Participant:

Use the cell phone connection. I connect the computer to the cell phone. So anyway. OK sorry.

Johnny:

No no problem. So you so your your grief process and your faith are pretty interwoven with each other.

Participant:

That's absolutely, yeah.

Johnny:

And tell me... tell me a little bit about that. And I'm going to give a few categories. I would imagine there's times when you were in counseling you're in counseling and you're processing this horrible loss. And sometimes it's in a very explicit question about your... your faith. Why... why would God bring this person to the bridge but couldn't save my daughter. Um.... And other times it might be more internal maybe of an experience of God feeling.... a healing from God. I'm curious how did you experience your faith through that process.

Participant:

Right. So I didn't it's not like I expected the counselor to answer that question, right? That's a difficult question to answer. And so, I didn't expect that. It's just to talk about struggling with that and to talk about thinking about that, too. Um....! Think about especially when you see that times that God is silent and how you respond and how I respond to that.

Relating in Therapy: Developing Trust

25:03

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

Um... The um... the... yeah and that's just helpful. I mean I think, I mean the... kind of some of the foundations of psychology were very anti-Christian and it would be very... And Christians in retaliation I think have been very anti-psychology and some of the groups particularly evangelicals, which I don't think is right either.

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

So I think it's what I was looking for is somebody who was a really professional and who could but who could would be accepting of faith. And you know I could relate experiences like going to that... that was a big experience going to the first longest night service and I could talk about that you know just.... the holidays are a very difficult time.

Relating in Therapy: Feeling Known

Johnny:
Sure.

Participant:

When you when you have suffered grief is particularly a, uh, a...just a really bad one like that. Yeah. And so I remember I remembered the first hymn or or psalm that they sang was "Comfort ye, Comfort ye", from Handel's Messiah and... that was really tremendous. I mean just had a big impact on me realizing... that uh.... really Christmas is for me. That's why Christmas happened, is for uh.... people like me and the others with who've had horrible things happened.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Experiencing S/R

Johnny:
Yeah.

Participant:

And the pastor is fantastic too there she, she always said that's her favorite service. But anyway experiences like that I could talk to.. talk about to.. and I felt like they understood.

Johnny:

Yeah felt understood. And what... let me ask the, huh.... I mean first of all yeah I can certainly resonate and empathize with the holidays making that grief heavier. Um...! And I think I'm curious as you had that experience like. Well what would have been missing from your counseling if if you were not able to talk about those experiences.

Participant:

Uh, yeah, I think it would depend on the counselor how much you could talk about it, how much you'd think they understood.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Addressing S/R

Johnny:

That's the second time you've said under... understood.

Participant:

Right or have to kind of have the background to understand... what I was talking about. Right. I mean there, just the content of the psalm is what really struck me. I think I don't think they teach that even in Oregon State or University of Oregon. Where you go?

Johnny:

Oregon State Yeah

Participant:

Oregon State, even in Oregon State and like that they don't probably teach that right.

Johnny:

They don't teach. No, I got that at my seminary training.

Participant:

Yeah, exactly so. And you know so anyway that... so kind of understanding that that content which to me was extremely powerful.

Johnny:

Yeah it to me it.... It sounds to me like it said something to you about your faith. Christmas is for me. It also said something to you about this intense season of grief. You were in.

Participant:

Right. That's right.

Johnny:

What did it tell you about that?

Participant:

Uh... Yeah... Huh.... Uh...Uh... Just how difficult it is and I would I would find things to read that were helpful. And um... I would bring them in and they were helpful to just talk over with my counselor for instance, I'm sure you know who. Oh.... gosh I blanking on... When you get to be 60 for... I'm losing the part of my brain within with with the that remembers names. But fortunately his book is right here. Timothy Keller, I'm sure you know Timothy Keller is.

Context

Johnny:

Yes absolutely.

30:00

Participant:

Oh yeah. So he... he wrote a very... he spoke at the 9/11 memorial like five years after it and just has a beautiful talk on sort of why is it that horrible things happen. And so you know that's something I found I can't stand to read really theological stuff or really long things... about it.

But um.... that was something short and I remember just a really you know his typical very winsome approach that he has. And um a.... he said in there that one thing we know is that God... it's not that God doesn't care because he sent his son.

And you know that was something I could read something like that and think about that and.... and talk over that and some difficult things a... with... with my counselor. Yeah it's not that I expected him to be a theologian. You know but it was just you know I could talk about what I was going through.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Experiencing S/R

Johnny:

Yeah. And you highlight these these particular things like this the longest night service a.... and hearing this him.

Participant:

Yes, yeah.

Johnny:

And then this.. this thing that Tim Keller wrote and what's... what's striking me is there when I have had these experiences over the years where I'm counseling someone and we have all the sessions where we talk about any number of different things whether it's faith or whether it's just the grief process or loss or pain or... But then what will come to the end of the time and say you know what... what was really impact full for you and sometimes what comes out as stories like this like it was that him at that service.

It was it was that longest night service and knowing that there were others. And um... it's.. it seems to me that these these kind of sound like that for you that these were some of the touchstones of how your process continued to move forward. Am I... Am I hearing that right?

32:13

Participant:

Yeah, definitely. And if it's... anyway, just... it's an incredibly beautiful church that it was held in... it's the episcopal church in downtown Venetia. And it gets back from the 1800s. It was built like by Norwegian shipwrights and it's just a beautiful, beautiful wood church and it was decorated beautifully.

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

They had a candlelight... service and... I should write an article on it some day. It's just... it was really incredible.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Experiencing S/R

Johnny:

And it just. And he found it just sounds to me as I hear you recalling it and I can he I can just hear the emotion that it... is just a you can't understate how significant of an experience it was for you. Experience of faith but then also an experience of your grief process you were going through.

Participant:

Yeah, absolutely. It was, uh, especially that first year it seemed like they kept the church dark afterwards. And ah.... they just left it open.

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

And it's just a good.. a good place to be sad.

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

But anyway that's... we're talking about the church but that's something I could talk over and share with my counselors and they would appreciate it. Like I said one thought it was so good he went on himself when...when he had a death in his family.

Relating in Therapy: Experiencing Closeness

Johnny:

And it just seems to me because yeah I could I could I too could get lost or not lost but I too could follow you into talking about that service ha.... because it interests me as well. But it seems to me for your counseling process like your counselors would have missed something really really significant. If you've not been able to talk about that.

Participant:

Yeah probably one of the most significant things that has happened that really almost was a turning point.

Johnny:

Yeah. And tell me a.... turning point from what to what.

34:45

Participant:

Oh.... yeah. I don't know why I said that. You know that was like six months after Elizabeth's death... she died in late June and that was in December obviously.

Johnny:

OK.

Participant:

And I don't know it was a little bit sort of a resurrection of my faith at that point. And anyway yeah, just sort of turned around.

Context: History with S/R

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

Going to church can be tough when you are... when you've had grief... when you've had a death like that. And that's something you could to I could talk to ... about with my counselor. We had to change where we sat in church just because it reminded us so much of Elizabeth. And.... you know certain songs... songs they're tough to hear. Easter is tough to hear. There's are songs about like resurrection.

Johnny:

Mhm...!

Participant:

A.... There's you know there's one hymn that our church sings about being under water. Anyway those are really, really tough to hear. And so Church can be a tough place to be.

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

And you sort of can't lose it completely like you want to. So it's... you know that's helpful to you know to talk to somebody about.

Relating in Therapy: Feeling Known

Johnny:

Yeah I hear this almost contrast of it's like..... it's... it's hard to bring your grief to church and on the other side it would be incredibly hard if you couldn't bring your faith to your grief process. Like if I need in a place where you could do both.

Participant:

Exactly... Yeah, almost sort of an anonymous place.

Johnny:

Yeah. Anonymous and yet there is still a very important longing for you of, I need this person to understand my faith as a context of what I'm going through right.

Participant:

Right. Exactly. And you know and to understand it's pretty typical and understandable.

Johnny:

Yeah. yep... and tell me if you can I'm going to ask another broad potentially hard question. I know that the grief process. I think in many ways it is best understood as the seasons like they just kind of change over time that gives way to new things and there are hard seasons and there are easier seasons. And I guess I am curious with whatever your experience of that has been what.. what are the... what are the moments in counseling and you mentioned the service that the service the longest night service what are the moments when God felt the closest to you in that process.

Participant:

OK. Not quite sure what you meant but a.... I mean at that service definitely during that whole service. Every year... every year we go back to what... So what, this is like six years. We always go back to that same place, sit in the same place. Well anyway we go back there to... to think about that and it's just a good place to grieve. We don't really know anybody there...just friendly people.

Context: S/R Practices

Johnny:

Yes. And and that... And so the service is this beautiful picture of this place you return to that has become a very important part of your own grief process. Are there moments that have been like that in the actual counseling room?

Participant:

Not really. No.

Johnny:

So there's this interesting thing where it's like our process that we're going through in counseling in your case is this grief process. It's weird how some of this happens in the counseling room but a lot of it happens out of the counseling. And it seems like some of the most significant moments for you in that grief process did not happen in the counseling room.

40:20

Participant:

OK. A... That's, I think that's right. Yeah, that's right.

Johnny:

And yet counseling was still an important thing that you would go to.

Participant:

Absolutely. To talk about that. I think we also went to um.... other... other groups. The local crisis center had a group for parents who ah.... had lost their children in... by suicide. It was you know not a... it was a secular group and we go to a monthly AFSP, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

Johnny:
OK.

Participant:
And so those are good places for grief. Also, I would say but, uh, but their places, you know and then you can talk about that. I mean I have the (fades) counseling as a place to talk about a kind of experiences there.

Johnny:
Yeah. Yep. It's... it's really interesting it's it's I almost get this picture of like your you had this grief process and faith process going on and you had these important moments. That was that would move it that would create movement in in your grief process. And it's like counseling counseling was the place that you would go to like de-brief all of that like.

Participant:
Yes. Yeah I think that's a good way of thinking of it.

Johnny:
Yeah and you've mentioned a little bit of this but I am going to ask it again. How when you would talk about those things when you talk about the service or the Tim Keller article. How... how... how would your counselor relate to those experiences? How would they respond?

Participant:
Yeah. No I... I can't remember exactly. But just in a... being interested uh.... in wanting to find out more ... asking you know what I was thinking about and things like that.

Johnny:
And was it was it did it feel sufficient for you to have um... to just know that they understood your faith. Did you want anything more than that from your counselor?

Participant:
No. I answered that very quickly. Yeah. No. I didn't think so I don't yeah was... I realize they're not you know theologians or... or even pastors. And so you know we maybe talk over good and bad. There's lots of bad responses to grief. And, you know, can talk about those or...uhhh.... let's see, I remember I was sitting in the waiting room for one of my counselors and there was... there was a brochure on a grief thing... grief share. I think it's been a very popular thing. And they were having it at the church and I was looking at the uh... at the different meetings and I grabbed it and I brought it in and I talked to him about it.

You know that I sort of in a in a positive way kind of um.... sort of what was wrong with it. Its because it's one of these... I can't remember exactly but I think it's really designed...griefshare is more designed for people who have lost a spouse. But there was one in there about sort of getting over it and moving on and stuff like that. And...and I could tell you know I could tell my counselor, "hey, I really hate this".

Context: History with Therapy

Johnny:
Yeah.

Participant:
Yeah. I hate it when people do that. You should find out another word for that. I mean there's better words for it. But anyway, I could talk to him about that.

Johnny:
Yeah. Yes. And it was a.. You mentioned this a couple times in its speech might piqued my interest because it's something I've heard from other folks I've talked to about what you did or didn't expect from your counselor.

Participant:
OK. Interesting. OK.

Johnny:
That you didn't expect them to be a theologian or you expected them to understand and be understanding of... of your faith experience but you didn't expect them to be a theologian or and I guess what I'm curious about and tell me if this makes sense I can reword it. Did your own Did your faith play a role in your expectations?

45:23

Participant:
OK. Maybe explain that a little bit more. In what way?

Johnny:
Like I guess. Let me let me phrase it this way. Why not expect your Christian counselor. Why not walk in and expect them to understand you and be able to give you some perspective and give you some theological answers. Why not expect that.

Participant:
Yeah. Um..... I think different... So I've had actually kind of two counselors that I've gone to on my own. And I mean all...all three of them actually have been different. Um.... but uh... I didn't... I can't. I think that's. That's sort of the way I am is that I'm looking for things. Uh I'm not sure I'm answering completely but what I would say is suicide grief is different and particularly bad. And a lot of counselors don't have any experience with it. Right. So yeah I just wasn't expecting that from them. I would

just...what I was expecting more and got a lot of help with the uh... dealing with depression and anxiety that developed. And so one of my counselors was...uh... into CBT and so that was very helpful. So we'd work on that sort of thing. That's what I expected.

Context: History with Therapy

Johnny:
OK. Yeah.

Participant:
I... I was thinking things were so bad that I was thinking of getting medications and I actually saw a psychiatrist once.

Johnny:
Mhm.

Participant:
And just kind of getting some advice and counsel about that was helpful and then helping move through different kind of seasons or stages of grief and different things that would come up.

Johnny:
Yeah.

Participant:
But yeah I just... let's see I think I get the roles. Maybe that's it. I think you know that's... that role of kind of the theology and dealing with the difficult questions you get from Tim Keller. And I have to admit I didn't ask my pastor even. That kind of question.

Johnny:
Hmm.

Participant:
I want to... I wanted to approach it more on my own. Yeah so I didn't... I didn't ask those questions.

Johnny:
Would your do you think your pastor. Um... are they the type of person who could have provided the same kind of understanding about grief.

Participant:
No, no I don't think so.

Johnny:

It's it's really noteworthy to me that you felt a sense of understanding about your grief with your counselors and understanding about your faith and that it allowed you to ask questions that you already knew there wasn't a simple answer to.

Participant:

Oh yeah. Plus I'm irritated when people give me a simple answer.

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

It's incredibly irritating. I avoid people who do that.

Relating in Therapy: Developing Trust

Johnny:

I can imagine.

Participant:

Another good influence and I'm getting off track a little bit but... what's that big church down in Southern California... the Purpose-Driven Life... that guy.

Johnny:

Oh yeah. At Saddle-back.

Participant:

Saddle-back and whoever the pastor is him and his wife lost their son to suicide.

Johnny:

Mhm.

Participant:

And uh... just some of the blog that the wife wrote a year after her son's death. It's something like: don't tell me to get over it or something like that.

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

Really providing good advice on how to, what to do and not to do, people in grief. Anyway. That... that has been real helpful. That's another thing that I kind of brought to my counselor to talk over.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Experiencing S/R

Johnny:

Yeah. Yeah. Yep. And I get so... I can.... I can very readily see from what you're describing that if your counselor wasn't receptive to your faith if they weren't understanding of it all of these key things that were taking part in your process wouldn't have been... it wouldn't have been involved or that you wouldn't have necessarily been able to talk with them about it.

50:06

Participant:

Right. They wouldn't have got completely. Yeah. So it's kind of that uh... it's kind of woven into it.

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

The warp and woof. I think that's a weaving term.

Johnny:

Yeah. I am going to have to... I will have to google that.

Participant:

Ha ha...!

Johnny:

Yeah it's... it's interesting. The reason I ask is as I've talked with a few people several several folks have mentioned that, a... part of their faith experience in counseling was recognizing the limitations of their counselor and saying I you know I recognize that there are just one person or they're they just have a certain type of training and they can be caring and they can be empathetic and they can. But I don't expect them to be everything.

Participant:

Right. Understanding what they're good at and their kind of role. Yeah. Yeah that makes sense, plus also they...they may not be experts on the particular thing and they might be doing some learning.

Johnny:

Right.

Participant:

And that's actually helpful to help too. Yeah my... I mentioned to my counselor that I had written to somebody an e-mail saying the 10 top things that have helped me.

Johnny:

Hmm...!

Participant:

And and so he said hey send that to me. Let's bring it and let's talk about it.

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

And so that was really helpful. And I think helpful to him too. Yeah he actually gave a training at his church later and used that material for training. So...

Johnny:

That's great.

Participant:

So, that's nice.

Johnny:

Yeah. It seems like as I listen to you describing it it's part of what I hear is it's not like it's not like you had a process that was going on in counseling in the... in the counseling room that the church service and the Tim Keller article added to it's like you had a process going on in your life, that intersected with the church service and the article and... and you would take that to counseling.

Participant:

Yeah. No that's and right and get sort of help surviving yeah. Yeah that's right.

Johnny:

Um...! All right. I would keep... keep talking and keep turning this around but I'm aware of our time and want to be very respectful of yours. And so let me just ask as we've talked through this. Is there anything else big or small, anecdotal, whatever that you would want to add about what your experience of your faith in your counseling, what that's been like?

Participant:

Ah.... lets see, not that I can remember.

Johnny:

OK. Well this will not be the last time we speak.

Participant:

OK.

Johnny:

So, let me move toward closing us up and tell you what's going to happen from here.

Participant:

OK.

Johnny:

The first thing I want to say, I'll start with the most important is, is a very heartfelt thank you. Not just for giving your time but for be willing to share parts of your story and the loss of your daughter. Um... I... yeah I don't I don't have I don't have good words to just say thank you for that.

Participant:

Got it. OK. Yeah!

Johnny:

And um.... so with that said what's going to happen from here is I'm going to take this along with the other interviews. And I'm going to transcribe them and I'm going to analyze them through my research process. And what I will come out with is a second set of questions, that I will then contact you in email to you and we'll set up a time to run through those and those... those questions will try to target things that began to show up across all of the interviews.

Participant:

Oh interesting. OK. Interesting...!

Johnny:

Yeah. To kind of dig in a little bit deeper to understand a few things a little bit more.

Participant:

Yeah.

Johnny:

So you probably will not hear from me for about a month as I work through that and then and then I'll pop back up on your radar and we'll get something set up that works for you.

Participant:

Now that's good. End of February is busy for me. So yeah, we'll get set up something. Let's get...!

Johnny:

And then you probably also read that there is compensation for each interview that you complete. The plan we have laid out is, the option we have laid out is me emailing you an Amazon gift card. If that is not how you would like to be compensated, we can arrange something different.

Participant:

Nope. That's fine. Whatever is easier, it sort of doesn't matter either.

Johnny:
OK.

Participant:
What you're doing is something I really believe in.

Johnny:
Well thank... I... I am being very, very, very grateful.

Participant:
No, I think... and I think um... yeah, at my daughter's memorial service I had my friend a... give a talk about depression a.. so people would understand it and recognize it.

Johnny:
Yeah.

Participant:
And I think this is a sort of a weakness in the evangelical community it's an understanding and the value of counseling and psychology. So anyway. So anyway what you're doing is something I believe in.

Johnny:
Great. Well I'm glad to hear that. Um... all right Participant. Thank you so much for your time.

Participant 7606008

00:13

Johnny:

Hi Participant.

Participant:

Hello.

Johnny:

I'm Johnny. Aa.. Nice to meet you.

Participant:

Nice to meet you.

Johnny:

Oh thank you so much for taking some time to do this with me. I am.... I'm incredibly grateful. This um.. seriously this... This is a big deal for me to be able to do this. So, grateful for you giving your time.

Participant:

No problem.

Johnny:

Um... I will... jump right in and I'll... I have a little way that I like to frame the time before we move into the questions. But before we start, I want to see if you had any... any questions for me about the research or about me?

Participant:

Um... No.. not in particular. I think my only concern is that, I did the whole scheduling thing, thinking it was Eastern Time. So, my schedule is all.... not right.

Johnny:

Okay..!

Participant:

So, I wanted to know if I could go back and do it again.

Johnny:

Omm... you can... does this time work for you today?

Participant:

Yeah. I had class, so I got up early today. So, it was fine but I didn't realize it when I... scheduled everything. So that was like crap. So I just need to go and um... do that knowing that it's.... pacific time.

Johnny:
Yeah.

Participant:
And then I'll be fine.

Johnny:
Actually, I don't think you need to worry about it, because when we complete this interview today, we will be done for now. And then I'll actually send you a new scheduling thing for the second.

Participant:
OK. All right. No problem.

Johnny:
Um... Awesome. Well with.. if there is nothing else, then we'll just kind of... we'll jump in. Amm... And.... I've got some questions to move us through... through the interview to hear about your experience. Ammm.... And I'll keep us moving in the direction of what we're going for because what I'm looking for is... is it's really kind of how your spirituality religion, how your experience of that really interacts with your counseling process? So, it's like not count not just counseling it's not just spirituality and religion it's like where those two intersect and influence one another. So that's kind of what all of our questions will be gearing toward. Um.... that's going to be implicit ways and explicit ways it could be in the session time that you have it could be outside the session time. We're casting a pretty broad net so that we can narrow down on what it is we're... we're looking for. So with that as our like general backdrop the question I'd like to start with is that, first question of how would you describe the role of spirituality and religion in your life?

Participant:
Um.. It's very major. But I think that's because, I was raised in a religious household. So, I don't know life apart from it.

Context: Identifying as S/R Person

Johnny:
OK.

Participant:
It's always been integrated.

Johnny:
Yeah.

Participant:
Um.. So it's a really tricky question.

Johnny:
Yeah... it's broad right. Ha ha.

Participant:
Yeah. Um... I don't know, I guess.... when I look at like life events in parts of my story like it's always.... I always run into personally like "where was god?" like in that and like how does that make sense with who he is or who he's supposed to be.

Context: History with S/R

Johnny:
Mhmm...

Participant:
So, it all... I always get redirected, back that way... personally.

Johnny:
Yeah. And so you... it sounds like it's always religion, spirit.... spirituality has always been a part of your life?

Participant:
Mhmm..

Johnny:
Um... And it sounds like you kind of brought it to a out and some central questions where... where is God? Where is he supposed to be?

Participant:
Yeah. For me personally.

Johnny:
Yeah. And how does that.... how do you like, what are the places either like in your life or in your internal world where you were you experience that the most?

Participant:
Um... Huh... I think it would have to be family life for me personally, so just knowing like where I come from. How did that happen. Um... It's always the question of like.... OK will either things are random and God's not sovereign, or He's sovereign and then this happened under his watch.

Context: History with S/R

05:00
Johnny:
Yeah.

Participant:

So... um... I guess, I don't know if I'm answering that correctly. hehe...

Johnny:

You're doing great aa... yeah. You're am... It's interesting hearing about your experience of God. Already you bring it to large questions..... like large significant questions for you. Where is God? Is God sovereign? And I think.. I'm curious what does how do you carry that in your day to day?

Participant:

Not well.

Johnny:

ha ha ha..... yeah...!

Participant:

Not well. Um... It's hard. I mean... I don't... I don't know if there is like a scale.... like a grading scale. I don't think I'm ever not aware of it or ever not questioning it. Not to say that like I'm thinking about it every waking second but I know not a day goes by where it doesn't in some degree like cross my mind like well how does... like "How is that you?" like especially today of all days like... he he..... how... like where are you at? Are you sleeping or are you or do you not care. Or it's....

Context: History with S/R

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

I think..... I've always... I've always got questions. I've always got a question like about it.

Johnny:

Mhmm... Yep.. And it's... yeah... you're painting a picture where. Um.. Tell me which words resonate the most for you? Religion, spirituality, faith, God, what?

Participant:

Definitely not religion. Probably spirituality and God. Yes... I guess, I have a hard time with religion because I feel like then I have to fall until like a certain denomination which I don't do well.

Johnny:

Ahan.. Yep. And so you paint a picture so far of your spirituality that is. Um... Something that's kind of always present in your internal world?

Participant:
Mhmmm..

Johnny:
And it's touching these major facets of your life. It's not just like it's like large questions it's family life. It's..... aaa..... I'm going to make some presumptions. But when you say a day like today..... and a crappy day like today.....

Participant:
He he...!

Johnny:
Seeing this person.

Participant:
Yeah it's.... yeah it's seeing this person. But then also I think one of the biggest ways I've experienced God in counseling has been that it's broken me out of the traditional denomination that I was raised in and then ended up being around. Because I didn't search for my counselors based on their denomination. Not intentionally but also not like unintentionally.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Exploring S/R

Johnny:
Yeah.

Participant:
So, I got them.... I got her through recommendation and it's definitely... I think it's definitely broadened and helped me to see more God of who he is as opposed to less of what he can be in specific institutions or..... ummm... certain groups that tend to only focus on certain aspects of his character or change certain aspects of his character to fit what they like or prefer. Um..... So, it's exposed me to the possibility of who God could be as opposed to what I've always been forcibly told he is.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Experiencing S/R

Johnny:
Hmm.... Forcibly. So there is some..... aa.... there's some story there.

Participant:
Totally... he he.... yes.

Johnny:
Yeah. And so you're counseling..... you didn't seek out a denomination per se did you seek out a Christian counselor?

Participant:

Yeah I did. Um... I sought out a Christian counselor per recommendation of someone I know who is a counselor and said you should probably do this. And so they recommended this person to me and I more so did it because it was comfortable because I'd never done counseling before. So there is at least some aspect of familiarity at least in like terms of religion.

Relating in Therapy: Feeling Known

Johnny:

Yeah. And tell me about that would help make them more comfortable?

10:07

Participant:

I think having the possibility... or the ability to bring up God and not have to go through the whole conversation does he exist does he not exist or wonder OK am I just talking and I'm not going to get any feed push back on like how I'm viewing him or anything like that like it..... I knew it was going to be an entire part of the process. And that I wasn't just going to be dealing with like the psychological issues.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Experiencing S/R

Johnny:

Okay.

Participant:

Solely..

Johnny:

Okay yep. Okay. I'm writing a few notes as you're.... as you're talking.

Participant:

No. That's fine.

Johnny:

And you're..... you're saying a lot of things that I actually want to jot down. Um... which is why I'm writing so much....! Because yeah..... I'm actually..... really appreciating where you're..... Where you're focusing in. Ha ha...! And I'm the counselor in me and the person in me wants to lament with you about Trump. But I'm like let's....

Participant:

Ha ha..!

Johnny:

OK maybe I'll just maybe.... I'll just keep my lament to this. I hear you. I hear you. I resonate with you. Um...! But I really like the areas you're focusing on. Um..... it helped make you more comfortable because you have these.... you have these questions about God.

Participant:

Yeah. And they're big and they're not, I mean Of course this is all in retrospect, I totally wasn't in this mindset when I was in counseling at all. Like at all. But I look back and like I have all these questions that like..... would have come to the surface in counseling had I picked a non spiritual counselor or a non-Christian counselor. And then I just would have hit a wall, very early on. Like very early on because I remember one of my first questions being like how could this happen if God blank. So, it was important and even though I didn't fully understand that it was...

Relating in Therapy: Developing Trust

Johnny:

OK. And so the stuff that brought you to counseling, really quickly.... brought you face to face with these questions that you maybe didn't even explicitly know you were carrying in there.

Participant:

Yeah.

Johnny:

And then having a Christian counselor.....

Participant:

Created the space for me to.. have them and say them... without, cause there's always having friends who who are not Christians which is fine, I love them to death. Like there's always that wall of like OK well you can't bring this struggle there because it's not going to go anywhere. I mean they're going to let me say it but like there's no possibility of conversation. Or even like if I don't have a question that's about God that I realize is there like they're not going to see either.

Relating in Therapy: Experiencing Closeness

Johnny:

Yeah. And so it almost sounds like there's something there's..... there's things about God. Just your experience in the world there's things that you you see that your counselor also can see is that my hear that right?

Participant:

Yeah... I think that would be it.

Johnny:

Hmm....

Participant:

I think because I think there's things that I like see that I don't realize that I see but my counselor is able to like... guide me in the direction to maybe have a little bit more self exploration cause talking is very hard for me. I'm very surprised I'm doing this right now.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Experiencing S/R

Johnny:

Oh yeah yeah.

Participant:

So yeah. Ha ha...!

Johnny:

Well.... would just out of curiosity.... what.... what made you do it? And how comfortable are you feel in talking with me?

Participant:

Ummm..... I did it to push myself.

Johnny:

Okay.

Participant:

Because my... my initial reaction..... like my initial instinct is heck no... Um... I don't know. It's different. It's a little scary. But...

Metasynthesis

Johnny:

OK. Yeah I... I appreciate all your..... your reflections so far. I really appreciate you pushing yourself and sharing about this because um.... yeah I'm.... I'm very intrigued to decide because a lot of what a lot of what you're saying is kind of already... It's like moving down the funnel of like what I'm really wanting to understand better. Um... Because it sounds like your.... your experience of God and spirituality, it's a very... it's a very close experience for you. It's very... it's kind of always there.

15:30

Participant:

Yeah, it is. Which is weird. I mean it's not weird. I kind of can see why. I mean I went to private school my whole life. So it's always just been around me.

Johnny:

Hmm..

Participant:

So, I know it's totally the environment I was raised in. But I mean it posed a lot of questions.

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

So, I just.... I feel like I had a lot of questions about it and I mean I still do most of them are unanswered.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Exploring S/R

Johnny:

Mhm... Yep. And how is that.... How has your.... how you've experienced your spirituality, um... in your counseling? And this can be like very concrete ways this can be more abstract ways this can be like feelings or sense or just how have you experienced it?

Participant:

Umm.... Ah... I think.. I've experienced it by being able to ask questions, because, I don't really think I have a firm sense of like definitively what my spirituality is because, I feel like I'm questioning everything that I was taught or shown. Um..... So, I think the way I experience it most is like the ability to question and say..... this is what I think I see. Like is this legitimate? Like is it wrong? Like God seems angry all the time is he angry? Like, I see this character of God in my dad like is that right? So, I guess maybe like the way I experience it would be like the reformation of my spirituality like.... um... I don't know if that makes sense.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Exploring S/R

Johnny:

Yeah. So there's.... there's an experience that you have of your spirituality of just being able to question your spirituality.

Participant:

Mhm...

Johnny:

And you're able to do that in your counseling.

Participant:

Yeah. And not... only there.... really I'm only able to do it there and like both intentionally and unintentionally like a like I know there are times when like I come

in when I specifically have this thing that's like I need to hash this out. And then there are other times when it's just like ohh..... OK... Um... And I have the space to do that there. And I don't really think I have the space to do that anywhere else.

Relating in Therapy: Feeling Known

Johnny:

Hmm.. OK. That's... that's the second time you've used the word space of like the counseling room has space for you to have these questions.

Participant:

Yeah totally.... 100 percent.

Johnny:

Yeah. What else.... how else do you experience your spirituality able to ask questions. Sounds like you're able to like bring things into that space.

Participant:

Yeah. I..... I mean, I go every week so I know that like I carry a lot of things through the week and then I just I go to counseling and I feel like.... I just drop weight and I'm like I need to go through this and I need to sort through this because I don't know.... Um... So, I guess another way that I experience it would be.... being able to like take whatever we've talked about inside and try and carry it throughout the week, the following week, with me. I think that's like my biggest I think that's like one of my...the biggest things I try to do. I'm not always successful with it. But.... trying to not limit... what I might learn in that space to just being in that space and have it applicable outside.

Receiving from S/R: Change

Johnny:

Ah.. Yup.. Hmm.. And that... can you put some words for me around how that is as part of your spiritual experience?

Participant:

Because I think it helps me to see the God I see in there outside of those walls.

20:00

Johnny:

Mhm... Yeah. It's like you uh..... it's like you go into your counseling and you offer your questions into the space and you get to engage them with your counselor and it's like.... it's like each week the two of you like a new lens that you then like walk out and like put on like OK. Now now I can see you got there and there.

Participant:

Right. Or at least trying to because not even, not even like a lens like it feels like I'm... sometimes it feels like leaving counseling and walking into a totally different universe. Like..... It's like..... this feels totally different than what just happened for the past 60 minutes later.

Johnny:
Yeah.

Participant:

So, I think oftentimes I end up, I feel like the struggle sometimes is worse after I leave because I have to try and remember because it's it's easy in that space when it's just one and two people and like life kind of doesn't really exist right now. But then I walk back out into the fray and it's like OK..... well based on you know talking about this like can you see how maybe this could be happening or something like that.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Exploring S/R

Johnny:
Mhm... Yeah. A totally different universe.

Participant:
Mhm....!

Johnny:
So, if you can.... It sound it sounds like counseling is a pretty spiritual engagement for you.

Participant:
I... I suppose? I feel a little uncomfortable with that word I don't know why.

Johnny:
Aa... spiritual or engagement?

Participant:
Spiritual. I guess...

Johnny:
What's the discomfort?

Participant:
It just reminds me of like a super charismatic thing... he he.... its not at all. So... I don't know. I mean... God's definitely a like central point. It's not like there's no there's no denying that at all.

Context: History with S/R

Johnny:
Yeah.

Participant:
Sometimes I think it's like subtle sometimes I think it's very pronounced.

Johnny:
Yeah. Could you give me an example of subtle and an example of pronounced?

Participant:
Ummmm... Subtle..... I think an example of subtle might be talking about something that in my mind has absolutely nothing to do with God at all. It's just my anxiety and then..... Somehow discovering like it is related to him and it's like oh I didn't even think about it. Like subtle and that kind of way where they feel completely unrelated.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Exploring S/R

Johnny:
Hmm...

Participant:
And I guess pronounced would be.... Walking in like having had a really tough conversation with my mom and having all of these like emotions and like flashbacks come up and.... Having the question like OK well supposedly God loves me. But these are the parents he chose for me so what's up with that. Like how can.... How can the two be... how can both be right. Because it feels like it's one or the other.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Exploring S/R

Johnny:
Yeah.... And so it sounds like subtle example you gave you..... you just come out with something on your mind.

Participant:
Mhm.....

Johnny:
And you stumble upon God.

Participant:
Yeah. Like not..... not like not even on my radar. And suddenly there He is. And it's like, OK.

Johnny:

Yeah. And then the pronounced one is like you kind of...

Participant:

Like I know I've got this beef with him.

Johnny:

Right. Like we got some stuff stuck. Ha ha...!

Participant:

Right.

Johnny:

Yeah. OK. Hmm...!

Participant:

Even... I don't know. But even, but then I feel like that's because even there have been times when he wasn't on my radar... but it was still pron... like it was still a very pronounced moment like maybe something I'm really struggling with or like an event I'm really struggling with and then yeah but God I'm like wait I can't even talk about him right now because like this.

25:02

Johnny:

Hmm.... Mhm.... Yeah. Yeah i think i'm curious about that too like.... It seems like a moment of pronounced where you're experiencing your your spirituality or like the spirituality of life. Sometimes you go in with questions about God. But other times it sounds like you're experiencing that but no I'm not not talking I don't have questions about God at the moment. But I... I am still experiencing this aspect of myself.

Participant:

Yeah. Yeah, Um.... I feel like that happens more often than not, honestly. Umm... I... I can't really find the words to explain like like to give an example. But.... I think... I think more often than not like I walk in and like I do have, most times, like I walk in and I have like things or we're working through something and..... like God's not even like top 10 priority right now... and not that like you know I've suddenly denounced Christianity. But like on the things that like I want to talk through or feel like I need to talk through that are like of utmost importance like.... his characteristics or not right now are really important. Um..... But even in those moments the like it's not... it's not like he doesn't exist or like it doesn't like affect the session. I don't know if that makes sense. Because like we can go like a week or two or three weeks without even mentioning God.

Context: Experiencing All Things As Spiritual

Johnny:

Hmm... yeah. I think that's again.... that's like we're on the target of what I'm so interested in is... there are some some folks who go to counseling and if we could be a fly on the wall watching the conversation... we would go, soon like they're talking about anxiety or seem like they're talking about a conflict at work. But then if we dig into their experience of it somehow there is a spiritual layer to it like oh it's there we might not have talked about it but it's not like it was gone.

Participant:
T... Yeah.

Johnny:
And it is hard.

Participant:
It's like... like...

Johnny:
Sorry.

Participant:
Always a layer.

Johnny:
Yeah yeah. Always present layer. Sorry I lost you for a minute.

Participant:
...not necessarily like always because of all.

Johnny:
Mhm... Yeah...! Yeah. And I... I think for... for someone who feels like their whole category their faith, religion, spirituality, beliefs, whatever whatever fits their that when that is something that's important to them. Um... they can experience it through out counseling sometimes in ways that are very explicit explicit and sometimes in ways that are very implicit And so I'm curious as you think about your time through counseling? And do you think about like. All right... I went in at point A and now I'm at a point whatever but I've I've moved in I've changed and I understand myself in new ways. What are the significant moments or the significant experiences of your own spirituality.... throughout that time?

Participant:
Ammm... Hmmm...

Johnny:
Or if you want I can ask an even larger question. Ha ha...!

Participant:

God please don't. Hum hum....!

Johnny:
Ha ha ha...!

Participant:
Can you repeat the question again?

Johnny:
Yeah....! You know, I'll repeat it in a different way. I'll repeat with like an anecdote. Sometimes, I get I get to the end of counseling to people that I've had the privilege of working with and we'll be reflecting on how have you grown? And there are times where sometimes even something we maybe didn't even necessarily speak about. Where they'll say well there was this one moment there was a conversation we had about umm.... my faith. There was an experience in in prayer that I had with God there was a shifting that I felt internally kind of when we were talking about this pain I carried from my childhood and all of a sudden they they put this layer on to our counseling of like here are the moments of like..... God in the process that are really significant to them. Do you feel like you have are there some of those there for you?

30:48

Participant:
Aaa.... yeah totally. Um....! I can think... I guess it might be recently like my last semester of school, I kept having panic attacks in the middle of class.

Johnny:
Ohhh..

Participant:
Um... So like my grades were not doing well. Um... even though I was trying really really hard. So... I remember like being in like one session and like I just walked in and like I just fell apart because for some reason, I'm staying up till 4 am but like no matter what I do, I go to the class, take the test and then I just black out and freeze or whatever.... Um.... and so we just sat in silence for like maybe half an hour because I couldn't stop crying. And I couldn't talk because I just like reached my breaking point.

Johnny:
Yeah.

Participant:
And so she took this moment to pause and to pray and like it was a weird but like she invited me to pray with her and somehow through the sobs I was able to pray. And nothing like elaborate nothing like you know spectacular and then we just sat in the silence. And that was the first time all semester that like I felt like I could

breathe. And so then from there like I was able to talk... And we were able to to like you know dissect OK like this is kind of the point where you start spiraling. So set some time aside to like breathe and.... just that kind of thing. And it's like it's like it was like spiritual but also practical but like it was the spiritual that helped me get to the practical.

Receiving from S/R: Peace

Johnny:

Hmm.... can you tell me more about that?

Participant:

Ummm... I don't know like... there's not. It feels like, I can't, it's hard. Ha humm....!

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

I don't know. It's first for like for that second like there was like a peace in the room and it didn't make sense like at all. Like not at all..... Because like... the farthest thing from like anywhere around me during that semester had been peace. Like I lost weight, like I couldn't eat. So but like for a split second I felt like it was quiet enough for me to like even be able to talk. And like have a moment. Um.... So then like after that I was able to like go and I had a test I had to take right after. Cuz Satan. And...

Johnny:

Ha ha ha...!

Participant:

So.... so like it was helpful because I was able to take that session with me as I went to go take my test and then I remember sitting there like getting ready to press the start button for this test and like feeling it all come crushing like rushing back to me. And like somehow being able to hold onto that moment of peace and the session and like count to ten and just say like this really quick childlike prayer. And I mean I ran out the timer to 10 seconds but I made it so like that was really like, I don't know, it was spiritual which makes me uncomfortable but it happened. And I think in moments after that I was able...I'm able to at least try to remember when I feel that panic come to try and try and seek out God like that again.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Experiencing S/R

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

I mean I don't always remember but sometimes unable to.

Johnny:

Yeah. That's.... that's a great.... that's a great story. And as you were recalling that it seems like you.... maybe not exactly in that way or exactly in that experience but you had other moments. Like that would fit in that same category.

35:14

Participant:

Mhm... Yeah, like I've had moments that could fit in that category. And then I can remember moments like before that ever happened where it was just like OK, "the wave is coming and you are like... it's just going to do whatever it's going to do".

Johnny:

Mhm...

Participant:

And so like remembering the before and after just like really like... it's a crazy contrast. To like what was never possible into what now is sometimes possible.

Johnny:

Yeah. And that's happened throughout your time in counseling.

Participant:

Mhm...!

Johnny:

All right so let me ask you the reverse question. You think about your time in counseling. This is going to be another unruly question. I apologize.... if you could somehow remove any aspect of faith, spirituality, God, from your counseling. How would it be different?

Participant:

None of it would make sense.

Receiving from S/R: Understanding

Johnny:

OK.

Participant:

Like nothing... nothing would make sense. Like..... Everything would just and I mean it still does feel random sometimes but everything would be definitively random.... and it would be it would be less of a I guess less of a journey. Sometimes it feels like and more of a just dealing with the aftermath.

Johnny:

Hmmm...! Yeah. And so somehow having that ingredient in the mix... helps us to feel like a journey.

Participant:

It helps it to feel like there is a past, present and the future.

Johnny:

Mhm...!

Participant:

I feel like without it, it would just be like OK well here's everything that happened and here's how we coped. And here's how we deal with it. And here's how we dissect it. And then after a certain point you're going to be over it. And then there's an end.

Receiving from S/R: Hope

Johnny:

I don't know if it fits but the word hope is going through my mind.

Participant:

Yeah. Yeah. Like maybe it's not just like here's a list of all the trauma and the goal is to get to the point where it doesn't debilitate you and then that's it. But more so like maybe there's something through it and past it, that doesn't necessarily render it useless but doesn't give it like the world's biggest hold on your life.

Johnny:

Hmm... Yeah. And having that sense of what it is that you're dealing with? Does that come from the counseling or the faith or both?

Participant:

I think both. I think... I think it started with the counseling and then it made its way into my faith. Because, before...before counseling I never would have seen it like that like but being in counseling really has 100 percent shaped like how I see God now because I don't see him the same way the way I do now is not in any way similar to how I saw him beforehand.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Exploring S/R

Johnny:

OK. And so your time in counseling has had a very... a very big impact on...

Participant:

Oh yeah.

Johnny:

Your view of God.

Participant:

Mhm... Maybe God didn't like (inaudible) my life like I'm doing things now I never could have done beforehand. Before counseling like it would have been physically impossible for me.

Johnny:

Hmm... yeah... yep... Let me circle back to it for thoroughness sake as we continue to talk is there anything else that comes to mind? Here's here's a place where I really experienced faith, God in my counseling process.

40:02

Participant:

Um... I think one of the biggest areas is like trying to wrap my mind around the fact that he's not passive. Um.... So, like understanding that like he cares but not not in like this like really like shallow kind of way like, "Oh.... he cares... more like. There are things that God would not have happen like if it were his preference. Ummm... And so like telling a story from my childhood and my counselor like..... Being emotional about it but not like in a bad way but more so like in a way that's like oh wait like Christians and God are supposed to be like heartbroken over this. I thought it was just normal.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Exploring S/R

Johnny:

Hmm.

Participant:

Ummm... So, I guess like him becoming less of like a distant deity and more of something personal.

Johnny:

Yeah. And let me grab that language. Can you.... Can you speak about moments in your counseling process that's in counseling and outside counsel? In your process, times when God has felt more personal?

Participant:

Hmm. It's hard to think of moments outside of counseling.... it's easy to think of them inside. I think.... I think it's harder to think of them outside because I feel like I live in an environment that's very opposite of my counseling room. So.... I guess no. Ha ha..!

Johnny:

Yeah. And so in counseling.... you have these moments of seeing God as being more personal and not just a distant deity but personal god.

Participant:

Mhm... Yeah. Like one instance when I was talking about like this one time my dad like pulled my hair and like whatever. It was...it just felt I mean I wasn't happy about it but it didn't tear me up inside. And then for us to start discussing. OK. Well is that what a good father does and..... like bringing that back to OK well do you think God just didn't care? Or do you think that makes him upset? Like, do you think he's unhappy with it? Like is he just a bystander and things just happen and if they're good he's excited and if they're bad he just turns a blind eye?

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Exploring S/R

Johnny:

Right.

Participant:

So, I guess.... I guess those kinds of moments where it's like oh.....like so that's not something he was happy with. Like that's not. And not like he was just not happy with it but He like... we're not going to pretend it didn't happen like he's actively unhappy about it.

Johnny:

And so you're sharing this painful story with your counselor about your dad harming you?

Participant:

Hm.

Johnny:

And the conversation proceeds from there into how does God feel about this. And really do this...

Participant:

Yeah. Or does he feel anything at all.

Johnny:

And then as you engage with that. What is it.... what does it do to your your session. What does it do to what you're talking about with your counselor?

Participant:

I mean for me every time we discuss that and go in that direction I always get anxious at first because it's just like the idea of questioning God is like just feels really...um not what you're supposed to do. So I always have to like jump that hurdle.

Relating in Therapy: Developing Trust

Johnny:
Ahan.

Participant:

Before we can really get into anything else. But then once I'm past that I guess it's... it feels like swimming against a current because everything I've been told like reinforces that the idea that you know God will be actively upset at like... harm. Which is...it's really difficult to wrap my mind around sometimes. Most times especially like growing up in a culture where it's just like "Forgive and forget," the blood of Jesus covers everything. Salvation's coming so why worry about it?

Context: History with S/R

Johnny:
Hmm...!

45:30

Participant:

So to push back through those like clichés or at least attempt to in like have the possibility that maybe God wants me to.... I don't know, it like even, even the idea that maybe he wants me to like fight that or like question it or argue against it. Even that in and of itself like reveals to me a bit of his character. Of maybe he could be the fact that He's like, "No I like let's let's do this...like... ask me the questions.

Johnny:

Mhm...! Yeah. And you... you've mentioned a couple times but as weird as you're doing this process ummm... in counseling. How does your... how do you experience your counsel. In relation to your spirituality your than your relationship with God?

Participant:

Oh it's a total 180 from like any Christian I've ever experienced. Like it's total 180.

Johnny:
OK.

Participant:

Because, to even have these questions goes against like most Christian communities I'm like I've ever been a part of so like to bring that to someone who you know believes in God like that is huge for me. And so like to have these questions and it never just get dismissed with well just forgive and let's move on to the next thing it's like... Like that's huge.

Relating in Therapy: Feeling Known

Johnny:

Yeah. So the the word space is going through my mind again.

Participant:
Mhm... Yeah.

Johnny:
Fill this in for me. Because my counselor makes space for my questions of God. I'm able to...

Participant:
I'm able to... I'm able to just be. Like be wherever I'm at. So whether it's on the, what's supposed to be the right side or the wrong side...I'm able to just be there on no side at all because that space exists I'm allowed to be on the side of the spectrum.

Relating in Therapy: Developing Trust

Johnny:
Yeah, that seems like a.... seems like a really good thing. It seems like feels related to each of what you talked about of the piece that you felt in that session when you kind of came in and broke down and where it's like somehow that space helps you to really just be where you are.

Participant:
Hmm... Yeah. Like and I think sometimes I think that space allows me to be where I am with God like even if I'm not in the mood to acknowledge him or if I like not even thinking to.

Johnny:
Yeah. Hmm... yep. I am.... I'm mindful of our time. So I've already had you for 50 minutes and I'm really I'm really loving hearing all your reflections.

Participant:
Ha ha... Thanks

Johnny:
I appreciate you. Pushing yourself to talk with me and I think I... I want to leave room because it seems like you've got a lot of really wonderful reflections about your own process and so I'm going to jump to that last question of like as we've spoken what else this could be big small. What else would you like me to know about how you experience your faith spirituality God in your counseling process?

50:35

Participant:
Umm... Huh... I think I just experienced that He's a lot bigger than the limits that I feel like society puts on him. And that, he's really involved in a lot, in a lot more areas than I would ever think that he would be involved in. Some days I'm like oh...

wow. And some days I don't see it at all which I feel like is probably normal. But having spirituality in counseling like 100 percent like shapes the process for me like I... I don't think it would be even remotely the same like without it.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Exploring S/R

Participant 7606009

Participant:
Hello!

Johnny:
Hi, nice to meet you.

Participant:
Nice to meet you.

Johnny:
I'm Johnny.

Participant:
I am Participant.

Johnny:
Aa.. Thank you so much for making some time for me. I'm greatly appreciative..!
Um...! I will go ahead and jump right in, since we have a very concrete task to do and the way I usually like to start is I like to ask if you have any questions about me or about this time or the research, before I frame... what we're going to talk about and then jump into some questions?

Participant:
Am... not really this time, interested to hear your framework. But yeah..!

Johnny:
Yeah, alright. Well let me do that, and... and then we'll move... we'll move into the questions. Am... So yeah when I'm.... I'm interested in.... in the research that, I'm doing is um..... lose you...!

Participant:
Stuck.

Johnny:
Stuck.....! Can you still hear me?

Participant:
Try again here. Hellooo... Ha ha..!

Johnny:
Hi...!

Participant:
I got stuck here.

Johnny:
Oh OK. Let me know if you have an issue again.

Participant:
OK.

Johnny:
And we will figure something out.

Participant:
All right sounds good.

Johnny:
Um...! So yeah. So the research that I'm doing what I'm looking at is you know as you mentioned you're familiar with IRB, so presume you're little familiar with research. There's this.... there's this kind of specific thing that I'm trying to dial in on with people where... it's more than just, "hey you want to talk about your spirituality or religion in your counseling". It's more than that. It's it's trying to move into the place of like when you are able to talk about it or when you experience your spirituality and religion in your counseling was it due to the process? What is it what does it do to your counseling process?

Aaa.... kind of like the role it plays or one of the pictures I've been painting for folks has been if you were to. Fewer to think of making a recipe and you had your list of ingredients that stir something you were baking you know we left walnuts out of the cookies. We would probably we'd still have chocolate chip cookies but if we left baking soda or baking powder out of the cookies it would alter the whole thing. And so trying to figure out what kind of an ingredient is it for folks. And then when it's present what does it do to the process.

Um...! One thing that's you know challenging about this is that the way folks experience their spirituality and religion in their counseling sometimes it's in the room sometimes it's out of the room. Sometimes it's implicit, sometimes it's explicit. And so my job is to offer you some of these questions. Your job is to give me your reflections on them and then I'll keep reflecting back to try to zero in on that target.

Participant:
OK.

Johnny:
Um... so yeah, I just need you to you know think freely about your experience and share whatever comes to mind with me. I will take a few notes while we're... chatting.

Participant:

OK.

Johnny:

But with all that said. Aa... Let's start with the first question which is kind of our broad entry point of, how would you describe the role of spirituality and religion in your life?

Participant:

Hhh... In my life, I would say it's an important part of my life. But I... Like that would be kind of the easy go to answer like it's a super important part of my life but I still feel like there's a little bit that's holding me back from experiencing all that it can be. So... Sometimes, I feel like I'm going through the motions so I'm going to church or I'm having my prayer time I'm reading in the Word, I've got my girls are Christian school, I teach for a Christian university. But even doing all the right things sometimes it just feels, um.... like I'm doing the right things but I'm not really experiencing the spirit as freely as, maybe I observe others experiencing it or how I think I should be. So, I think I have some room to grow.

Context: History with S/R

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

But it is an important part of my life like I... am believing that there's more to it than what I've got currently and so working towards that.

Johnny:

Okay, So.... the way the things you describe, huh... seem like you know things that most people would say oh those are spiritual or religious activities you know church prayer read in the word... but then there's that experience for you of like yeah but I think there's still there's something beyond that that sounds like would like more of.

Participant:

Exactly. Like there's got to be a little bit more depth and more um.... depth to the experience or to not have it like I'll explain. I don't know if I'm jumping ahead to another question but like I'll explain to [Counselor], the counselor.... I feel it in small moments. These, where I really feel the spirit on me. And I want more of that to be a constant.

Context: Identifying as S/R Person

Johnny:

So you know... let me ask you about that. You know, I find there's all the places that sometimes we think, God or the spirit is apt to show up through the Word or

through church or through prayer. And sometimes that happens but other times I find that.... It.... It happens in places that surprise us. So I wonder what are the... what are the moments that come to mind for you of when you experience the Spirit the closest.

Participant:
Most often it's through music.

Johnny:
OK.

Participant:
I'm not a real musical person at all. I don't sing, I don't play an instrument, but I can really appreciate maybe a really good song or something. ...And I really am.....

Context: S/R Practices

Johnny:
Yeah. Oh no, I'm losing you.

Participant:
I know. I think it was fading. Aaa...!

Johnny:
OK. You can really experience it then... I heard you say...!

Participant:
Yes, through music, um I'm not a musical person.

Johnny:
Hmm...

Participant:
And then some day I'm a nurse so sometimes I'll feel it with like connections with other people as they're telling me.... Their story or you know... hhh.... kind of a vulnerable moment there that then I just feel like you know there will be a conversation or something that I will have said or offered that would just be supernatural or I'll know that was of God and not of myself.

Johnny:
Yeah. And in those moments those are fabulous examples in those moments when you kind of experience it the most... music, connection with others... What.... What do you experience internally that tells you yeah it's happening right now?

Participant:

It's probably just a little bit more of a lightness inside. Like a light as far as weight not as like light versus dark but like a lightness to my spirit, I'm not as heavy.

Receiving from S/R in Therapy: Lightness

Johnny:
OK.

Participant:
But maybe just like a clarity of mind too like.... With the music especially just it helps to whatever I might be wrestling with. Then just a little clarity is offered where I'm able to put away some anxiety that I have about something or fear.

Receiving from S/R in Therapy: Clarity: Peace

Johnny:
Yeah. Yep.... Yeah it's, it's one of those kind of interesting things that we can experience and we.. we know it. Let's actually go. What do I experience! Oh and so I love your descriptions lightness. Not as heavy clarity beings. Any anxiety you're carrying can go away. And that actually makes one other question around the anxiety you're carrying. What what sorts of things in your life or sorts of things sorts of situations prompt you to kind of crave a spiritual connection? When do you need it?

Participant:
Where do I need it?

Johnny:
Yeah.

Participant:
When parenting..... parenting and then work life for sure.

Johnny:
OK.

Participant:
And then extended family relationships.

Johnny:
OK. And what is it about those things about parenting work life these relationships that trigger the need.

Participant:
I have no control over those things, he he...! Yeah.

Johnny:
Yeah. Yep.

Participant:
So that loss of control and I think that's where like music or when I'm able to just kind of get away and..... do get a fresh feeling of the spirit then like, "Yeah Participant, you don't have control over any of those things and I'm able to give back to God quickly and I might take it up in the next hour or two but for that moment. Right. I'm able to have a connection. And there's that lightness of spirit and clarity of mind.

Context: Experiencing S/R

Johnny:
Yeah. This is great...! And I appreciate you kind of painting a picture for me of your your spiritual landscape. Am...! And so, I think I'm in let's kind of gather this up and take it into how have you experienced your spirituality, your religion, your faith in your counseling.

Participant:
So, I think that was interesting that you said that sometimes it happens in the room and sometimes it happens out of the counseling room. I hadn't really thought about that before but absolutely that's been my experience like, some sessions like it's very... weaved in through the session as far as maybe um, [Counselor] will pray over me or offer a verse or you know maybe an encouraging passage that she's read or she is quick to maybe correct where I might be skewed in my thinking or offer a different viewpoint from maybe what I've been taught or just a different perception. Um... And then outside of the room then I can usually I try to take time to reflect on what we've, what are sessions been about and.... I really feel like God uses those times that I do kind of slip away and really write about it or think about it to kind of bring some truth or bring things to light that she said or...

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Experiencing S/R

Johnny:
Yeah. Yeah, and so you've got.... go ahead.

Participant:
She just offers a real fresh perspective.

Johnny:
Mhm.... Yeah. And so you've got examples in the room?

Participant:
Yes.

Johnny:

Again kind of similar to your your spiritual life like in the room these areas that would probably be many people would see them and say oh that's a spiritual thing, like she's praying over you. She's offering a passage of Scripture. But then you also have examples, outside the room through your reflection time your time with God reflecting on what the session was. How else.... How else do you experience it? Your spirituality and your religion and your counseling?

Participant:

Again I guess referring back to that weight that I feel... Um...!

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

It is a very like a spiritual experience when you.... you know you've had a tough session you've shared a hard thing... here I am tearful about it now. You cry it out with someone else who's very loving and unconditional on the other end. Who doesn't shame you for your feelings that you might be.... feel legitimate shame for it. I don't know, just releasing that is a very spiritual experience and you know I trust that... that's from God.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Experiencing S/R

Johnny:

Yeah, yep. And it obviously is.... very emotional for you even now.

Participant:

Yeah yeah yeah. I just been very grateful... Because, I think... Um... I don't know, from like the pulpit and the stuff that I've heard from in church.. and... It's a little bit more dogmatic and more a little bit more right and wrong. You should do this, you shouldn't do that and... to walk into a place and sit and share things that are so vulnerable and to receive grace instead of should and shouldn't; right and wrong. That's been a very different experience for me...

Context: History with S/R

Johnny:

Oh yeah, I can.... and I can tell it's been incredibly meaningful for you.

Participant:

Yes.

Johnny:

Yeah. Yep.... And it's part of what's striking me as you describe it is that you share about it you use the word a lot you share about the weight that you feel, that you carry.

Participant:
Right..!

Johnny:
You receive this support and love and grace from [Counselor] and it's different than what you've experienced in other places. Part what's noteworthy for me is that whole... back and forth, you described, as feeling like a spiritual experience.

Participant:
Yes because I know my heart. That's the true essence of God, He's unconditional. He is full of grace. He is there to lift your burdens and that sort of thing. It's just kind of pushing me towards a place to maybe really believe that in my heart like, to just not know that but to believe it. Um....!

Receiving from S/R: Grace

Johnny:
Yeah.

Participant:
So then to see it in practice and have someone to practically offer that grace. That's kind of like the hands and feet of Jesus just there.

Johnny:
Yeah. Yep. And so it's it in some ways it isn't just.... it isn't just you know.... it doesn't just go in the spiritual file in your mind like you really experience, you experience [Counselor] as really embodying that, being the hands and feet.

Participant:
Right. Right. But not in the spot where I feel like I've got her on a pedestal or I feel like she's a god or anything but she's just really.... yeah embodies would be a good word.

Relating in Therapy: Experiencing Closeness

Johnny:
So let me let me ask you this. I love that you clarified that. Where would you place it like. Do you experience like... [Counselor]... you know embody in the presence of... of the spirit or do you just experience the presence of the Spirit in your sessions?

Participant:

I feel like he really uses her you know, and will speak through her wisdom. I don't know from her perspective that she would say that too... like, "Oh I couldn't believe that that came out of my mouth but I wasn't even thinking about that before the session or whatever. Where did that come from. Um... But there have been moments like that where it's just like... I'm sure that he was speaking through her and speaking truth into my life.

Relating in Therapy: Developing Trust

Johnny:

Yeah. Yep. And so there... as you... as you describe this...! There's a lot about your counseling sessions and a lot about your counseling process that could be described as spiritual.

Participant:

Yes, yeah, yes. I'd call it where she works is called the Soul Care house. So I call it my soul work that I do. And it's like you have to be careful too. Like many things are spiritual So I just like to really be careful like ok, am I just having this spiritual experience that you know anyone could have versus truly from God and is this like, Biblically centered because they don't really.... come out right and say we're Christian counseling or anything like that. So I don't know where those those lines are blurred or cross but yes. For me it had a spiritual experience in counseling. Ah.....!

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Experiencing S/R

Johnny:

Yeah. And you said you call it your soul work.

Participant:

Yes yes yes.

Johnny:

Can you tell me about that phrase?

[22:42](#)

Participant:

Hmm...! Ah...! Well there's um.... we we're going on like, a year and a half year. Um..... So, there's a lot of work that has to be done outside of the sessions. Such as like maybe books she's recommended or books that I come across that have to do with what we've.... Whatever topic we're kind of wrestling through.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Exploring S/R

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

And then just creating margins of time, or margins of space to write and think and pray... That's been a lot of work.

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

Saying no to all manner of things that I could get myself involved in.

Johnny:

Mhm...

Participant:

So, that's just kind of amm.... you know my family knows it and that sort of thing. Like I... I'm resting

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

Not like this to give me permission that's ok to do that.

Johnny:

Yep.... Yeah. And tell me.... tell me about the other half the phrase.

Participant:

Work or soul?

Johnny:

Soul.

Participant:

What was the... Soul... So, aa.... I feel like, that's the essence of who I am. Um.... And trying to process... this whole process is trying to discover that like what has... like who I truly am. I think one of the first sessions I walked in.... I was...just this sense of being tied down or maybe like you were saying, weight... like just really wanting to be free. Like I'm not really sure who I am and what's contributed to.

Context: Identifying as an S/R Person

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

This is the process of kind of uncovering that.

Johnny:

OK.

Participant:

And that is.... it is a spiritual piece, of me it's my role in....

Johnny:

OK, yeah...! yep.... Yeah the essence of who you are. That you're trying to discover one to be more free. Um....! And it sounds it sounds like you're really able to. Talk about.... and experience everything you're describing here as a part of your counseling.

Participant:

Yes.

Johnny:

Like it seems seems like you could walk in and say to [Counselor] this is my sole work and she'd be like yeah...

Participant:

Yes, but we couldn't do that a year and a half ago. We've come a long way.

Johnny:

Oh and why couldn't you do it a year and a half ago?

Participant:

Probably a big shell around that...my soul and not feeling really safe to expose it.

Johnny:

Yeah. Man that took you back somewhere you started.

Participant:

Yeah.

Johnny:

Thinking about where you started with her. Yeah.

Participant:

I'm so appreciative...! (sobbing) Because I come from the... obviously now I'm crying... much softer place now that.... that is exposed. Whereas I was a much harder person on myself, on others.

Johnny:

Yeah... yeah... And again it just seems like it's been a very meaningful season for you.

Participant:

Yes. And that's a good term to use "season". Like I know I mean we're never done growing as a person or discovering who we are but this is definitely been a season of growth and change and it is a season.

Receiving from S/R in Therapy: Growth

Johnny:

Mhm...! Yeah. Let me ask you a question that's going to be. Aaa...! Probably a tough one to think about because of how many things you described as a part of your spiritual experience. But what... what would your counseling process look like and you kind of began to touch on how you started at one place and now you're in another. There was this great hardness there was this show there's this weight and now you're a kind of a different place, when you think about that process. How would it be different if we just kind of like sucked all the spiritual and spiritual experience out of it? And it wasn't there it wasn't in the counseling room.

Participant:

Well I had that I really did, there was at work they had years ago the Employee Assistance Program or something so you could go for free to go talk to someone and you know what I worked through or what I'm working through is nothing that wasn't present in my life 10 years ago when I sought out counseling. And you know she was over and done with me in three sessions. And wrap it up in a nice little box but never really got to the heart of the issue.

Relating in Therapy: Feeling Known-> Not Known

Johnny:

OK.

Participant:

So, I feel like someone who.... the.... to bring the spiritual aspect of it into counseling is not just dealing with whatever topic that I'm you know have of the day that I'm coming in the issue with they really are.... dig deep to the heart. And then.... I don't know that was my experience with a place that wasn't a Christian counseling place was that it was just kind of more topic base. And yeah it didn't deal with my heart or my soul or..... move me to a place of gosh I don't know. (sobbing)

Relating in Therapy: Feeling Known-> Not Known

Johnny:

Yeah. And in those in that time when you went to the counselor to the Employee Assistance Program, did you talk about your.... spirituality your relationship with God your...?

Participant:

No. No. No... it wasn't like... it almost wasn't a safe place to bring that up because you didn't know if that person also shared your viewpoint. And um..... I don't know. For me that's not really comfortable to go there with someone who... I don't know... believes the way I do or don't you know.

Relating in Therapy: Developing Trust

Johnny:

And so it was it wasn't safe didn't feel safe for you to bring that part of yourself.

Participant:

Right. Right.

Johnny:

And I'm curious. Aa...

Participant:

Which, it's like, that's part of me you know, again.. I think about that with nursing like we're trained to see someone holistically as their physical body mental body and then their spiritual soul and... mff... I don't know if I'm trained that way because I went to nursing school at a Christian college and then I'm teaching and that's very much part of our curriculum. But I, I wonder if it is if a counselor who goes through more of a traditional training without you know this one particular person didn't go there and I did not feel comfortable to bring that into the session.

Context: Identifying as an S/R Person

Johnny:

Yeah. Yeah. I think part of what.... I wonder is you know what what was lost. Because that wasn't there. You know it's... it's not like you.... it's not like you didn't share with her that hey one time I went to North Dakota. You know it seems like it was something that's, "Hey I didn't I didn't share" my spirituality my faith. And so what else did she miss out on by not having that.

Participant:

I feel like I missed out because then I didn't really get a resolution to the core issue. Yeah I got that one situation of how I needed to handle a family situation and got some confirmation that I was on the right track and maybe some guidance and counsel or a couple of different ways to handle it and maybe where it might be stemming from.

Johnny:

So you feel like I that's I love that you you put it that way. It's not just that she missed a part of you it's that you you missed out on being able to go deeper into...

Participant:

Yeah... because here I was 10 years later still dealing with the same core issues, that you know maybe that's just God's timing in in my life that here I am like sure would have been nice to deal with this stuff 10 years ago. So, that I'm not still... you know, living with that shell around my soul like I wish someone would have just gone there with me.

Receiving from S/R: Direction

Johnny:

Yeah, yep...! And it sounds like... you've had that chance with [Counselor].

Participant:

Yeah yeah.

Johnny:

Yeah. And now obviously the two are very different. You had three sessions with one counselor 10 years ago who didn't really see your soul in have a year and a half with [Counselor]. But it does show with how much... even during our time of talking about this how many times you've expressed gratitude or appreciation.

Participant:

Yes. Yeah. Because, I don't want to play to live with a hardness or a weight. That's not... know I'm realizing that you know that's not how God designed us to be... he doesn't...that's not his desire for my life.

Johnny:

Yeah. Yeah. And can you tell me.... tell me any more about that gratitude?

Participant:

Like where it comes from, or why I have it or....?

Johnny:

Yeah. Like yeah just walk me through it. You know who or what is it for....? Does it play a role in your counseling...?

Participant:

Am.... I think mostly I'm just grateful that someone's willing to go there. Grateful that I have the resources to be able to pay for it. I feel terrible for people who don't. I wish everyone could kind of have this experience. So I'm grateful for the opportunity to work through my junk.

Receiving from S/R: Gratitude

Johnny:
Yeah.

Participant:
With someone who's really like helping me do my soul work.

Relating in Therapy: Experiencing Closeness

Johnny:
Ahan.

Participant:
So. That's mainly where it's directed at is just grateful for the opportunity, that God has provided a skilled person in a beautiful place for me to do that in.

Johnny:
Yeah, yep..! That makes sense. And let me.... let me.. aa... I love all all the things you've shared and your.... your willingness to.... Um...! To share the emotion and the meaning that that's connected to your work. Am...! I think I want it now that we kind of have all this like kind of our in our conversation let me circle back around to.... you know that experience of your spirituality and religion in, in your counseling process. When you think of if you were like you're like paint or draw a landscape of your year and a half counseling process. And you were to then point a couple of things out to me of that was that was a moment that my... my spirituality really intersected. That was a profound moment of that really is a part of the landscape of my counseling, what or is there anything that comes to mind?

37:59

Participant:
There was one session I don't even remember what we were talking about in that session but it was something that I had released and it was like, kind of needed to close oops, there goes my battery...we needed to close that hour out. And you know you don't want to just leave someone really raw... and excuse them out the door. And so.... I...that was one time where she didn't really know what to say or have a response to that. Like, how can we just close this up in any package because this isn't a neat thing that we just talked about.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Experiencing S/R

Johnny:
Yeah...

Participant:

And that's when you know she just would read a passage of scripture over me, and pray for me. It's kind of like sniff sniff.. where it talks about Jesus, just like the washing of the water of the word. And that's just what it was.

Johnny:
Yeah.

Participant:
It's like you can't fix this at all. But you know here's just like a wave of peace that can that can wash over it.

Johnny:
And did you experience that, did you experience peace?

Participant:
Absolutely. Absolutely. It's that time to just quiet the soul back down after it had been really raw and exposed. Um... You know that's not something people do in everyday life with you. They... yeah...

***Engaging S/R in Therapy: Experiencing S/R
Receiving From S/R: Peace***

Johnny:
Yeah. That sounds like it was a very impactful session.

Participant:
Yes. Yeah. We've had several of those. Where she'll just um, she'll just have to end it with a moment of prayer because this isn't just a nice neat package the end of a session that we can end really well so, and that just helps to put everything back into perspective of peace and then it's just like. This hurts but you're not alone and that hurt like God knows you're hurt. He sees your hurt. Your hurt is important to him.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Experiencing S/R

Johnny:
Yeah. And in those moments when she's reminding you, that you're not alone. Yeah. Is she's saying she is with you, is she's saying God is with you? She's saying both?

Participant:
Probably both, because she sees and knows me and that's very validating but you know she is very... Sniffs... Or maybe I just sense it like that... You know that God sees this. God knows this He knows that what happened wasn't right or that it would be hurtful or you know just brings like it sheds some truth and some light in a manner.

Johnny:

And it sounds like in the midst of those moments, I've heard you say peace and perspective and not feeling alone.

Participant:

Yes. Yeah. Maybe another word would be like validated in your.... validated in your spirit, because I'm sure you would feel validated... in a traditional counseling session. It just seems like it... for me it's at a deeper level. It's just not head knowledge. But, Like in my heart.

Receiving from S/R: Validation

Johnny:

OK.

Participant:

She is speaking truth over me or...

Johnny:

Yeah. And so even that it takes on a difference. Depth or nuance where it's it... isn't just oh I'm being validated, emotionally or intellectually or head knowledge. But like somehow it's it's actually validating a deeper than that.

Participant:

Yeah. Yeah and that's what I so work.

Johnny:

Yeah. Yeah. I mean it's different very different for different people but I'd be hard pressed to imagine you'd be hard pressed to imagine your counseling process without your spiritual process...

Participant:

Mhm...!

Johnny:

The two sound either inseparable or identical like one is the other...

Participant:

For me?

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

Yeah.

Johnny:

It's...

Participant:

To kind of to link back to the first question. And sometimes I really feel like that spiritual connection in small moments. I mean we certainly don't have those moments every counseling session but when there is a session of connection like that like it's just that confirmation that God is real. He is who he says he is. He's... he really is part of me.

Context: Identifying as S/R Person

Johnny:

And how, I... you know I haven't asked as to the other folks that I've had the chance to talk to. But I feel it with you. How how has it been even to.... How has this experience been to reflect on your soul work and what those moments have meant to you?

Participant:

Yeah when I saw those questions I thought oh..... I should probably prepare but they were a little bit hard to prepare for... So, I read through them twice and had intentions of kind of writing stuff out and I thought I'm just gonna have to go for it because I really don't know.

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

How to be a able to, I was hoping you'd be skilled and you were good to be able to kind of pull the answers out of me.

Johnny:

We'll hopefully, hopefully I have.

Participant:

Yeah.

Johnny:

Yeah. Yeah. Uuhh.... It's it's been interesting Participant as I've talked with different people. You know one of the things that has it's something I feel like, I've witnessed many times over the years in my counseling and something, I've started to hear in these interviews has been that you know counseling the profession of counseling can sometimes seek counseling as like a thing in itself. And it's like oh you know you come to counseling you come to this professional. And then you may have, you may also have spiritual experiences. And what I find with most of the people I talk to is it's.... it's very reverse of that for them. Like no I'm having a spiritual process and counseling happens to be a part of it.

Participant:

Right. Yeah I mean, may have even been probably what drove me to counseling is that discontentment in my spirit.

Context: History with S/R

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

You know I pray, I do my Bible study, I'm still not getting what I want to get. Like that feeling that there's something missing. There's a peace. And part of the counseling is experience like well it's probably because you have this hard outer shell around your soul that we... it just really needs to be cracked so that God can do what he can do.

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

But I'm hoping. Ha ha...!

Johnny:

Yeah. Yup....! It sounds like, as you use that language enough that I can tell it's been an important part of your work. The identifying, there's a... there's a shell around that very kind of essence of who I am my soul. And it's a hard shell and it needs to be cracked in yeah. And when it's cracks a very different part of me emerges.

Participant:

Yeah, and am I OK with that person and you know, is that ok? Will other people be OK with that person because they don't... because it's different.

Johnny:

This is now like moving toward closing.

Participant:

Mhm...!

Johnny:

Again opening a broad question of as we've talked about this. Is there anything else that comes to mind about your spiritual experience in counseling that you want me to know? This could be in the room, out of the room. It could be anecdotal, it could be clarifying, it could be. You actually mentioned early on you mentioned music and I wondered if music that the spiritual experience you feel in music had been a part of your counseling process at all..!

Participant:

No not, she hasn't brought in music. Aa... I definitely pray on the way in that God would be a part of our session.

Johnny:

Hmm..

Participant:

Um... That, you know, whatever. I have on my agenda to talk about for that day.... that, if that's really what doesn't need to be dealt with or That God would just intervene that he would give, [Counselor], the counselor words of wisdom and truth and how to kind of preparing.

Receiving from S/R: Direction

Johnny:

So you prayed for your sessions.

Participant:

Yes. Yes.

Johnny:

And it sounds like your pray for [Counselor]?

Participant:

Yes.

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

Because this is a big investment for me. I mean, financially, and my time and just emotional vulnerability. I don't want it to be wasted. And so that might be part of my core belief too. It won't be wasted if God's in the midst of it and He's directing it.

Johnny:

So in what... what stands out to me and that is when you think about the investment that you're counseling time has been and you don't want it to be wasting, from that you turn to prayer and God in contrast to turning to the counselor and telling the counselor you want more from them.

Participant:

Yeah yeah. I feel like prayer in God and then myself if I've not done my, my homework or you know applied what she suggested then... yeah I don't put that on her, I put it more on myself.

Johnny:

Yeah which sounds sounds like it could easily be a spiritual experience or it could also be could also be part of the stuff you're dealing with.

Participant:

Mhm...!

Johnny:

Every once in a while people share their stories of me I'm like oh that maybe maybe that might be a little twinge of some of what she deals with in counseling.

Participant:

Right...!

Johnny:

But either way, it's... it's no... it's noteworthy to me that. Yeah it's noteworthy to me that so many of my clients over the years have told me that they prayed for me.

Participant:

Yeah.

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

Because in the end, we're all human. I mean she's.... yeah...

Johnny:

Yeah... yep... And anything else comes to mind that you want me to know this can be big, can be small?

Participant:

I think.... Probably just maybe to clarify like the whole going to church, reading the word, doing the Bible like doing these things that are... a Christian should do. Like, counseling has brought out a new dimension of what spirituality is and more of, it's not so much what I do, it's more of like who I am as my being. I don't know. I don't know the exact terms to use...I need to plug in here soon... so it just... That's been revealed to me over this, over these several sessions like it's just... more of the grace filled of spirit filled living versus you should and shouldn't be doing these things.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Exploring S/R

Johnny:

Yeah... yep..! And so church... church. Some of your might say practices. You still continue to feel those are things that a Christian should do. But counseling has added something to that?

Participant:

Yes. Its like opened my eyes, maybe...!

Johnny:

Yeah.... yep..! One... one more pass, anything else you'd like to add.

Participant:

I think I'm good.

53:23

Johnny:

Well let me then. Close, close out, first by expressing my gratitude, not.... not just for your time but for your reflections and your.... your vulnerability about your experiences. I really appreciate that very much. Um...! On a practical note, what will happen from here is, I'm taking each of these interviews, they'll be transcribed. They'll be analyzed, by me, so, that I can get that... so, that I can generate a second round of questions. Once I've done that and gotten approval for those, you'll hear from me again saying hey can we set up another hour. Here's the next round of questions. You should probably expect that it it'll be at least a month until I'm able to actually get to that.... get to that place. You also probably notice that there's compensation for each one of the interviews. And so there's.... there's a proposed option but it can absolutely be amended. The proposed option is e-mailing you an Amazon gift card. If that works, I can do it right after we're done here. If you would like composition in a different way, it's completely fine. Whatever work whatever is good for you.

Participant:

You can e-mail me, that's fine. Ha ha...!

Johnny:

OK.

Participant:

That's fine.

Johnny:

Am...! And then... probably was there something else..!

Participant:

How many people do you have?

Johnny:

Nine.

Participant:

Nine. OK. Is that good? Is that what you need for your sample size or.....?

Johnny:

It is, yeah. So it's I'm doing qualitative research. A lot of qualitative research, can operate with smaller sets. So my target my target was eight to 10.

Participant:

Good good.

Johnny:

Yeah. And the other thought that came to mind is just because I yeah I'd be remiss if I didn't say something. I love [Counselor]...!

Participant:

I know, she is a good person.

Relating in Therapy: Experiencing Closeness

Johnny:

Yeah..! She's fabulous. I'm glad you've had such a great time with her.

Participant:

Thank you...!

Johnny:

Anything else before we end?

Participant:

I think, I'm good, I am at 2 percent so I got to, ha ha...! I'll come with a full battery next time.

Johnny:

No problem. All right thank you so much for your time.

Participant:

You're welcome, Johnny..!

Johnny:

Alright...!

Participant:

Take care.

Johnny:
Bye bye.

Participant 7606010

00:00

Participant:

Yeah.

Johnny:

Appreciate it. A... I'm Johnny!

Participant:

Hi!

Johnny:

You must be Participant.

Participant:

Yes! Ha ha!

Johnny:

Um... well why don't I... if it's OK with you, jump right in. And what I usually like to do is first answer, see if there's any questions you have about me or about what we're going to do with our time. And then I'll kind of jump into framing my research just a little bit and then move right into the research questions.

Participant:

OK sounds good.

Johnny:

So any questions for you?

Participant:

A... I don't think so.

Johnny:

No.. okay. So I... with um... with my research. I am... there's kind of this like nuance that I'm trying to you know focus these interviews on. Which is it's more than just how do you... how do you feel about addressing spirituality and religion in your counseling. It's more about one of the metaphors I've used is if you were like making a recipe and you pulled all the ingredients out and you are going to bake something.

There are certain ingredients that are like add ins and certain ones that are essential and certain ones that are filler and so, I want to know what kind of ingredient spirituality and religion is in that counseling process. What does it do? Is it you know, is it like chocolate chips in the cookie? Or is it like baking powder?

Um... and so what I need from you is I'm going to ask you these questions and I need you to just reflect and share about your experience and it will be up to me to kind of zoom in on places and ask for some clarification and keep us focused on that that central idea. Sounds good?

Participant:

OK. Yeah, sounds good.

Johnny:

So, I'm probably going to take a few notes while we're chatting.

Participant:

OK.

Johnny:

And if you see me writing, but I'd love to start with just how would you describe the role of spirituality and religion in your life?

Participant:

OK. Yes, so I wrote down my answers to the questions so...

Johnny:

Oh wow. Awesome.

Participant:

So, I would say that my faith keeps me grounded. Um... like when things are stressful or like overwhelming, like knowing God's in control, helps manage the stress. I would say um... it impacts how I view the world around me.

Context: Identifying as S/R Person

Johnny:

Okay.

Participant:

And how I interact with others um.. in terms of you know trying not to be judgmental. Um... like we as Christians are really meant to love others and like not.. that's not our role. Is to like be judgmental or um... put people down or discriminate.

Context: Identifying as S/R Person

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

And kind of gives like purpose to like life and sort of just like this is as good as it gets type thing and just try to be happy and take thing like knowing like there's more than just like the now.

Johnny:

Yeah. That's a lot of big areas that a... in terms of role that your faith plays. Um... keeping you grounded, you know dealing with stress, how you see the world, how you relate to others. A.. and then even some like purpose to life sounded like hopefulness kind of thing.

Participant:

Yeah.

Johnny:

And what, as you you a... know as I talk with people, I'll say spirituality, I'll say religion, I'll say faith, I'll say God, but I'm curious what terms resonate the most for you when you describe this part of yourself?

Participant:

Um... I kind of lean towards more faith than religion. Like religion to me, it's more like the structured like rules type like organization.

Context: History with S/R

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

Like structural church. And I feel like it's more than that. But then like spirituality I feel like is more like... like your one on one relationship with God not necessarily like community.

Context: History with S/R

Johnny:

Okay.

Participant:

I feel like faith for me kind of gets like the relationship with God like personal one on one like relationship. But also like included within that like community with believers. So it kind of encompasses both aspects. Whereas the other ones I feel like are one or the other.

Johnny:

Yeah. And so your faith and even that term my faith a... it describes your internal experience and that aspect of how you relate in the context of others, community.

05:10

Participant:
Mhm... Yeah.

Johnny:
Okay. Um... and then at some point in your life you went to counseling.

Participant:
Hmm...

Johnny:
And I'm curious, how would you describe how you experience your faith in counseling?

Participant:
Um... so the counselor that I saw was through the church that I was going to at the time.

Johnny:
OK.

Participant:
Um... and he like supported what we talked about in sessions or like what we worked on, with like Biblical Truth. Whether that was like in terms of like who God is like in his character and how that impacts me in terms of like my identity in Christ and like what God thinks of me. And like who he is.

Relating in Therapy: Feeling Known

Johnny:
Yeah.

Participant:
As well as like his promises. And like grace, like how he extends grace to me and how like something to work on, is like grace for myself. Like if God like sees me as like clean and like extending his grace to me then likewise like it's... like something for me to work and to like also give myself grace.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Addressing S/R: Exploring S/R

Johnny:
Yeah. And so the first thing you mentioned was that your... you experienced your faith through your counselor kind of supporting your process with biblical truth.

Participant:

Mhm...

Johnny:

How.. how else would you say you've experienced your faith in counseling, in your counseling process?

Participant:

Mhm.. um.. so like each session he would begin the session with prayer. Just for like God's guidance in like guiding the session. And like what he wanted us to get out of the session like God for us to kind of lead that. And then he would also end the session like closing it prayer to just kind of like that God would like protect my heart um.. after like sharing vulnerable things and kind of like to use that as like a beginning and end thing for each session. So...

***Engaging S/R in Therapy: Experiencing S/R
Relating in Therapy: Experiencing Closeness***

Johnny:

What did it mean to you to have your sessions begin and end with prayer from your counselor?

Participant:

Um... I think it kind of like gave like a calming like... So, I was at college when I was like going to counseling and the church I was going to was a campus ministry. So, like oftentimes I would be coming from class, so I'd be like stressed out. So he would like check in with me emotionally and then be like OK, well I'm just going to like bring God into this, before we get started. So, that would kind of like you wouldn't say center me but we kind of... like just kind of like am...

Johnny:

That word doesn't resonate huh...

Participant:

Like I mean I don't like using that term but like kind of like just like calm everything that was going on beforehand or that might be going on after a session like just would be in the moment. And like invite God into it. So it wasn't like, let's jump right in, like into all this vulnerable stuff. So...

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Experiencing S/R

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

And then like preparing our hearts to talk about what was gonna be talked about.

Johnny:

Yeah. So there's something calming about having your sessions began and end in prayer. Um.. something like centering but or a piece of the experience. But that's not that's not the word that captures it for you.

Participant:

Yeah.

Johnny:

Um....

Participant:

I can't really think of, a word.

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

I guess centered would be like the best term I could think of.

Johnny:

Seems like it did something for your internal world.

Participant:

Mhm...

Johnny:

I think when I hear the calming and the centering, both of those sound like they're internal.

Participant:

Mhm... kind of like mindfulness, like being focused like in the present.

Johnny:

Ahan...

Participant:

Like whatever happened before hand or whatever I was going to afterwards like..

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

In that moment, in prayer like that wasn't going on, like that wasn't going to impact it.

Johnny:

Yeah... yep.. so it sounds like it was relevant to you and to your process for your times in counseling to begin that way and end that way. So you mentioned.. you mentioned that, you mentioned the support of your counselor... biblical truths. What else comes to mind for you about how you... how you experienced your faith during your counseling process. And it's kind of these it's a weird phrasing but to say you're counseling process.

But part of what I was wanting to capture is, I think most people are kind of going through a change process or a season of reflection and counseling is part of it. And so therefore the counseling process happens both in the room and out of the room. So when you think about that where else do you see your faith kind of active within your counseling process?

10:58

Participant:

Um... Well so part of the issue was like I would tend to go to people first. Like lets say, like I was feeling upset about something or like depressed about something, like I would just run to it like a friend or like family and call them like immediately. Um.. and so something that my counselor kind of challenged me and is like what if you like involved God in that process.

And like maybe like you can still call someone, like if you're still feeling upset but. What would it look like if you like prayed about it first or like said like OK, I'm going to like, kind of reflect with God, like for like 10 minutes and then I'll call somebody or like just engaging God in the process instead of just going to someone to like fulfill an immediate need.

And then just like being fine or, not going to God after like. He kind of challenged me to go there first before like going to someone else. So that kind of was helpful not only like in process of like working to become less dependent on people, but also in the sense of like growing in my faith with and like walk with God to like rely on him more and instead of a person...

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Exploring S/R

Johnny:

Yeah... yep... absolutely. And I am... I think curious what those moments, like how you experience them. You could just.... do you remember any of them, when a moment when you wanted to reach out to someone and you are like wait no. I'm gonna connect with God first.

Participant:

Yeah... like that was definitely (laughs) a struggle, because then I would like bring that up in counseling. Like yeah like but I just want to be like comforted like in the moment, by like someone's actual presence. And like with God, like yeah I can talk

with him and I pray to him. But like I don't feel that immediate... like comfort, that I do from like talking and having conversation with someone.

Johnny:
Right.

Participant:
So that... was like a struggle. But like just being diligent and like doing that, even though it wasn't like how I prefer to receive help. But, I think that definitely like challenged me in a good way to like reach out to God instead of kind of like a last resort type thing.

Johnny:
Yeah. And what... what sorts of um.. what sorts of situations would provoke that. Like walk me through a moment when you were like, ah.. ha ha... I want to call someone but I think I should go to God first.

Participant:
Um... its like for example like back then, um... I... like struggled with like cutting

and stuff. So... like it would be easier for me to text someone or call someone and be like, "hey, I feel like I want to do this like can you like help calm me down" or whatever. Versus like praying to God and being like OK, like hey God, I feel like this, like I'm tempted to cut, like I just ask that you would give me peace or like something like that. So, like that is kind of like not an instantaneous kind of thing ha ha... you know. Um... so that was like hard for me. Because like when those feelings would come up it would be like intense, I'm like I just need somebody right now.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Experiencing S/R

Johnny:
Yeah.

Participant:
But...

15:08

Johnny:
Wow. I appreciate you sharing, that's a very vulnerable thing to share. Um... and it does sound like those moments would be very intense. Like you were very much needing something, needing comfort right that moment. Um... You were making a conscious effort to pray with God about it.

Participant:
Hmm... and it would be like more things to it, it wasn't like... my counselor was just like, just pray about it. Like um... I had this booklet that was like um... bible verses

depending on different situations. Like when you feel anger or like when you feel depressed or when you feel anxious, here are verses in the bible, that like can relate to that. Or like when you... like need peace like and so it would talk about verses about like Jesus is the prince of peace or just different things like that. Um....

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Experiencing S/R

Johnny:
Yeah.

Participant:
Like God is like a comforter. Humm... (sigh) so like reflecting on those, like in the moment too when I was experiencing those things.

Receiving from S/R in Therapy: Comfort

Johnny:
Yeah.

Participant:
Or like music for me is a big help. So like sometimes listening to the different songs that talk about like who God is, or like his promises, like different, like hill song, songs or like other bands, Christian bands. And just kind of like listening to those words and taking them in.

Johnny:
And was it in those moments? Was it the words or the words and the music?

Participant:
Both, the words and the music.

Johnny:
So it's like both of them were part of your a... experience of faith in that moment.

Participant:
Mhm...

Johnny:
Yeah.

Participant:
Yep.

Johnny:
So there was.. there was um.. prayer, there was focus on kind of like what you were.. what you were trying to grow in. Like not just going to people too quickly or relying

on them for something that you want/need from God. There were bible verses there was like a kind of directions there are around different things you might be experiencing. And I'm wondering like can you give me.. can you describe the experience of when, a... ah... for lack of a better term, for when it would work and when it wouldn't? He he he...

Participant:

Ah... one that would work, like I could just kind of like, for example so like music.

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

Option, just like close my eyes and like lay down and just kind of like listen to it. Like sometimes over and over, just until like I felt like more calm or like the feeling was less intense. Even if it was still there, it was less intense, like wanting to cut or feeling depressed or whatever it was, anxious am... and just kind of waiting it out with like that in my ears and like listening to it and feeling more calm. Um... or like the prayer um... just kind of like sitting in that like after I prayed and like waiting. Um... until I had like calmed down and like believing that like God can like um... like bestow peace on me, if I ask for it. Um... and I came to him and like was active and seeking him in like involving him in that so, just kind of like believing that and trusting that. And then like the scripture, just like reading over and over like the verses about peace or about um.. just different things like that.

Engaging S/R in Therapy: Experiencing S/R

Johnny:

Yeah

Participant:

God's promises.

Johnny:

Mhm...

Participant:

And then trying to like reflect on that. Like believe that, that's true. Not just in general but for me as well, so...

Johnny:

Yeah! So, it sounds like there's some similarity there to even what you described about the presence of prayer in your actual counseling sessions. Where... when you would engage, when you would engage with God in this way... there was the words you used were calm, peace, being reminded of truth. And then a couple of times, just now you used the term waiting, that they would... seemed like there was more

capacity to wait, in the midst of the situation. Does that all sound right, as I play it back to you.

20:24

Participant:

Yeah. Mhm... yep...

Johnny:

And as you think about these moments when it worked, for my lack of a better term. Um.. what comes to mind for you when you think through that time? You think through your times in counseling and your times engaging in these practices and these um... you know experiencing God, when is, what moment comes to mind when you experienced God the most? When... when was he the closest in your counseling process?

Participant:

Um... I think when I actually did try to go to him first instead of the last resort and also like.... like I said I think the music um... and like the lyrics of the songs, like helped me the most.

Johnny:

Yeah. So it sounds like... it sounds like the music was a... it was an experience.. it was a faith experience for you.

Participant:

Mhm...

Johnny:

And it really... it really did something, really did something for you.

Participant:

Mhm... And like even, like in church services back then and now like I feel like I get the most out of like a church service in the worship portion of it... more so than the message or like the sermon, like even though like that is helpful most times like I feel like I feel most connected to God through music.

Context: S/R Practices

Johnny:

Yup. So, let me use that piece and reverse this question. What would... what would your process through counseling, what would it have been like... if there had been no music? What would have been missing?

Participant:

A.... like if I was doing the Christian counseling without the music part or if I was doing like regular counseling that was not christian counseling?

Johnny:

Um.. either way you want to think of it. If it was, if you imagine your counseling process and you took the ingredient of your faith out of it.

Participant:

Mhm...

Johnny:

What would be lost? How would it be different?

Participant:

So, I had gone to counseling beforehand like to a non-Christian counselor beforehand.

Johnny:

OK.

Participant:

Am... and like, didn't feel like it was useful to me. Um.. so, I feel like and I kind of use like an analogy, huh....

Johnny:

Ahan

23:30

Participant:

So, I'm in social work school right now.

Johnny:

OK.

Participant:

Going from a Master's social work and a lot of times like what we say is like, you know like what we talk about in therapy and everything is like useful. But like if it's not being supported, like outside of just therapy, like it's not going to do that much good. And for me that's how I felt with my counseling experience in that, like I can learn these different coping techniques and stuff.

But if I don't incorporate my faith and like God into like getting better or as part of my coping skills are in like my like healing process or therapy. Like it's not going to really do a whole lot of good. Like in the moment it might but, maybe but like in terms of like long term like it's not going to really do anything. Because like those things will satisfy in the moment but like God is like really the only.... like he's the healer like he's the only one that can heal my heart.

Or like. Um... like help me grow, like there is only... so much like a therapist or I can do like on my own without God's help in that process.

Relating in Therapy: Feeling Known->Not Known

Johnny:
Yeah

25:00

Participant:
So it needs that like extra support or like added in like aspect. Cause it's not enough like otherwise.

Johnny:
And as you were describing that, I heard a contrast between as you said, like I could go to counseling and I would get coping skills. But that won't be helpful apart from God.

Participant:
Mhm...

Johnny:
And what struck me was like, you are kind of painting a contrast there between just coping skills and the work that God can do. And so even as you describe these things of like a... praying, bible verses, listening to music, in these moments when you really needed it, it sounds then like those are more... those are not coping skills for you. They are something more than that.

Participant:
Mhm. Because it benefits me like longer, past like a moment. For example when I went to counseling that was not a christian counselor. Like learning how to re-frame my thinking. Or like when I felt like I wanted to cut to like hold ice or like draw with a marker like on my arm or like....

Johnny:
Yeah

Participant:
Things like that or like snap a rubber band, like that would help in the moment but it wasn't... it was like kind of putting a band aid per se. on the whole issue without actually getting to the root of the problem or like which only like me involving God in that can do um... yeah.

Relating in Therapy: Feeling Known->Not Known

Johnny:

Yeah, both of it, that paints a good picture. So, they're both... so like those things you described holding ice or writing with a marker, or like those are things you would do in the moment.

Participant:
Mhm...

Johnny:
And praying and seeking God is something you would do in the moment.

Participant:
Mhm...

Johnny:
But one only helps in the moment and the other one is...has much more lasting potential.

Participant:
Mhm... yeah.

Johnny:
And how else would you describe, um... when you think about the other counseling that you went to.. um.. what else would you say like didn't work for you with that?

Participant:
Um... um.. I don't know. I just felt like I didn't have a good connection with like the therapists that I saw. I saw two different ones.

Johnny:
OK.

Participant:
That were both non christian. Um... like it's almost like I trusted them to a certain extent. But like I didn't fully... like I kind of like had them at a distance still, like I mean you can tell me all you want about coping skills but you don't really get it or like type thing like, I don't know I just. And one of them I even saw him for like a year. And I just still didn't feel like I learned anything different or beneficial.

Relating in Therapy: Feeling Known->Not Known

Johnny:
Yep. And was that.. was that sense of not trusting them keeping them at a distance, is that related to faith?

Participant:

Um.... I don't know if that's how I like phrased it at the time. Because I saw them first and then had a couple of years in between not seeing a therapist before I started with my christian counselor who I was with for like two years. So like at that time my I wouldn't say it was because they were not christian. But looking back... I can see that having a christian counselor that worked on my faith as well as the emotional stuff was more beneficial to me than they were. So, it's kind of like looking at it like okay well what's different and that's the key factor to me that was different.

Relating in Therapy: Developing Trust

Johnny:
Yeah

Participant:
So, that's why I would say I felt more comfortable or felt like I got something more out of the other counseling.

30:00

Johnny:
Yep. Yeah. And so your... you said you didn't trust them as much, kept them at more of a distance.

Participant:
And part of that too could have just been, I was younger at that time. Like I was in high school when I saw them. And I was in college when I saw my other counselor so...

Johnny:
Yeah!

Participant:
That could be a factor as well. But yeah and so not trusting them really.

Relating in Therapy: Developing Trust

Johnny:
And did... when you met with them, did you talk about your faith at all?

Participant:
Um... Yeah, I like talked about how that was important but they.... I don't remember them really spending time on that. Or like it would be more of like at a distance thing of like.. that's good, like use your coping skills or strategies. Um... like for you if that's like your religion or whatever like doing that like they wouldn't... it was like they acknowledged it was there and if that was helpful for me then great, but it wasn't like they talked about it.

And like now, as I'm going for my degree in social work, it's kind of the same thing that we're like taught like... you kind of steer clear of religion. Like if someone uses that as their coping skill then yeah encourage them to like do that like 'yeah that's great that you like find religion helpful like make sure you use those coping skills when you're feeling whatever it may be'... like so we don't really talk openly about it.

I'm last like the person says like yeah, that's hopeful from me. Then I'm really like oh kind of good for you. Like you said it's good for you but you don't like engage in it with them.

Relating in Therapy: Feeling Known->Not Known

Johnny:
Yeah.... yeah.

Participant:
Which I feel is a disservice to them, because like going through Christian counseling, I feel like how that was a beneficial aspect of my treatment. But unfortunately like in the position I'm in, like I can't do that unless I was in like a faith based tape setting like my counselor, like working for a church.

Johnny:
Yes.

Participant:
Stuff like that.

Johnny:
Yep. And it seems like it did.... it does do, how your counselor relates to your faith. It did change something about your experience with them. Like it could have been that you were younger, in high school. But I do hear this sense of like either... more distant or them not knowing you as well.

Participant:
Yeah.

Johnny:
On top of the.... you know the need that you feel for addressing your relationship with God and your faith and seeing the like long term healing and that kind of both.

Participant:
Yeah.

Johnny:

Which is, we're kind of like addressing that fourth question how did you experience your counselor in relation to your faith.

Participant:

Yeah, I'd say, he kind of served of like a reminder or like a coach to like incorporate my faith into the healing process. And like ways to cope, like I mentioned like in prayer or through music or like scripture. And then also like how I see myself. Like I had mentioned before like God like sees me as like his child and good and like to try to give myself that same grace. So...

Relating in Therapy: Feeling Known->Not Known

Johnny:

Yep.

Participant:

Kind of served as like a reminder for those things.

Johnny:

Right. Yeah. And did your faith being involved in your counseling, did it change your view of your counselor? Your experience of your counselor?

Participant:

I felt like it was more real. And like what I mean by that is like the other counselors like it felt like fake, like kind of scripted almost.... like you're feeling anxiety, here are some coping skills. Or you're feeling depression, here's some coping skills. Make sure you take your medication, type thing. Whereas with my counselor who is a Christian, like it was more like relatable and like felt more real and vulnerable, than just like, how do you feel about that. Or what can you do to decrease those feelings or stuff like that. Like it just felt more like real and personable and like he actually cared about not just like my emotional well being but also like my spiritual well being.

Relating in Therapy: Experiencing Closeness

35:30

Johnny:

Yeah. So your faith being part of your counseling had a lot of impact even there, like.... somehow either faith being part of.... part of your counseling made it more real, more vulnerable, more personable, you felt more cared for.

Participant:

Mhm...

Johnny:

These all sound like really good things.

Participant:

Mhm... Because like the spiritual aspect, like caring about my spiritual well being is more than just like in the moment. It's like um... which is what they were kind of.. my other counselors were kind of... to me what they were pushing for. Like with the emotional well-being like just being stable like emotionally whereas, with my other counselor the christian one... like caring also about my relationship with God and like how.... like they kind of go hand in hand like God and like my emotional well being and my spiritual well being might go hand in hand like it's more well rounded than just focusing on one thing.

Relating in Therapy: Experiencing Closeness

Johnny:

Yeah. So your emotional well being and your spiritual well being go hand in hand and they're so intertwined.

Participant:

Mhm...

Johnny:

It would seem... it would seem unfeasible to counsel you and remove the faith aspect.

Participant:

Mhm... Yep.

Johnny:

Which I think is part of what makes it hard to describe, how.. what the impact is if it's not present. It's hard to even describe.. this gets back to that ingredient piece. It's like yeah if you take walnuts out of the cookie then it's just a chocolate chip cookie not a chocolate chip walnut cookie.

Participant:

Mhm...

Johnny:

If you take baking soda out, it's not really a cookie. Ha ha ha!

Participant:

Yeah.

Johnny:

Like... yeah. As we talk through this, what else would you like to tell me about? What comes to mind, this could be thoughts, reflections, memories from counseling about your faith in your counseling process?

Participant:

Yeah. So... um... part of the... when I was in counseling, both for the first year and the second year, um... like in between the school year and the next school year. Um... like in the summers, I attended this leadership training program, that was two months during the summer through my church, where my counselor was also a part of. And just like that was super helpful because, leadership training, that, kind of what it entailed was like a two month thing, about like discipleship and like evangelist and our own like stories kind of like our past and like how we came to be like followers of Christ.

And kind of like how we can impact others with our testimony. And just stuff like that like different like growth and like training. So, we kind of went through and then had like small groups and stuff throughout the time too. It was um... like a pretty intensive training program. Um... so... a... I was going to counseling at the same time like once a week. So, it was good and like helpful for me to have that during that leadership training time because like a lot of times like things would come up like that were like challenging for me. Like memories or like just different emotional things or things like that. So it was helpful to reflect on that outside of the leadership training or outside of the small group thing.

Relating in Therapy: Feeling Known

40:00

And kind of like talk about that in counseling and reflect on like, um... how it was for me to like experience that or learn that. And then like what to do moving forward. So, it was like an additional piece.

Johnny:

OK. So you had this leadership training thing that would bring things up for you. And counseling served as a place where you could address that.

Participant:

Mhm... Because like, there was like obviously like in small groups like we would talk about like either if stuff came up during small group or if something came up during one of the like training sessions. Like we could talk about it in small group but also having like an additional like kind of one on one.

Johnny:

Yeah...

Participant:

Safe place to like discuss it, because it was related, most times with both my faith and like emotionally. So, to have that place like an extra kind of... place to have support to work through things and get feedback so.

Johnny:
Anything else you would want to add?

Participant:
Nah. Nothing, that's it.

Johnny:
Let me move forward closing out our time.

Participant:
Mhm..!

Johnny:
Am.. first of all, I'm super grateful for you um.. giving me some of your time. It's very much appreciated. From here what's going to happen is, I'll take our time together, I'm gonna transcribe it and go through the next steps of my process for analyzing and doing my thing. And then, I will be reaching out to you probably in about a month to schedule a second interview. And because between now and then, I'll be developing a second round of questions. And so we'll do the same thing again. Set up a time, meet, chat for an hour. Am... the other thing that's going to happen is... you might have noticed in the information that I sent you that, after each interview, there's a compensation in the form of a gift card.

Participant:
Mhm..!

Johnny:
And so, I checked with everyone to find out, my plan has been to e-mail you an Amazon gift card. If that doesn't work for you we can make other means, if it does, then I'll... I can take care of that today.

Participant:
Yeah! That sounds great.

Johnny:
Awesome. So... with all of that said, I don't think there's anything else for us to do today.

Participant:
OK.

Johnny:
Um... thank you so much.

Participant:
Yeah thank you too.

Johnny:
I'll be in touch.

Participant:
Alright. Sounds good. Thank you.

Johnny:
Alright. Bye bye!

Participant:
Bye!

Appendix Q

Audit Trail of Analysis Following First Interview

2/24/2017- Journal Entry

I finished my interviews and then got delayed. The delay occurred from needing to have an adjustment that needed to go through IRB. Then, personal situations in my life kept me from engaging my data.

By the time everything was transcribed, the momentum in the analysis had stalled. As I have now returned to the data, I am needing to reorient myself once again in order to engage it.

2/24/2017- Dissertation Meeting

1. Listen to the whole recording while looking at the transcript.
2. Proof read the transcript during this process.
3. Don't think about the 2nd round of questions.

Initial analysis

Ch. 3 Research question should be lingering in the back of my mind but not in the forefront of my mind. This includes the research question and subquestions.

First thing- Memo/What do they sound like

When are they talking about it and when not

All coding is in "ing"

Focus on the meaning/not on the things

"Experiencing the problem"- code- context?

"Having a problem"

"Reaching a breaking point"

This is VS. This is not about spirituality

Relationship with counselor

Open coding begins with bigger chunks/categories

After all open coding is complete- begin to move toward pictures.

Worked with Deb on coding procedures and techniques:

The central research question for this study is, "how do clients experience their spiritual and religious beliefs and practices during the counseling process?"

(a) How do spiritual and religious clients experience their spirituality and religion as a part of therapeutic change?

(b) How do spiritual and religious clients experience their spirituality and religion in session?

(c) How do spiritual and religious clients experience their spirituality and religion as part of their counseling process outside of the session?

(d) How do spiritual and religious clients experience their spirituality and religion in relationship to their counselor?

(e) How do spiritual and religious clients describe the role of spirituality and religion in their counseling process?

(f) What does spiritual and religious look like in the counseling process to the client?

(g) What are the mechanisms by which spiritual and religious experiences affect the counseling process?

Memo: What do participants sound like when they are talking about their spirituality and religion?

Um... So like my grades were not doing well. Aaa... even though I was trying really really hard. So... I remember like being in like one session and like I just walked in and like I just fell apart because for some reason, I'm staying up till 4 am but like no matter what I do, I go to the class, take test and then I just black out and reason whenever... Um.... then I just sat in silence for like maybe half an hour because I couldn't stop crying. And I couldn't talk because I just felt like its my breaking point. This is not spirituality and religion. What is it? Part of the context probably. *Experiencing the problem. Having a problem. Reaching a breaking point.* Does the silence have something to do with the spirituality?

And so she took this moment to pause and to pray and. Like it was weird bit like she invited me to pray with her *Being invited to pray (being invited into spirituality)* and somehow through the sobs I was able to pray. *Accessing spirituality in session?* And nothing like elaborate nothing like you know spectacular and then we just sat in the silence. *(Experiencing spirituality as something small or 'not spectacular' or ordinary)*

And that was the first time all semester that like I feel like I can breathe. *(Experiencing some relief -*

Small Memo: Is it because of prayer, spirituality, silence or the counselor???) And so then from there like I was able to talk... And we were able to tell like you know. I said OK like this is kind of a point where you start spiraling. So set some time aside to breathe and..... just that kind of thing. (Memo: Is this something about spirituality or is it what happens afterward??? Code = *Being able to work after accessing spirituality.* And it's like it's like it was like spiritual but also practical but like it was the spiritual that helped me get to the practical. *(Experiencing spirituality as something small or practical)*

This whole prior chunk is about spirituality and religion. And it's about interacting with the counselor. And experiencing some kind of relief.

Ammm... I don't know like there is not. It feels like, I can't, it's hard. Ha humm....!

I don't know. It's first for like for that second. Like there was like a peace in the room *Experiencing peace* and it didn't make sense at all. *Being taken aback by the sense of peace*. Not at all..... Because like... a fire in a state from like anywhere around me during that semester and peace like I lost weight, like I couldn't eat. So like for a split second I felt like it was quiet enough for me to like even be able to talk. And like have a moment. Um....! So then like after I was able to like go and I had a test I had to take right after. And...

So..... so like it was helpful because I was able to it with me as it went to go take my test and then I remember sitting there like getting ready to press the start button for this stones and like feeling it all come crushing like rushing back to me. And like somehow being able to hold onto that moment of peace and obsession and like count ten and just say like this really quick childlike prayer. And I mean I ran out the time or 10 seconds that made it so like that was really like no. It is crucial which makes me uncomfortable but it happened. And I think in moments after it I was able to at least try to remember when I feel that pain come to try and try and seek out God like that a gain.

I mean I don't always remember but sometimes unable to.

Mhm....! Yeah, like I've had moments that could fit in that category. And then I remember moments like before that ever happened it was just like OK, "the wave is coming and you are playing. It's just going to do whatever it's going to do".

So the entire passage prior to this is about being in the 'problem' and accessing peace.

2/25/2017- Research Process Note

Deb recommended that I begin by spending time with my 2 'favorite' interviews. I printed these off and plan to read them regularly over the next couple of weeks.

5/23/2017- Email to Deb

"I wanted to send you another update on where I am at (mostly for my own accountability).

And I would like to schedule a time to connect so that I have a present deadline. Short story is- I am still dragging and am feeling a bit stuck. I have managed to get some work done on the transcripts- basically, they are all proofed and ready to code. The next step for me is to take the two most different items and code them. Then move from there. And I am having trouble finding time as well as having trouble feeling paralyzed.

I am definitely mentally stuck in wanting to be done and having trouble seeing the path toward the finish line. Even though, I know what the next step is.

In addition to Hope's surgery, we also found out that the church I work for is doing layoffs. Long story short, I am not being laid off but I am moving on from the organization. It is more transition that is distracting at the moment.

Here is what I need from you:

1. Any wisdom you have that you think would be helpful.
2. Could we schedule a time to meet the week of June 5th? Christy and I are heading to Florida for a wedding over the course of the next week or so.

Last, I am a little embarrassed that I have bogged down this bad. But not embarrassed like I want to hide. Just noticing that feeling in myself. I feel like I am needing to get back to basics and keep focused on just taking the next step. As always, I appreciate you. I also have it in the back of my mind that you are on sabbatical this Fall and I want to be done SO bad before that. Hope you are doing well."

Her response:

"Hi Johnny - yes let's meet next week. I am pretty open most of the week. Give me a few times and I'm sure one of them will work

Before next fall is not possible. That is a lot of grounded theory to do during a short span of time. More likely you may be ready for round two or three at that point. I will have someone experienced with grounded theory working with my dissertation students at that point who will be able to assist you with what you need. Or you can be set up to be at a relatively independent stage, for instance conducting interviews and transcribing/doing selective coding.

In terms of coding trying to pick your favorite and just 'be' with it. Let yourself code without thinking of being done. Trying to be done will paralyze you every time. And you will not be done."

6/9/2017- Journal Entry

This was my first pass at coding and I was having trouble entering the data. I found my codes to be very generic and were not aiding in entering the depth of what was described.

I need to take a step back and figure out what I need in order to enter into the content of the transcript.

6/12/2017- Journal Entry

I met with Debbie today in order to reorient. I talked to her about how stuck I was feeling. I realized that I am not coming to the data with enough curiosity about what is going on. Part of this is because of the desire to be done with my dissertation process. Which, I need to suspend in order to be effective.

6/14/2017- Journal Entry

I reengaged the data today and felt much more traction with my efforts. I had a much better sense of the depth of the content and began to see some of the different angles.

6/14/2017- Journal Entry

Deb recommended that I approach the data by conceptualizing the top 3 polarities that stand out to me.

6/17/2017- Email to Deb

“Ok, This week felt much more productive and like I could actually envision myself making progress on this thing.

I have attached two transcripts that I worked on. One is the previous transcript you have seen with new analysis. The other is one of my least favorite transcripts- for some contrast.

In terms of dilemmas, I saw a number of them and will try to narrow them down. But, as I thought through this piece, I jotted down a bunch of notes. Here is a summary of those notes.

Dilemmas: I clustered these into similar groups. And I bolded the three that are my favorite or are standing out the most to me right now.

Outward vs. Inward

External vs. Internal

Tangible vs. Intangible

Seen vs. Unseen

Presence vs. Absence

Give voice vs. Being silent

Giving voice vs. Hiding

Freedom versus oppression

Hiding vs. known

Process vs. Static Beliefs

Shame vs. Loved

Spiritual vs. Not Spiritual

Depth vs. surface

Distance vs. closeness

Engaging vs. Avoiding

Real vs. Fake

Some of these apply to the therapy room/therapy relationship. While other apply to spirituality and religion in general.

Last, a metaphor popped to mind as I was working on this. Thinking of spirituality-religion as a color spectrum. Some people appreciate a lot of colors, some less so. Some people overuse a particular color because they are drawn to it. When

interacting with the counselor, not addressing S/R becomes like trying to describe the color green to a color-blind person.”

6/27/2017- Dissertation Meeting

Micro coding was lacking meaning

What has emotional valance? Conceptual valance?

Tangible vs. Intangible- How do you code this?

Give voice vs. Hiding

Distance vs. Closeness

“Dilemma Coding”

Now- verbal memoing.

Types of questions you ask yourself?

- What is the relationship of this thing to my question?
- What kind of a thing is it?
- What does it refer to?
- Who are the actors?
- What is the thing that is tangible/intangible?

Important thing- might be a characteristic or dimension

Contextual- participants exp. Of her spirituality

Tangible- in the moment?

Is it the thing I am talking about or is it a quality of the thing?

Context- Part of the process but NOT central

Dimensions → from concepts

Concepts

Central ex: Communicating S/R to therapist

Category -> Major working component (usually action)

→ Properties

- Dimensions

Tangible is a category?

Axial- about a characteristic

-> Not about a different thing.

Giving Voice vs. Hiding

- Is about communicating
- Is about the client

“Central” to me

Theory pulls together multiple seemingly different experiences.

Why it works for both people w/ diff exp.

“Looking for the backbone”

Move the analysis forward

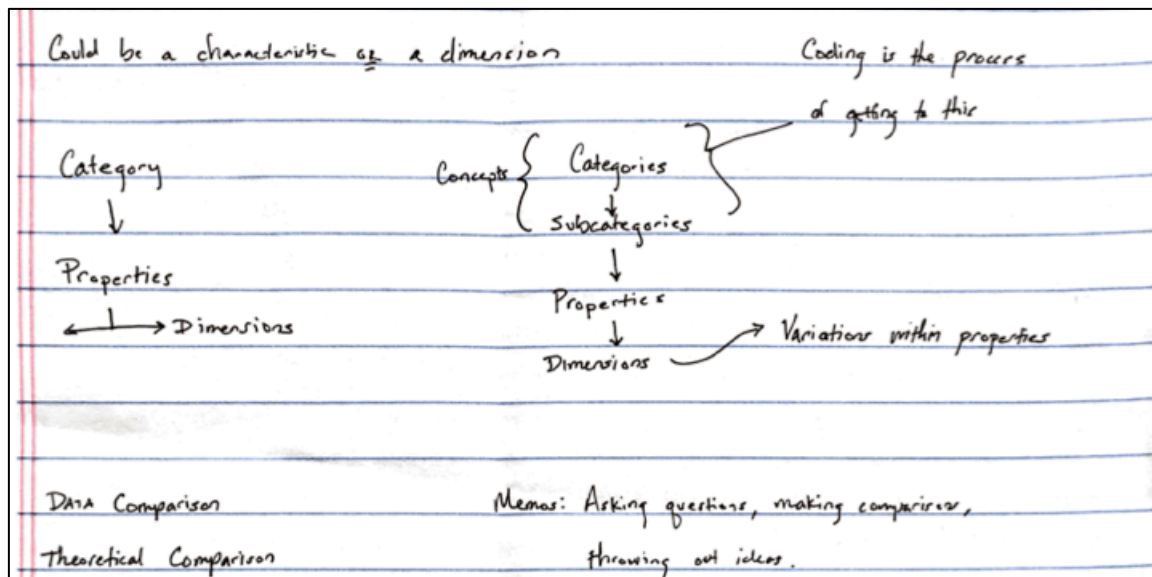
- Coding
- Draw

Look at these two transcripts and think about outcomes?

Relational, identity

What happens because of...

Pre-coding orientation but may...



What would these people say is the most important outcome?

Center outcomes on the therapeutic process?

What would they say is significant.

Feel the data from the perspective of the person?

Most important things.

Memoing

Identify 3-4 deep concepts that the participant is trying to convey?

BIG ideas

Can do it in week

Substantive write-up by Friday

Maybe.... Apply to a third transcript

7/3/2017 Journal Entry

What is the relationship of these things to my question?

What kind of a thing is it?

What does it refer to?

Who are the actors?

^Comparative analysis

Feel the data-> get to the essence of what is being said.

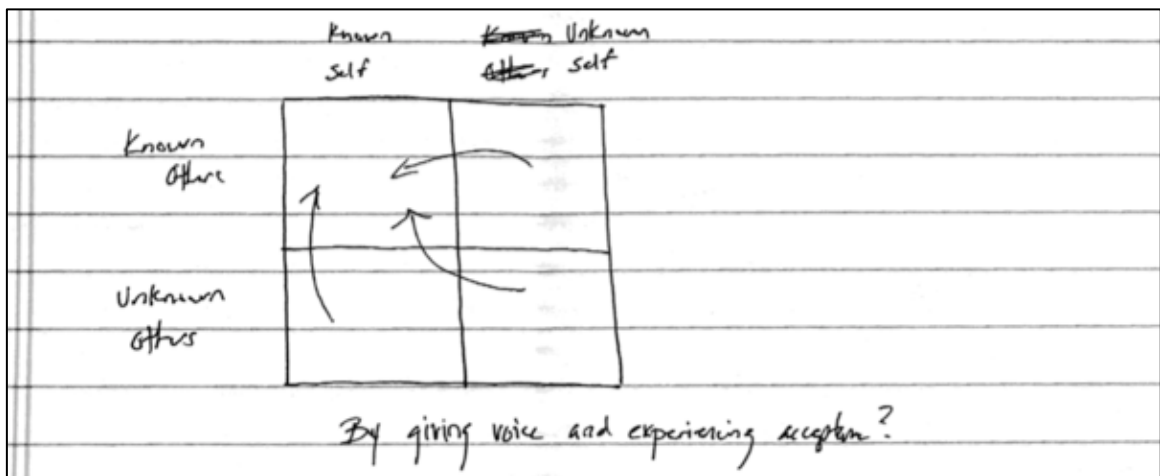
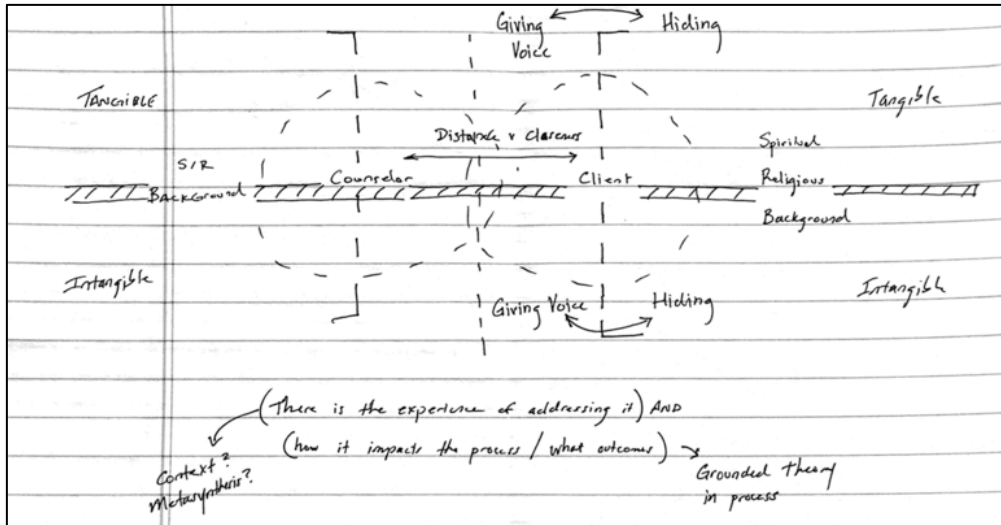
Theory pulls together multiple, seemingly different experiences.

What would these clients say is the most important outcome?

3-4 deep concepts the participant is trying to convey.

Participant A

1. Tangible vs. Intangible -> this feels like it might be a property of multiple items
2. Giving Voice vs. Hiding -> this feels internal to the client's exp.
3. Distance vs. Closeness -> this feels like a result between client and counselor

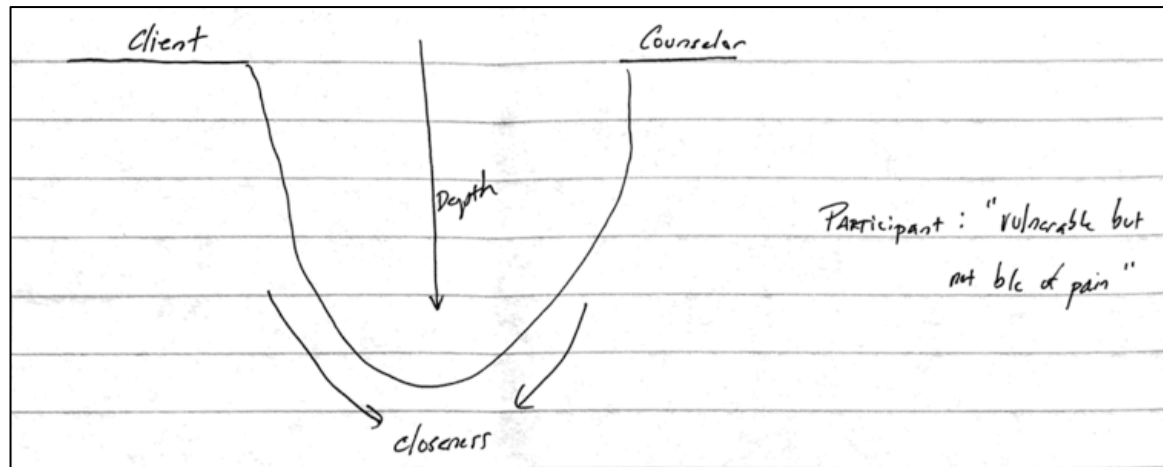


This participant is helpful because she has seen multiple counselors w/differing faith backgrounds. Can help add depth to theory.
 Could the metasynthesis results name part of the context for this experience?

1. Tangible vs. Intangible could be in the room or in the exp or in the context. It seems like it is speaking to a property of S/R experiences.
2. Giving Voice vs. Hiding- there seems to be something about the experience of experiencing S/R and the meaning. This feels like a core category. Although there are elements of this that could be a property.
 - a. Like: Experience S/R::Giving Voice < - - - > Hiding

3. Distance vs. Closeness- This feels like a result or outcome. It feels like a "what happens because" kind of thing. But, there is something else missing between dilemma 2 and this dilemma. Like the client feeling known or appreciated. Or perhaps experiencing more trust with the counselor. The Johari window comes to mind and how the client handles things known to them but not known to the counselor.

Do you want to know the spiritual/religious me?
Talking about S/R vs. Experiencing S/R with the counselor



"Level of presence" there is something here around depth. Maybe an experience of being more deeply known?

"The deeper we go, the closer we get"

S/R takes on aspects of identity. It seems clients might exp. S/R as part of who they are. Not something they think or experience in life. This seems to give rise to language about hiding and feeling known. And, conversely, feeling more known can lead to an experience of closeness. Particularly for clients who exp. Counseling as a spiritual conversation (or exp.)

Tangible v. Intangible

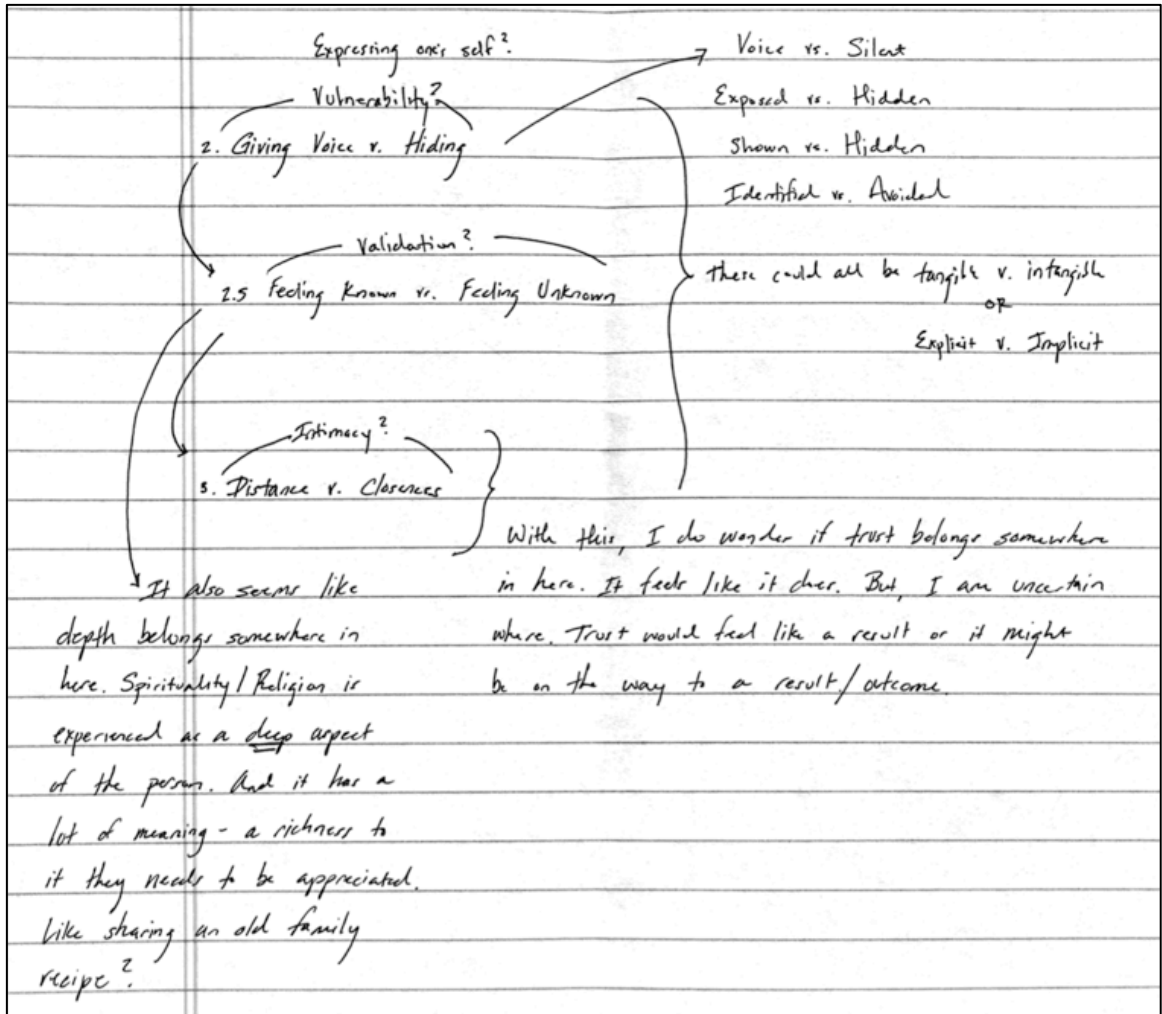
Explicit v. Implicit

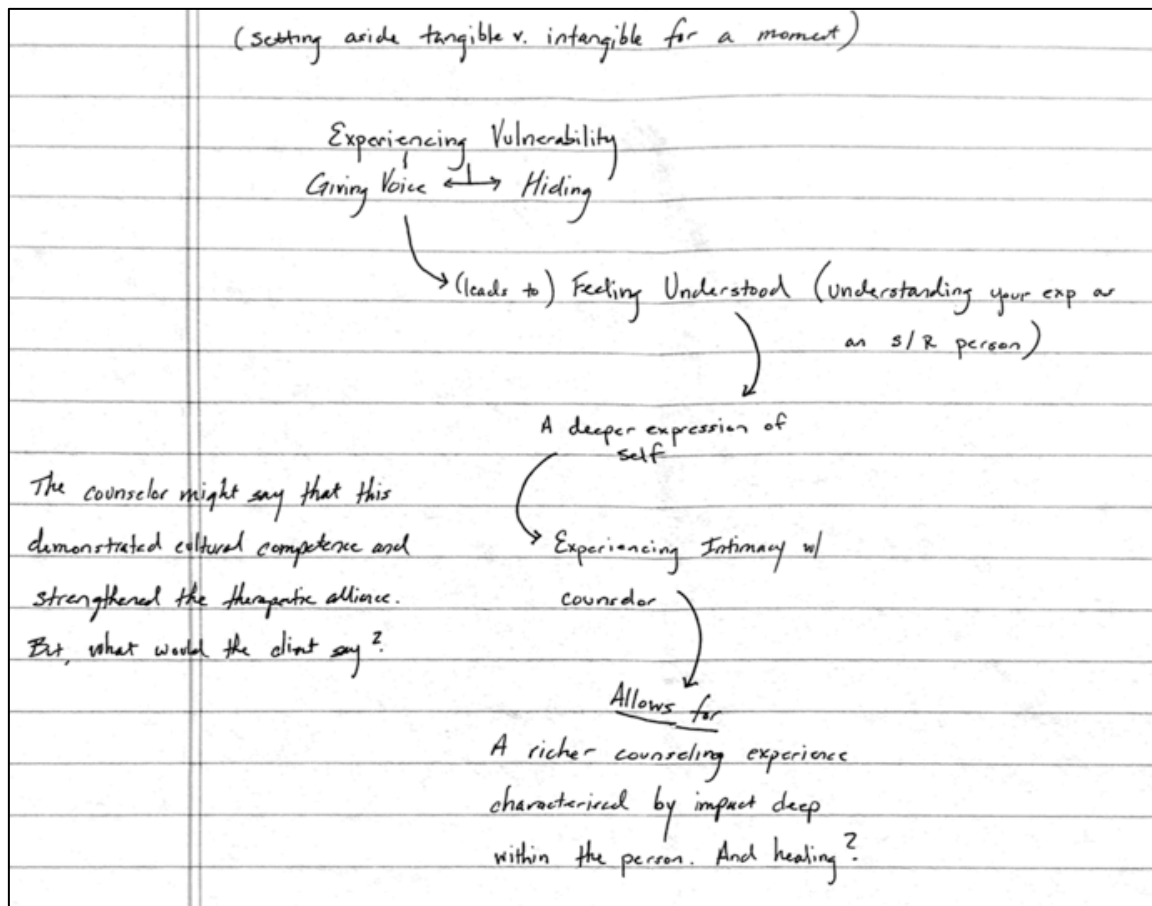
Concrete v. Abstract --- these do not feel core to the exp.

Which may validate this being a property/dimension.

3-4 Deep concepts the participant is trying to convey.

What would they say is significant?





7/4/2017- Journal Entry

3 Dilemmas

Tangible v. Intangible

Giving voice v. Hiding

Distance v. Closeness

Overall, this participant felt much different from #2. My own S/R experience did not resonate as much with this person. I experienced it to be shallow and very behavioral. I am aware of this perception because it is certainly not how my participant would describe it.

Role of S/R (to the participant)

- Worldview
- Stress management
- Relating
- Purpose

All of this feels like context. Maybe some of my metasyn results.

Lots of language about vulnerability and identity. This could be part of the Giving Voice dilemma or, I am may need a higher category to envelop both.

Also, just not certain if this is the impact of S/R in general or the impact specifically on the counseling process.

Reviewing these transcripts confirms that Tangible v. Intangible is not a central category.

Large Outcomes:

1. "Involving God in Counseling"
2. Made the impact of counseling deeper/more effective
 - a. The word "root" which she uses, has depth implications
3. Better connection w/ Therapist
4. Healing

Note: The counselor might say that involving S/R made therapy "more effective" but I am curious about what language the client would use.

Trust feels like it is present but not being spoken to directly

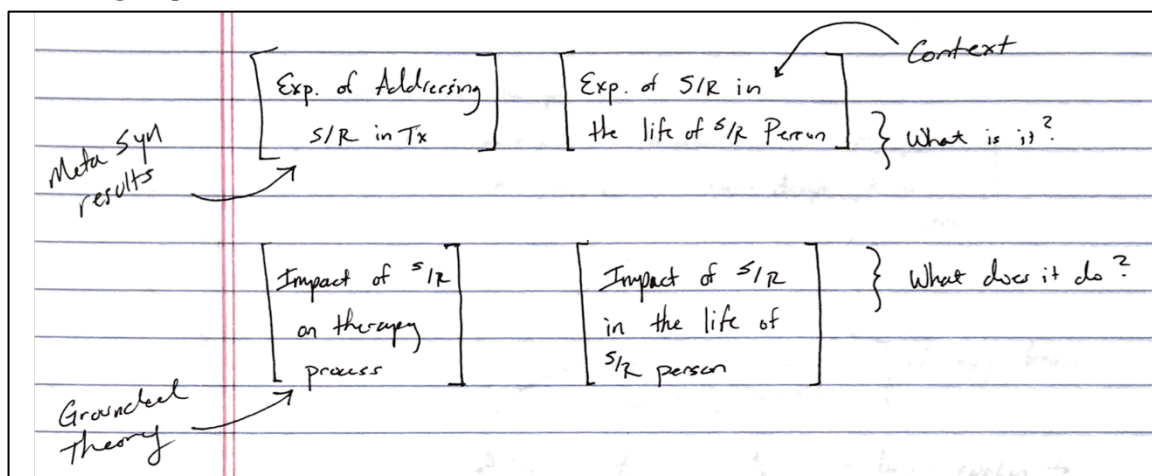
The word healing comes up across a lot of interviews. It seems like this is part of that "extra depth" that clients are talking about. It takes a process that is helpful and makes it healing.

7/5/2017- Journal Entry

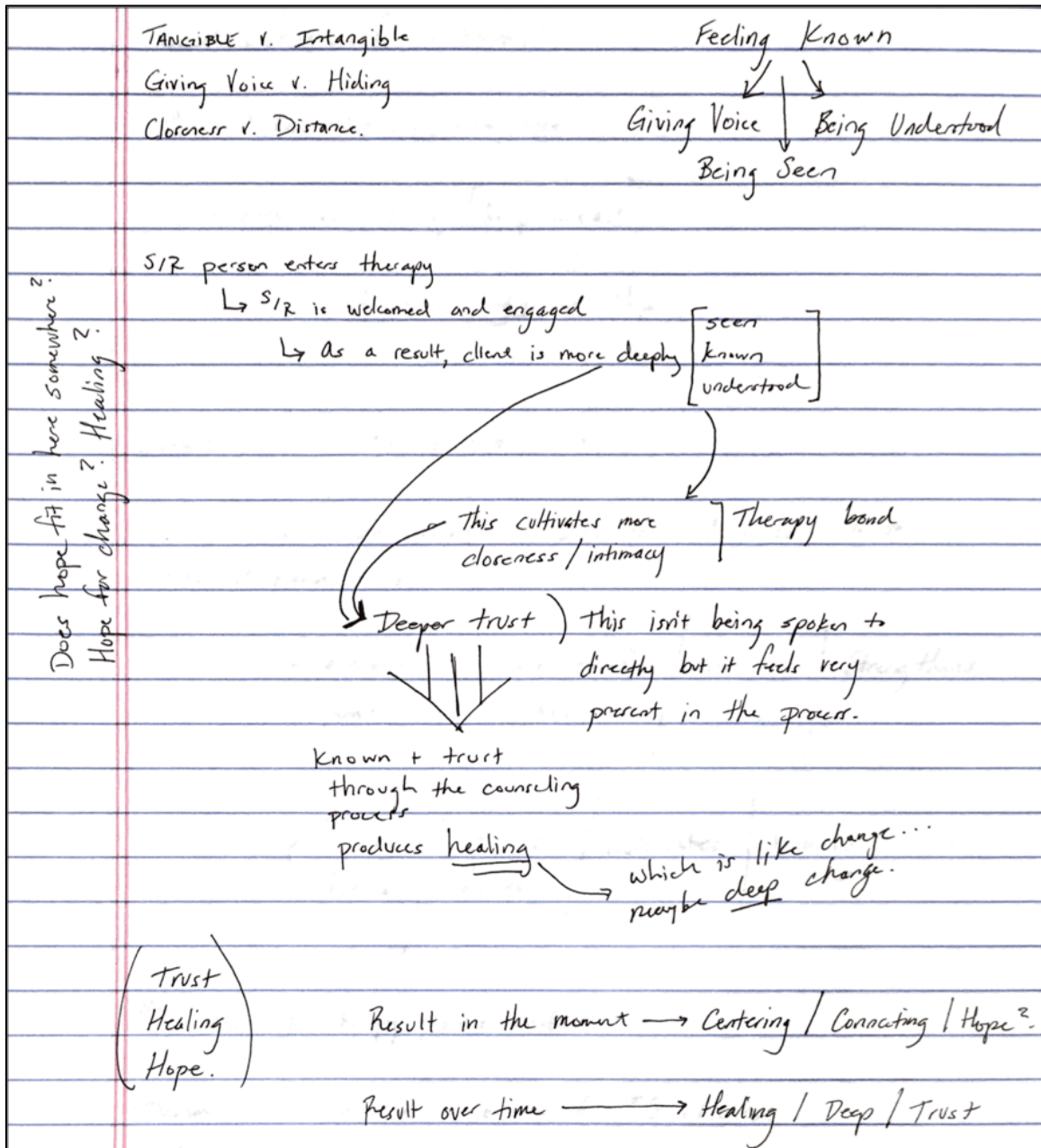
Just finished reviewing another participant. Struck by some chunks of the larger experience of S/R in therapy. The metasynthesis captures one of these chunks.

Part of "what it does" is related to what it is (for the client)

Since S/R is experienced as a deep aspect of self, integrating it into therapy has far reaching implications.



S/R is more like an aspect of identity than a set of beliefs.
 S/R is not like a political party.



Client experiences feeling known
 Client & Counselor experiencing closeness

(Client experiences healing/deep impact)
 -> Counselor has been a conduit for this
 Conduit is an interesting word picture

Conduit carries something else. Like electrical wires.... To the place it needs to go

S/R in TR- Energizes Empowers // Holds together or Supports // Clarifies // Strengthens

Guides or Directs // Alters Changes // Cultivates // Meaning

S/R makes the therapy process soulful.

Therapy process seen as a journey for S/R clients.

S/R brings hope

Counselor acts as a guide/is the guide helpful if they do not know it is a spiritual journey

7/6/2017- Journal Entry

If I had to pick some key categories right now

Feeling known

Experiencing Healing

Developing closeness with the counselor

Trusting

- > The counselor } Cultivating trust. Increasing trust.
- > the process

I think hope is in here too. But, I also want hope to be in here. I am convinced that understanding hope is part of my own process right now. So, I might be wrong.

- Experiencing hope.

“Depth” is another item that is emerging. This language is used a lot to characterize spiritual experiences and/or spirituality. It doesn’t seem as simple as spiritual=deep. But, it is hard to put more language around what “deep” is and where it is situated in the process.

- Going Deep
- Experiencing Depth
- Inviting Depth?

It seems like the “deep” and intangible may be related and perhaps this is why they are hard to describe. Depth feels like a key result and like something that needs follow up w/participants.

What constitutes deep?

- Might explain some of the variance

Trust, healing, deep?

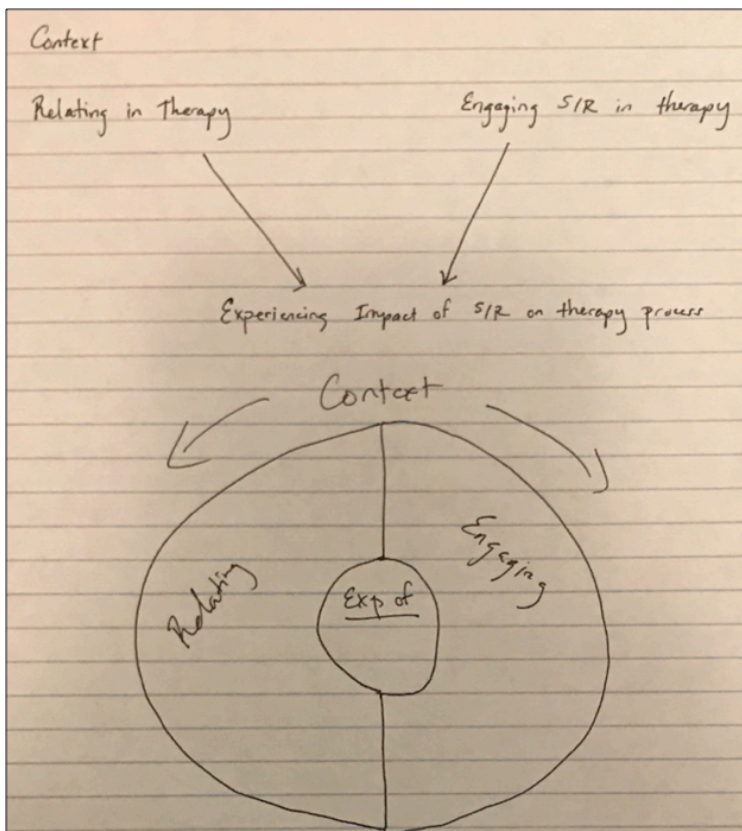
- Needs to be more concrete

- A little more micro
- Getting a bit more axial

Talked very little about the therapist
Where are they?

Trust throughout
And variation
And connection

Depth as a property or dimension
- May be attached to a category
Email to schedule.



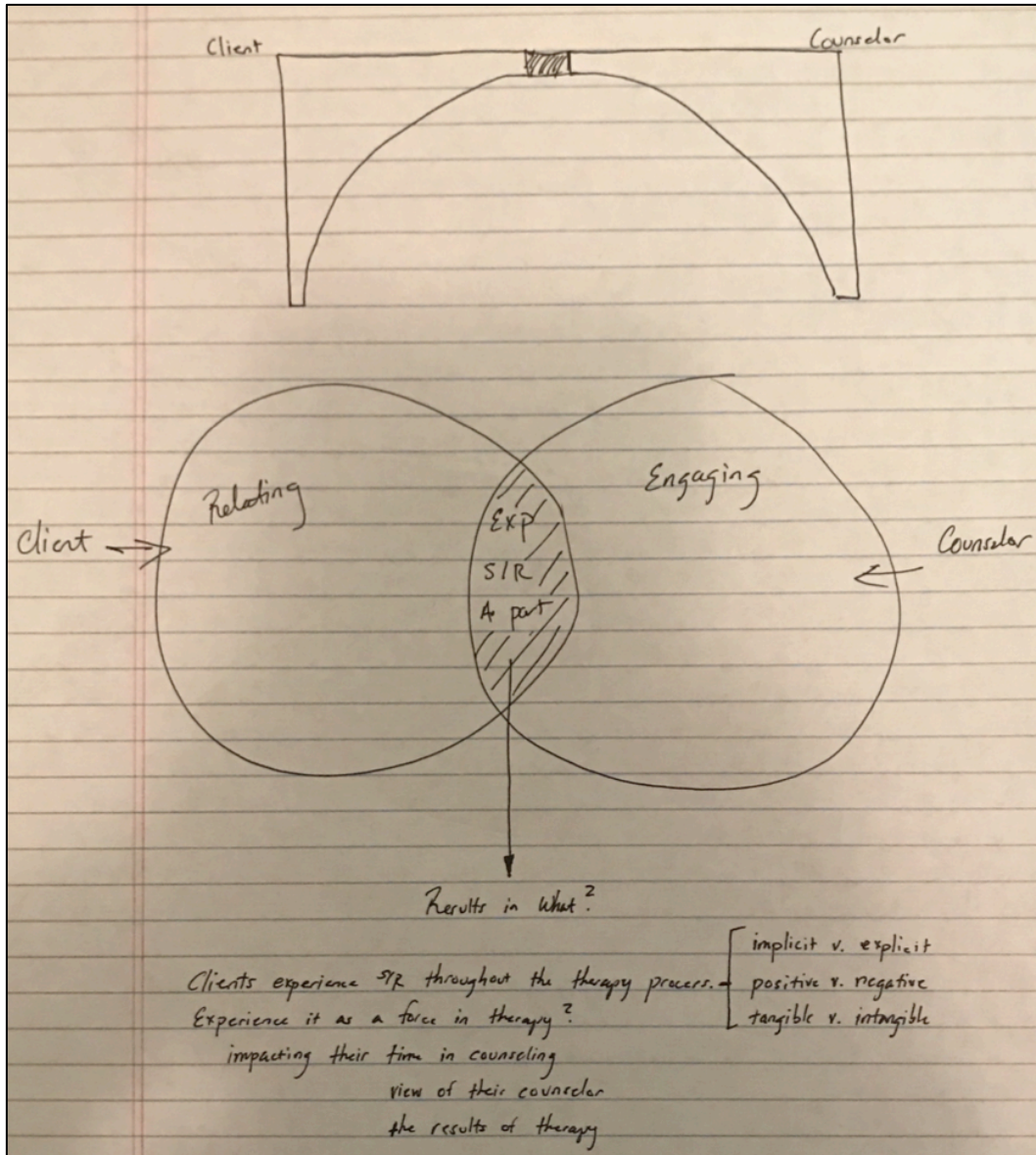
Experiencing S/R as part of therapy process

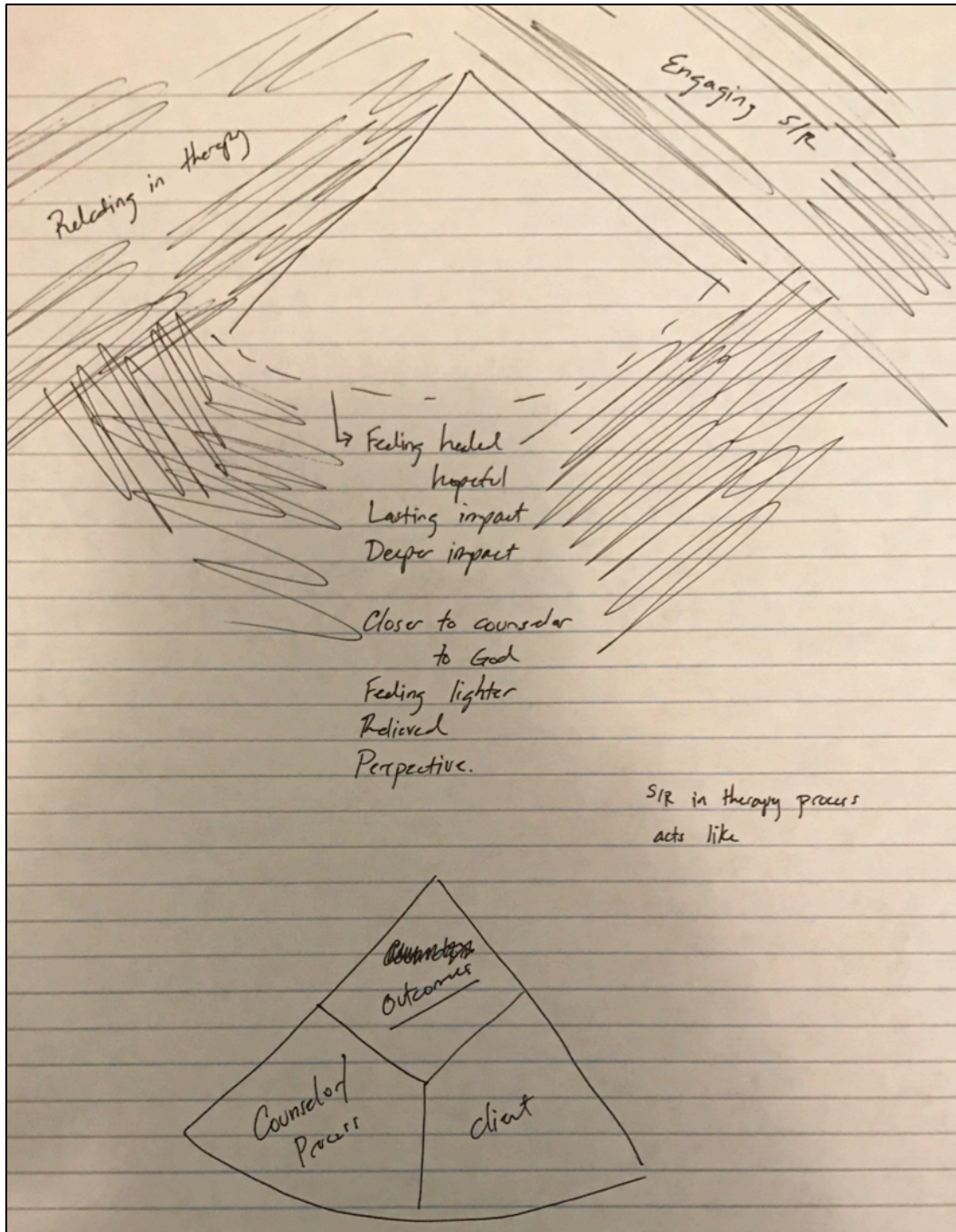
What is it?

What is it made of?

What does it do?

How does it act?





Trust, healing, deep?

- Needs to be more concrete
- A little more micro
- Getting a bit more axial

Talked very little about the therapist
Where are they?

Trust throughout

And variation

And connection

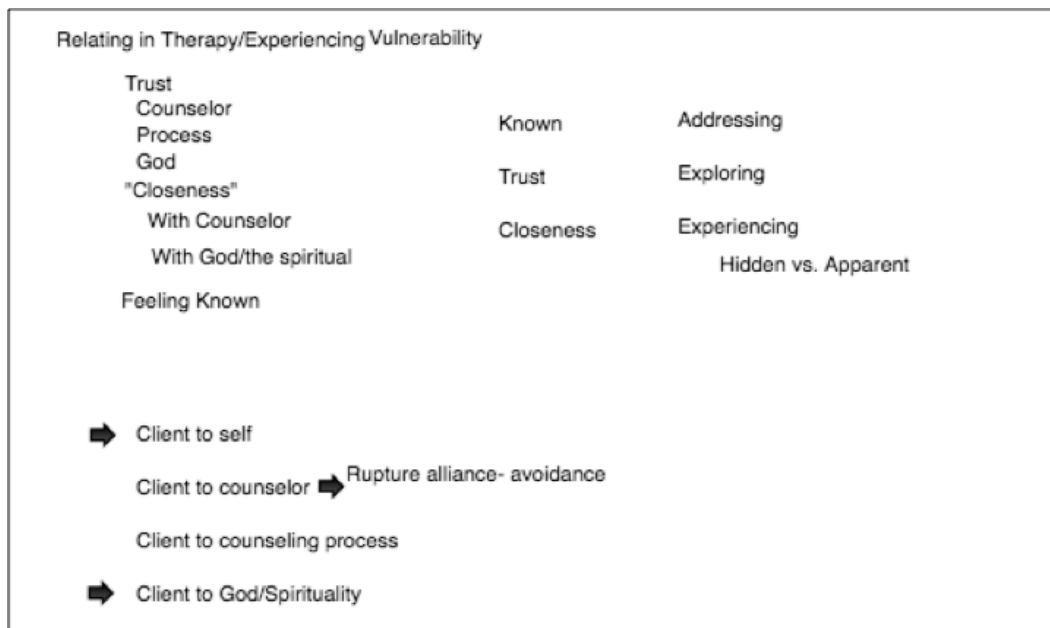
Deep as a property or dimension

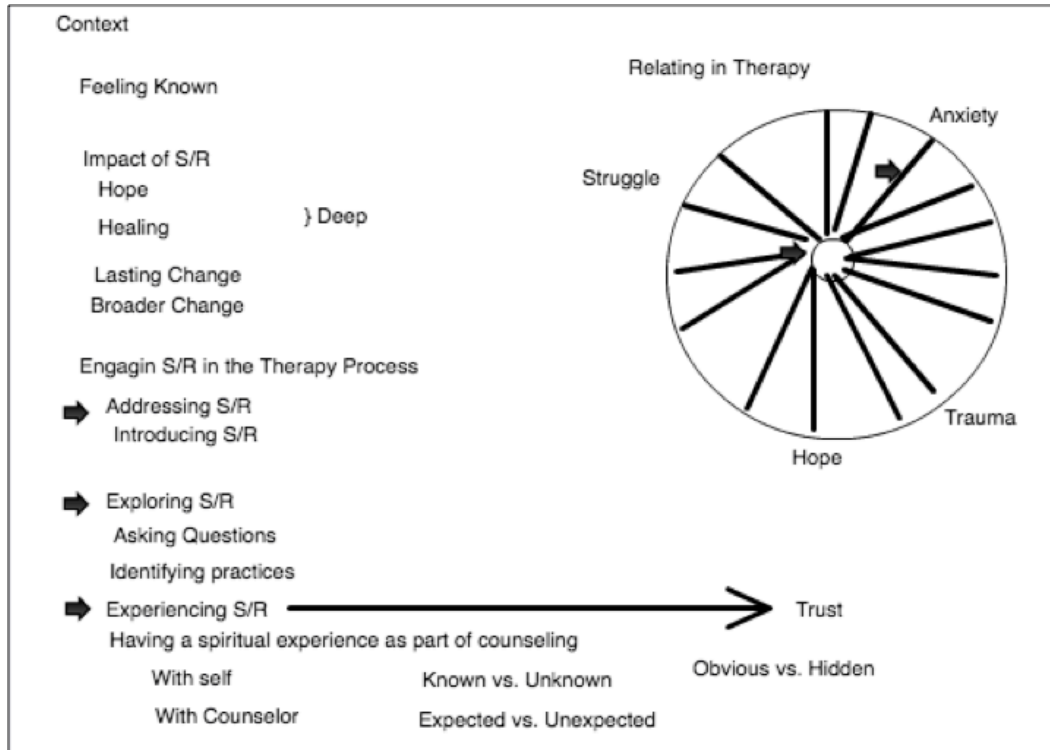
- may be attached to a category

Email to schedule.

7/19/2017- Dissertation Meeting

Notes from Meeting in which I presented some of my forming ideas to Deb





7/29/2017- Journal Entry

Had a good session today digging into the data and locating what will hopefully be some key pieces.

7/31/2017- Dissertation Meeting

Head to round 2- identify major things you know and some you don't know
 "I know X but need to know more about Y"
 "Where does X fit?"

Next week: Major clumps outlined (they will change)
 Drive some questions as part of the process
 Could participants talk about it not being part of it?

Alters the view

- of the counselor/Process
- facilitates to deeper knowing
- Changes the outcome ---- > for the client

What are we looking at within the process?
 Intentional seeking around S/R

What is the variability for this population? }
 How does S/R act within the process? }Hardest to identify

What does it actually do? }

Where did healing go?

Matrix of

- Categories
- Properties
- Dimensions

Interview technique

- Think of a time

Get some structure

- What is that central piece

1-2 Contextual Categories

2-4 Process Categories

7/30/2017- Journal Entry

Code List

Engaging S/R in the Therapy Process			
Feeling Known	Addressing S/R		
	Introducing S/R		
	Exploring S/R		What unlocks this?
	- Asking Questions	(Challenging Circumstances)	[Counselor Offering Direction]
	- Identifying Practices	(Reflecting on Experiences)	
	- Extracting Meaning		Painful or positive?
	Experiencing S/R		
	- Having a S/R experience	God-> Client	
	With Self	God-> Counselor	Explicit<-> Implicit
	With Counselor	God-> Process	Tangible <-> Intangible
	Feeling Known	Trust	
		- Counselor	Self?
		- Process	
		-God	

Impact of S/R on Therapy		
Hope Healing Lasting Change Broader Impact "Lightness" v. "Darkness"	"Closeness" w/ Counselor w/ God/The Spiritual	

Known	Address
Trust	Explore
Closeness	Experience

*Matching of similar vs. different counselor in terms of S/R: "Similar enough"?

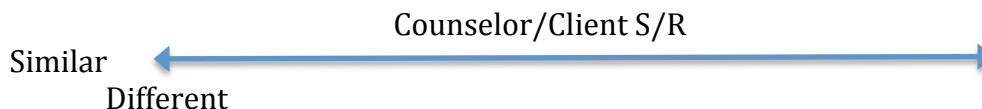
When certain things line up.... Access more layers of the experience

Similar vs. Different (Desire for)
Trust

Like a diagnostic tree leading to a deeper experience

7/31/2017- Journal Entry

Clients have differing levels of interest in having a counselor who matches their S/R beliefs. This usually seems to show up in the counselor selection part of the context.



This seems to impact the openness to trust
i.e. Clients who desire high similarity may also only trust a similar counselor

At the same time, being more similar than different may open up the "deep" parts of the experience.

-OR- the difference only becomes an issue where it negatively impacts Feeling Known.

So, maybe it is how the similar vs. different impacts the experience of feeling known. And trust?

*is safety the same category as trust?

*is "closeness" w/God or counselor the same as "connection"?

Context:

Identification as S/R Person

History w/ S/R

One dimensional vs. multidimensional

Good v. Bad

Positive v. Negative

The emotional is spiritual (or: what counts as spiritual?)

Are there more pieces to "Feeling known"?

Validated

Appreciated

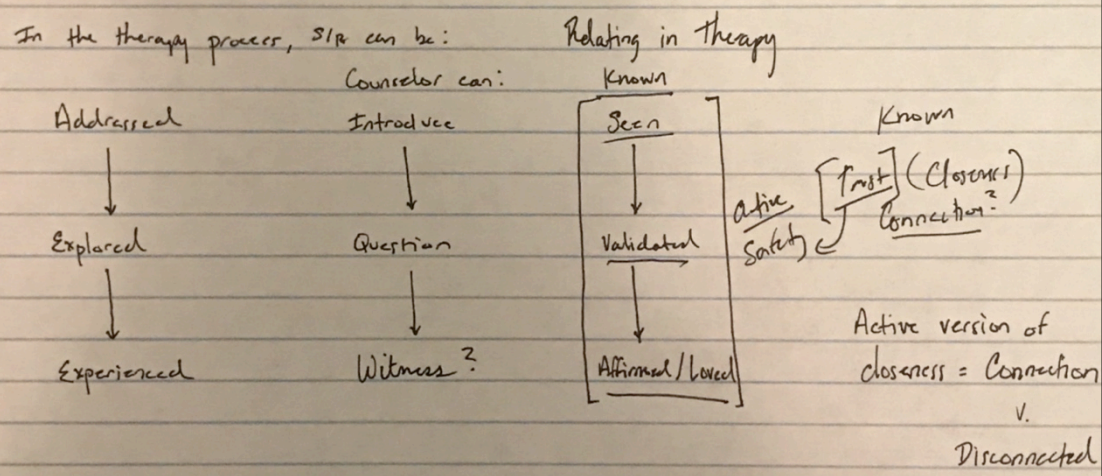
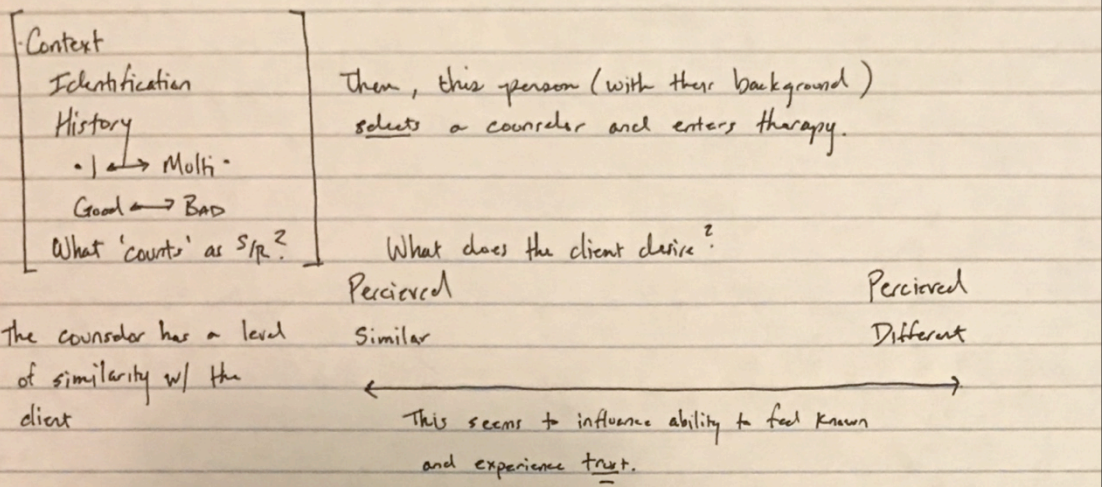
Loved

*Catharsis v. Transformation?

What do discuss with Deb?

1. As this forms, what am I heading toward during this stretch of the work?
2. Similar v. different counselors
 - a. Impact on therapy
3. Experience S/R with the counselor and/or counselor offering guidance [what unlocks these?]
4. Feeling known: dimensions identified
5. Impact of all this on S/R
 - a. These categories need refinement
 - b. There are a lot of differing things

7/31/17 Doodle of Process



Are we drilling down? Or building up to an experience?

Seeing something together?

Putting together a recipe?

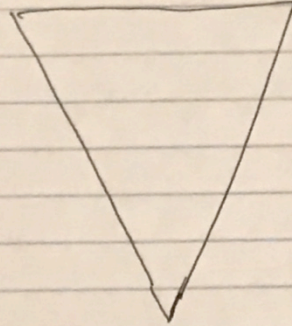
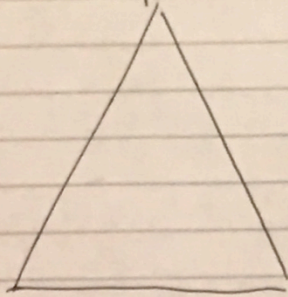
For S/R clients, counselors aren't 'introducing' S/R. Because it is already an 'S/R' experience. They acknowledge and witness.

- What creates the impact?
 - What fastens the experience together?
 - What allows for direction?

How do clients exp?

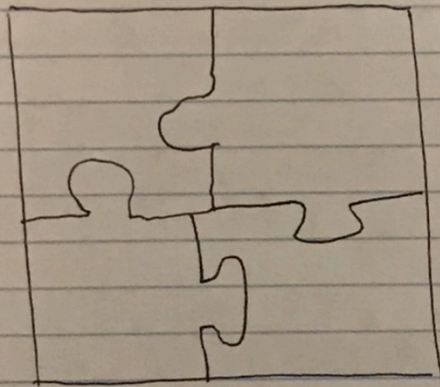
For the SIR client, the console is a
piece of the process

Exp.



Ingredients

1	x	} = Impacted Experiences.
2	y	
4	z	



Puzzle pieces?

On a key with multiple
pieces?

A trail map?

7/31/2017- Journal Entry

Met with Deb today and then spent time engaging my content. She pointed out that I need to dial in on the client's experience of the most central part of this process- what is the spiritual experience and what does it do?

8/1/2017- Journal Entry

Like marriage therapy without changing how you see your spouse?

S/R, by it's nature is a nebulous thing. So, in order to understand it and how it operates, you have to embrace that.

When clients describe S/R in therapy, they use very expressive terminology.

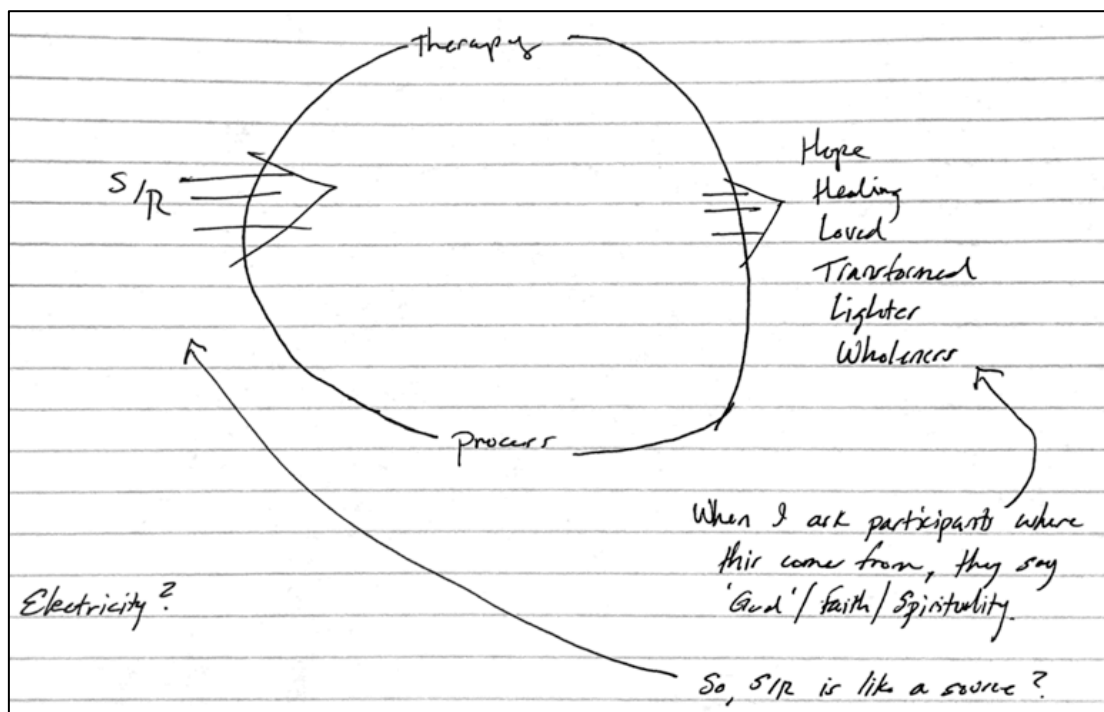
"It is everything"

"It is the 'warp and woof'"

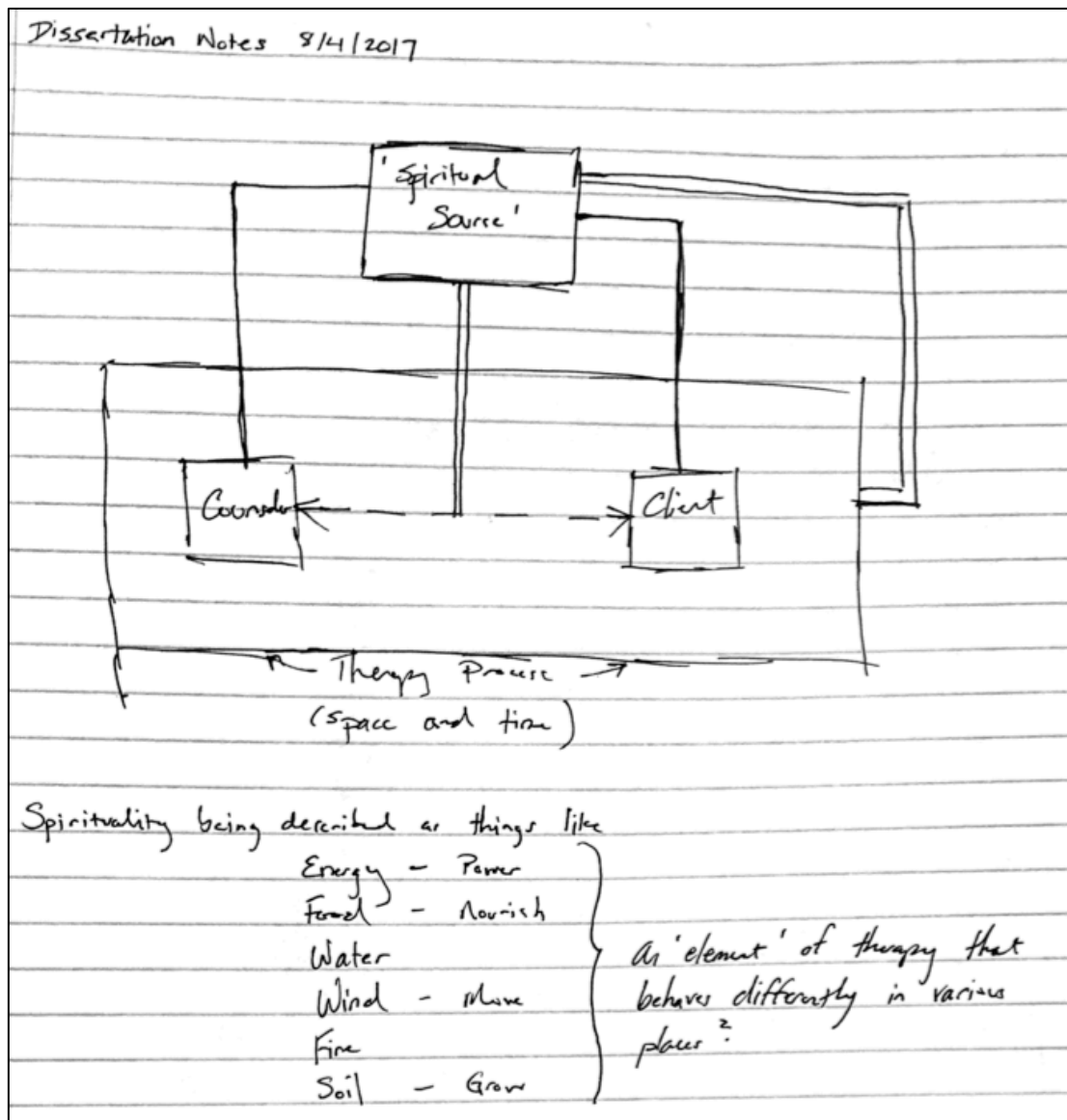
"I could just tell it was there"

"Part of the fabric"

Therapy becomes like a 'holy place'/a sanctuary. A place where the spirit of God dwells.



8/4/2017- Journal Entry



Elements of Chemistry

The Four Elements- Earth, Wind, Fire, Water

An element can be more common in some places

Can have different forms

Can have different reactions

Electricity

- Therapy/Counselor are like conduit
- Healing comes from spirituality
- Healing comes through the process

For me:

- 1- What did I get from S/Rin therapy?
 - 2- What was the result?
 - 3- How did it happen?
-
- 1- Exposing and healing of internal wounds
Connection to my counselor
Feeling loved
 - 2- Reassurance that something intentional was unfolding
 - 3- Believing in the process of S/R
Catching glimpses of it
Seeing it through my counselor
Reflecting on it from vantage points

There is a mystery to the wind

Like electricity

- Powerful
- Move
- Can be present w/o being seen
- Can illuminate
- Runs through conduit

Could be present w/o being utilized. But, is more effective when utilized- like turning on the lights.

Element or Energy?

I am healed because God is present

I know God is present because I am healed

By involving S/R in therapy, it connects clients to the source of things they are needing

Need to get near the source/invite more of it

How?

By speaking about our experience

Illuminating how things are connected

By getting closer to the source

Some things are 'receptive' to electricity

8/4/2017- Journal Entry

Spent some time today trying to color in the lines around what I do and do not know. Was drawn toward some imagery to try to articulate different aspects of this process.

8/7/2017- Dissertation Meeting

How do clients experience their S/R as part of the therapy process?

Context

Relating in Therapy

Engaging S/R

Then...

The actual experience of S/R

What DO I know? For the S/R client...

-S/R is IN and AROUND the therapy process

-S/R is tied to particular impact

-hope, healing, wholeness

-It is seen and unseen

Things are retroactively attributed to S/R

-Therapy is part of a spiritual process. The S/R process is primary

-Client describes S/R in large/total terms

What do I not know?

- How does it influence the process?
- What ends to happen to create impact?
- What makes a thing S/R?

In general, S/R (particularly S) is a nebulous thing- challenging to describe what it is, how it works.

This leads descriptions that are metaphorical and image based in order to apprehend pieces or angles of the experience.

S/R beings a sense of order to the process

Some of the impact comes from being in the presence of S/R (like recharging)

"Element"

Not characterizing what it is per se

Mystery

Difference of clients

- complexity
- openness

What next?

The therapy process piece } What is the client doing? Gerund version/What do you want to ask about the therapy process?

Grounded Theory
Movement

Process to outcomes

Reanimate it

Questions? For next round?

Context

- S/R orientation of client
- Perception of the counselor/problem
- What happens? The outcome piece.
- Sitting in the presence

Inexplicable? But may be describable.

How do we ever notice change?

In the moment- epiphany

Sometimes long after

In the end, we will be talking about PROCESS. I will be describing 'the arrows'

'Locating the counselor'

'Searching for connecting'

'Waiting in a problem'

Counseling is a part of spirituality

Weaving through- what is actually happening in the session?

In terms of: Access through, with, in spite, around)

Disconnection vs. connection

- longing for connection to the spiritual
- Sat in the presence
 - o Access the spirituality
 - o Never an absence, just a disconnection

Connecting to God in the midst of...

What is the client doing?

Email to schedule

8/9/2017- Journal Entry

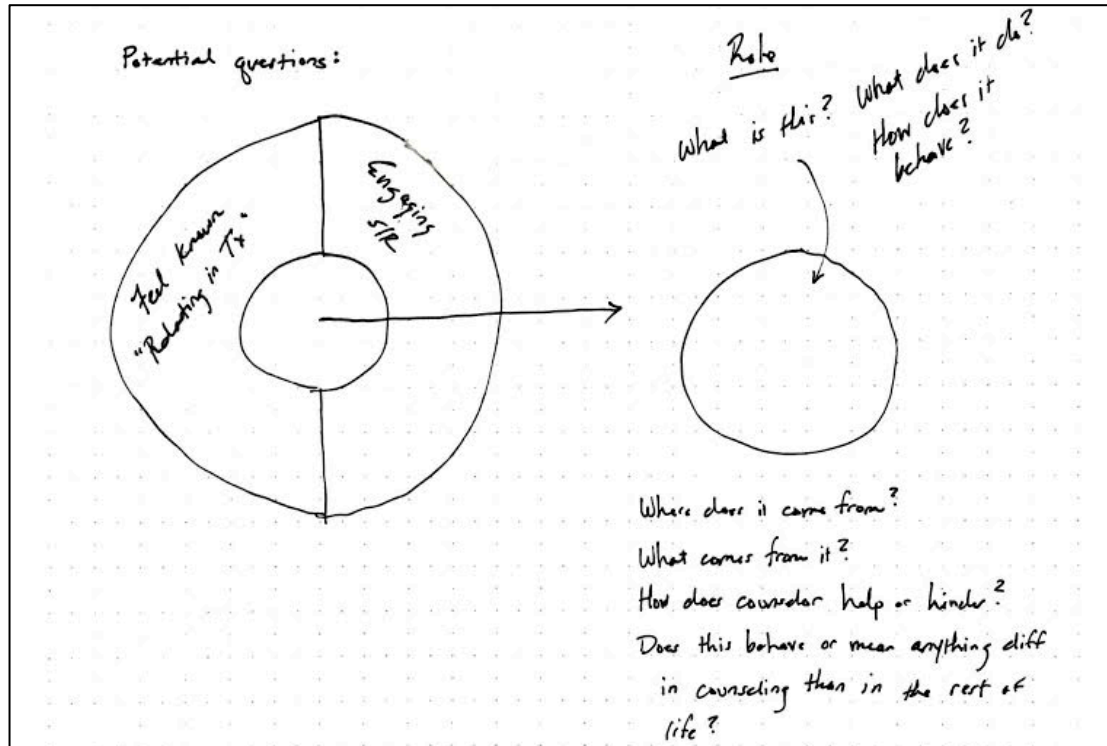
During our last dissertation meeting, Deb mentioned a reflection about how any type of change takes place. She compared and contrasted that with the type of change process that clients describe in terms of spirituality and religion. This was provoked by a comment that I made about some moments of S/R being very obvious in the moment they are happening. Whereas others are only seen as spiritual or religious upon reflection further into the process.

So, the question became, how does any change take place? This made me think of Carl Rogers necessary factors for the therapeutic relationship. Is there an equivalent for S/R clients. OR, is this a good form to understand how S/R operates in the therapy process?

8/30/2017- Journal Entry

S/R acts as a "source." Valuable things originate from it.
The counselor and counseling room interact with and direct this course.

So, the questions for round two need center around understanding this.



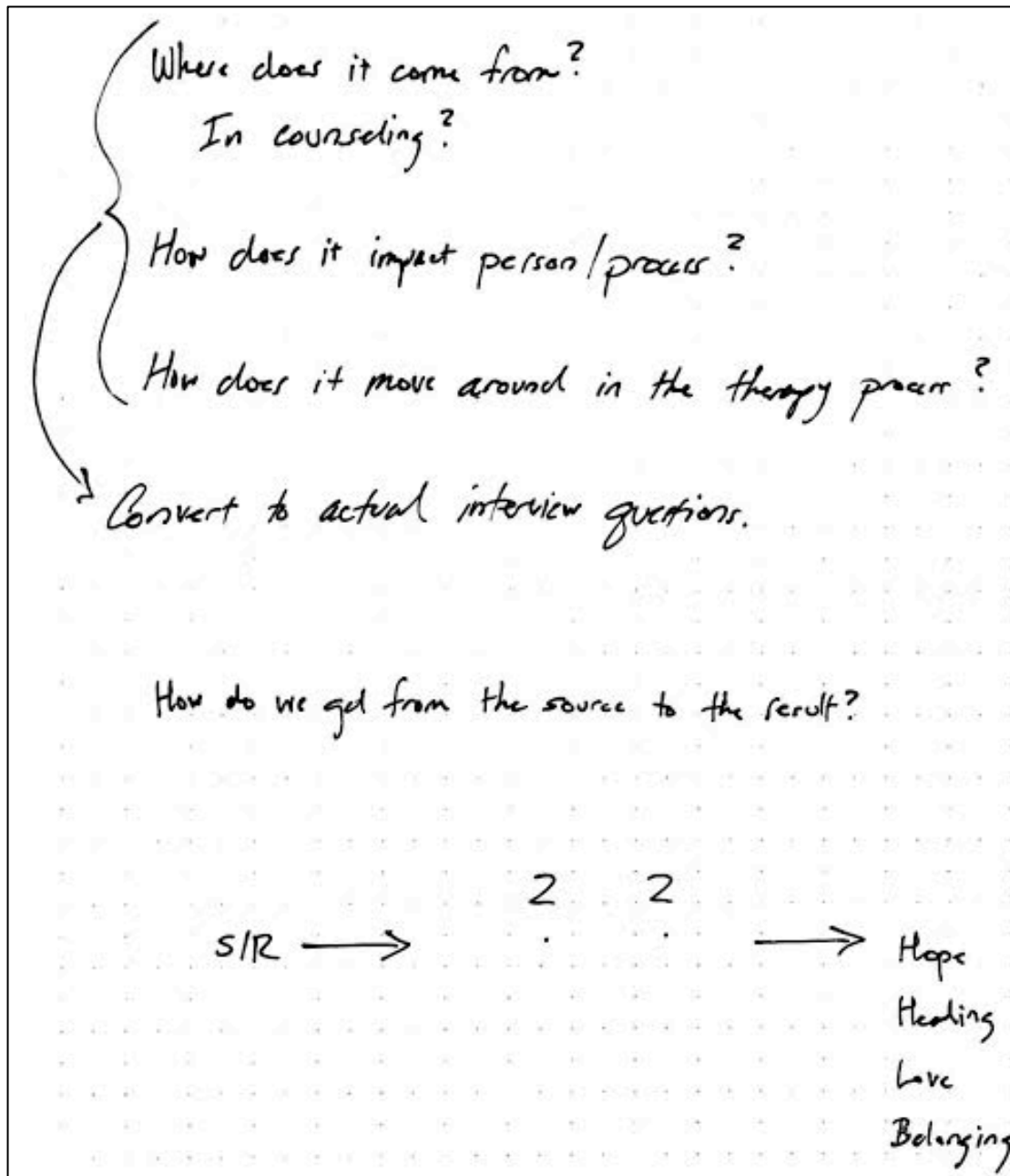
Ask client (participant) for a metaphor to describe S/R in therapy process.
What do you particularly gain from S/R in therapy?
When is something in therapy spiritual?

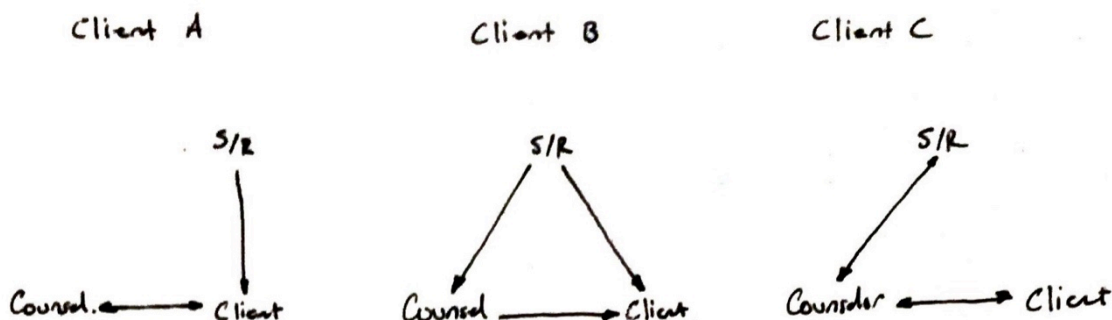
GT: About movement/Process

Assume: Stuff originates from S/R into the therapy process

That 'stuff' is active and impactful

(even when not dynamic- like silence/waiting)





9/5/2017- Journal Entry

S/R Acts as a 'source' in therapy
It influences the therapy process for S/R clients

S/R Acts as a dynamic force in therapy

Engaging this force can happen in deeper ways

This engagement becomes part of relating in therapy between client and counselor as well as client and process.

The deepening engagement/relating cultivates space in the therapy process to witness, experience, and access the impact of S/R on the client and their change process.

This is not entirely different from how S/R influences the client outside their therapy process but requires some elements in order to deeply access it.

Commonality of S/R experience

Some clients need it and some don't
Each combination can have advantages

Some clients can deeply experience S/R apart from counselor S/R

Some require commonality -> (Trust)

Some benefit from commonality-> (depth/relating)

Then, the question turns toward what the "stuff" from this "source" does to the therapy process.

It is active in the therapy process- in what way?

Where does spirituality come from? In life, generally? In the therapy process?

What do you get from spirituality in therapy?

What makes something spiritual in therapy?

Can you give me a picture or metaphor for how S/R operates in your therapy process?

What does it do for you to experience S/R in therapy? With your counselor?

1. Refine questions
2. Prepare IRB
3. Email participants

9/6/2017- Dissertation Meeting

Where are the variables?

Client orientation (nuanced/flexible)

Counselor orientation

Impact (Outcome)- What do you get?

Presenting Problem

→ Spirituality is relevant?

Recent IRB submission for 2nd round questions (3rd round sample)

No need for meeting w/ new advisor

- Submit questions
- Need to make changes- involve Debbie

Other question

What is challenging about S/R in therapy?

Need a peer debriefer

- Someone who can be critical
- Grounded theory
- Spirituality/Counseling process
- Chuck DeGroat?
- No identifying info to the reviewer

Trustworthiness

- Official Meetings
- Summary of round
- Helps with summary
- Official material
- Official feedback

Just submit questions w/o peer debriefer

Minor revision to Deb

- Do I need to update conflict of interest section?

Update protocol
 Remove conflict of interest
 Add second round of questions

Minor revisions form
Updated protocol
Updated informed consent
List of questions (new questionnaire?)

Create Interview Two Email

Appendix R

Interview Two Guide

Presentation of Study Purpose

Thank you for your time in participating with this study. As a reminder on the purpose of this study:

“I am interested in learning more about the experience of spirituality and religion during the counseling process. The experience of spirituality and religion will be generally defined as the contributions made by the spiritual and religious experiences of the client to the counseling process. These experiences may happen in or out of the therapy room, be engaged implicitly or explicitly, and may or may not have been shared with your counselor. I am most interested in your experience of spirituality and religion and what your experience has been with spirituality and religion during your counseling process.”

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Conduct Second Interview

Interview questions:

1. How does spirituality or religion enter into your counseling process?
2. How do you know something is spiritual or religious in your counseling?
3. Can you give me a picture or metaphor that will help me understand how spirituality or religion operates in your counseling process?
4. What does it do for you to experience spirituality or religion in counseling?
Experiencing spirituality or religion with your counselor?
5. What do you gain from having spirituality or religion in your counseling process?
6. What is challenging or hard about having spirituality or religion in your counseling process?

Conclude Second Interview

We are at the end of our time. Thank you for all of your contributions up to this point. I will be emailing you to inform you about the next steps of the research process. Do you have any other questions for me at this time?

Appendix S

Interview Two Transcripts with Coding

Participant 7606001

Johnny: For someone like you, how does that stuff that you believe in and that stuff that you experience, how does it enter into the counseling process?

Participant: Are you asking more internally or externally, or both?

Johnny: I'd love both, actually.

Participant: OK. I guess if we start externally, I know that I sometimes ask for prayer at the beginning or end of a session, depending on what it is that I'm trying to discern or work through. I know that in the traumas that I've been working on in my counseling and my therapy, my belief system plays a huge role in my healing, and that I believe that the emotions and shame, and that kind of thing, has really kept me from a deeper union with God.

Centering the therapy process on spirituality/religion

I think for me, that has become a huge focus, in part, because what [Counselor] is really great at is that containment and making sure that the answers do not rest solely in that time together or in himself, and in all the boundaries and everything that go around that. But I think as you understand as a therapist there's always ... and I'm doing this similar work, as well. I'm in a practicum to become a spiritual director.

Johnny: Oh, wow.

Participant: I have a couple of clients right now. There's a lot of overlap with counseling types of things and spiritual direction. But I think there's always, I think, a natural risk or a part of the process of becoming maybe too attached or something to the therapist. I think for me, the fact that my spirituality is such a huge part in this healing process, I am able to do the work ongoing outside of my therapy, because I'm seeking something deeper than just healing with a trusted other, if that makes sense.

***Experiencing therapy as spiritual/religious
Centering the therapy process on spirituality/religion***

Johnny: Some of it, it sounds like, would come through, for lack of a better phrase, something that would look obviously spiritual, like asking for prayer at the start of a session. But then there's also part of your experience where dealing with traumas and pain immediately connect to spirituality, because you're looking for a deeper sense of healing and connection with God.

Participant: Correct. My sessions are only every other week or every third week of the month. There's a lot of space in there that I need to continue to practice what we're discussing in therapy, and some of the strategies and things that might come up in therapy that are more mind-body connected, not necessarily spiritually connected. Pairing that with my faith, and whether it's spiritual reading in scripture, or other books that I happen to be reading, or just meditation, and being present, and being present in all parts of me, my mind, my body, and my spirit. Those are things that I can be introduced to, and reminded of, and asked about in therapy. But my spirituality has me seeking my true healer, rather than my therapist.

I don't know. I kind of talked in circles, but I think you get what I'm trying to say.

Johnny: Yeah, it sounds like spirituality ... it interacts with your own internal healing process. It also plays a role in how you relate to your therapist.

Participant: Yes.

Johnny: You're not getting your healing from your counselor. Your counselor is a part of a healing process that you're getting from God.

Participant: Correct. Yep, and my own resources, yeah.

Johnny: How do you know ... You mentioned being present, mind, body, spirit. How do you know when your spirit or your spirituality is being engaged in counseling? How do you know when something is spiritual?

Participant: Well, I think ... I can give you a very concrete example and then maybe talk a little bit about some less concrete things. I know in one session, I was sharing about some sexual harm, and feeling very alone, and like God wasn't there, and wanting to hide. It was a very cloudy day. I'm just sitting there crying. The clouds parted, and the sun just shined through the window, just on me, just through one window in the office.

Experiencing S/R in therapy::in session

[Counselor] was like, "Did you see what just happened?" It was literally after I was sharing God's not here, basically. I didn't notice it, and so he brought it to my attention. It was just like ... I don't know, I think it's his ability to see, and his poetic mind, and being present spiritually with me in that moment, and me being spiritually ... or seeking, anyway, and then having a moment happen where I was able to embrace that and go, "Yeah, God is here."

Experiencing S/R in therapy::with the counselor

It was very calming, where I had been trembling. When I'm sitting in my trauma, I tend to quake uncontrollably, like I'm cold, but I'm not really cold. That ceased completely. That's a very concrete kind of beautiful experience.

Receiving from S/R

- Johnny: Yeah, it is beautiful, and I hear a couple of things that stood out to me. I heard you mention [Counselor] bringing something to your attention. I heard you mention your own seeking. Then in terms of the experiencing the thing as spiritual, it sounds like you had both a physical and an emotional change in response to that moment.
- Participant: Yes, and it was immediate.
- Johnny: OK. Yep.
- Participant: I think some less concrete examples would be ... now that I'm able to recognize when I'm experiencing, when I've been triggered, or whatever things are happening, because I'm more present in my body, I'm able to then rest and either do the brief meditation or something, or prayer or just sit quietly, and just receive peace or reassurance. That's more of a daily practice than anything.
- Johnny: Receive it?
- Participant: I believe that it's always there and that I walk away from it, because I get distracted and clouded by things that are going on around me, the constant drama with my ex, things going on with my own children that are triggering or just painful as a parent. Being an Enneagram 5, I always retreat into my mind. I want to try to control, not necessarily the situation, but my preparedness for what could happen, so a lot of playing out different scenarios in my mind. And if

this happens, I'm going to do this, or I'd respond this way. Instead of doing that, which gets me out of my body and out of the present, I try to stop those thoughts and get back to my center where God is and just receive the comfort that's already there.

Experiencing S/R in all things

Johnny: How do you know ... What do you experience that tells you you're in your center?

Participant: You broke up a little bit there. Can you say that again?

Johnny: Yeah, how do you know, or what do you experience, that tells you that you're in your center?

Participant: I'm able to breathe normally. I sense what's happened in my body. I am aware of my surroundings. I'm a very hypervigilant, perceptive person, but that's when I'm in more of a trauma state. When I'm not hypervigilant, when I can just be and not have to be focusing on everything at once, when I can focus on what's right in front of me or what seems to be the most significant, when I'm experiencing joy, or happiness, or pleasure of some kind, and when I can just accept things for what they are, I guess, cognitively and then also just rest physically in the present moment.

Centering on S/R

Johnny: OK. I'm going to grab a couple of words that you've used. This is kind of a two-part thing. First part is, what happens, what do you gain, what is the result of, having your spirituality in your counseling? That's the first part. I hear some things. I hear things like rest, peace, awareness, presence. I'd love for you to fill out that list for me. Then I'm going to ask you a little bit about how spirituality does those things.

Participant: OK. So what is the benefit of having spirituality in my counseling, first thing?

Johnny: Yeah.

Participant: OK. I touched on this a little bit, but for me, in my style of relating and my attachment issues, like I said, I think initially, I tended to see ... because [Counselor] was really the first man in my life that I had any safe experience with, a healthy experience with. In a way, I was using him as a security blanket early on. In bringing my spirituality and growing my spirituality through my counseling,

really, that has been a significant part of my spiritual growth is through my counseling.

I am able to have, I guess, a healthier independence in my own growth and healing apart from him, a healthier dependence on God, and a healthier independence from him and the process itself, and realizing that he isn't healing me, that I am using what I'm learning about myself and the process, and who God is to me, to really propel my healing a lot more quickly than I think I would have otherwise.

***Seeing the therapist as limited
Relying on S/R in the therapy process***

Then what was the other part of the question?

Johnny: Actually, let me hover there a little bit longer. What else would you say you gain from having your spirituality in your counseling?

Participant: I can maybe frame it better if I thought about if I didn't have it in my counseling, or maybe not. I need to think about this. I have gained a better understanding of who I am about my own identity in Christ, and how he used me, has named me, has created me, how I have been designed specifically for a purpose on this planet. I've really learned what my purpose is by having that as part of my counseling.

Identifying as a spiritual/religious person

Yeah, I think the Enneagram is also part of my spirituality. That has been part of several of our conversations, and just understanding how I operate under stress, and where that comes from, and what fears that is rooted from, and then having a clearer picture of that and working toward really how I was designed to be functioning with all of my "5-ness," and if I was really healthy, and the potential that's there.

Johnny: So your spirituality brings a lot of understanding about who you are. It brings a sense of or an awareness of purpose. Then the Enneagram has also been a similarly spiritual vehicle for that.

Participant: Correct. Not necessarily from a Christian perspective.

Johnny: Sure. Let's grab one of those. How does your spirituality deepen your understanding of yourself? How does it do that?

Participant: I think with the kind of traumas that I have experienced and continue to experience, frankly, I'm [inaudible 00:18:11] drowning

in shame, and believing that shame is really a vehicle that creates a barrier or a wall between me and God, or between who I think I am buried in that shame, and who I really am when I'm digging my way out. I think the understanding that I'm a child of God and that all of those scriptures of when you were fearfully and wonderfully made, and all of those things just embedded in such intense love, has been really something that I cling to, because there are so many other messages in my life, in varying roles and capacities, that have told me otherwise. In believing those truths about who I am, that has kept me really from, I think, emotional or even actual death in my life.

Identifying as a spiritual/religious person
Experiencing S/R as an aspect of identity

Johnny: So your spirituality has something very direct to say about who you are and what your value is.

Participant: And hope, and the hope that ... I had mentioned purpose, and that ties into that for me. Purpose and hope together are really what keep me moving forward. Hope that it will be different, that because I was designed for whatever, X, Y, and Z, that I will get there, or I will continue to walk into it.

Receiving from Spirituality/Religion

Johnny: Yeah. Your beliefs, it sounds like, bring hope in that they almost remind you or reorient you to the fact that there's something more coming. There's something you were designed for.

Participant: Yep.

Johnny: And you also mentioned ... There was another one that stood out to me. You mentioned peace. How does spirituality bring peace?

Participant: A lot of times, it doesn't. I think it's the hope for peace. I think there ... I do experience moments of peacefulness, for sure, when I'm able to be present and when I'm able to see beauty. For me, beauty is peace. It's not necessarily a feeling, as much as it is being able to see something lovely in the midst of immense ugliness. I think beauty is another huge piece of that for me in my spirituality, that all of the opposites. You can't have light without dark. You can't have good without bad. You can't have ugly without beauty.

In seeing the ugliness of some of the areas of my life, instead of focusing on that, I look for what's beautiful. That helps me to have a

heart of gratefulness, heart of gratitude, and be able to focus more on the good than the bad. Not that the bad is ignored, but it's just not what rules my thoughts, or my body, or my spirit.

***Experiencing S/R in all things
Giving attention to the S/R layer***

Johnny: So sometimes your spirituality is about drawing your focus, drawing your attention, to certain things over other things.

Participant: As an example, I was in court. I'm going into battle constantly. Even if you just took spirituality [inaudible 00:23:15], I'm in emotional and even physical battles constantly. I had court in the morning one day where I had to sit and listen to my ex tell lies about me for two-and-a-half hours.

Then an hour later, I had to be in my son's well child visit [inaudible 00:23:39] ex. Sitting in a little doctor's office with him, I have anxiety just being 10 feet away from him. In looking at my son, he's got the most amazing freckles on his nose. Focusing on the beauty of him, and his personality, and the opportunity to spend time with him on a day that I normally wouldn't have been able to spend time with him, and being grateful that, despite the trauma of the morning, I could walk bravely into another situation where I'm sitting right next to my abuser and be able to focus on my child. That's from a spiritual place. That's not from any other place that I would be able to draw from.

Receiving things from S/R: that only S/R can provide

Johnny: Yeah. In moments like that, how does that stuff get to you? You mentioned receiving it.

Participant: I think for me that ... I think it has a lot to do with my wild imagination, my ability to pretend that the enemy is not sitting right next to me within arm's reach, and just, I don't know, [inaudible 00:25:43] love washing over me, imagine it touching every hair on my head and every cell of my body, or just focusing on what's beautiful right before me and being in awe of it.

That's something that I rarely ... I'm an artist, and I [inaudible 00:26:19] spent most of my life with studying things, but from a more scientific angle, I guess. I would study things, and I would draw them with incredible accuracy and detail. Or I could write poetry about it, or write a story about it, or a song. But I never really saw the depth of it. I only saw the surface.

My spirituality is like art that goes beyond the technical stuff. It's more about the soul of it.

Johnny: Yep. This might be a good time. I'm going to tap into that artistic side. If you could give me a picture or a metaphor for how your spirituality operates within your counseling process, what would it be?

Participant: The thing that's popping up in my head right now, I'm not sure why, but it's like an iceberg. I think what is visible above the water is only a fraction of what's deep below. What's visible above the water, all of the technical things that I could say about what I've experienced, I can recall and tell stories, and all of that, and maybe dip below the water a little bit and share more about the deeper experience. But I think my spirituality is really what takes up the majority of the object of that structure.

Johnny: Just to leverage your artistic-ness, that picture sounds like a ... in some ways sounds like a description of what your spirituality is.

Participant: OK.

Johnny: Tell me about, in that picture, how does it operate? How is it active?

Participant: I'm trying to think of another picture, because I don't know if I can talk about it with that one. I don't know if this really goes with any picture, but I think that what ... I'm thinking back on the first time we talked. I know that time, the first time that we talked, I was more centered than I am right now. You may see that, as well.

What happens with me with my spirituality, I have felt very out of touch with God recently, just with everything that's been going on the past couple months. I retreat, and then so what's happening inside, whatever chaos or disconnect that I feel, also you can see on the outside. I am less animated in my language, my tone of voice, my energy, my [inaudible 00:30:55] expressions, that kind of thing. When I am feeling more connected, and I feel more centered spiritually, I feel lighter. I feel freer. I feel like I know where I'm headed. I have a confidence about me. I swear less.

Anyway, as far as going back to the iceberg, I don't know if that fits with anything I just said. But the inner workings of my spirituality definitely reflect on how I exist on a daily basis.

Johnny: Yep.

Participant: I'm pretty good at thinking it when I need to. I work with children. I'm a teacher, and I think that they see me more [inaudible 00:32:13] in my life, because they know bullshit when they see it. That's also a good barometer for me. I know if I'm centered or not, or if I'm operating out of this deeper place, this deeper spirituality, if my students are [inaudible 00:32:39] to hug me more than they normally do, which is so sweet. Even though I am just as animated as I normally would be, there's something I don't have.

One of my students said ... He's this four-year-old. It was the first week of school, and he's just staring at me. He's sitting at my feet and just staring at me. I'm singing. I teach music. I'm singing to the kids, and he's just staring the whole time. Everybody else is singing, and he goes, "Ms. Participant, you are so beautiful, and you have a sparkle in your eye." And I'm like, when I don't have the sparkle, whatever that means to them, they see that.

Johnny: Yep, and so there's a picture ... Whatever metaphor or picture is here, it's a ... because I think my brain is chewing on this as you're describing it ... It's a more complex one. It has more substance to it. There's multiple moving parts here, because your internal world shows up on your external world, and that's directly related to how centered you feel. And how centered you feel is directly related to how connected you are to your spirituality and to receiving the things from your spirituality that give such goodness for you.

Participant: Yeah, and when I'm not centered, it's really hard for me to see beauty. It's really hard for me to be grateful, and, I don't know, just experience joy. That's where my spirituality has ... it is it. It is my healing. It is my process. My spiritual growth is my therapy, because I wouldn't have experienced any of the healing that I have without it. I wouldn't be pulling myself out of the dark nights to look at the beautiful faces that I get to look at every day.

Memo: I really like the picture of centering and the language of paying attention. I think that most of the people in my population experience S/R as always being available to them and always being at the center of their person. And that paying attention to it becomes a crucial piece of the experience.

Johnny: Yeah. I'm still chewing on your description, because I'm going ... there's some active process here that becomes visible in how you live in the world. This is a really stupid example, but the one that was coming to mind is have you ever cooked gnocchi?

Participant: No, but I've eaten it.

Johnny: The way you cook gnocchi, they're made of potatoes, and you make the little pillows. You put it into a pot of water, and they all sink. They sit at the bottom of the pan. As the water boils, and as they cook, they literally just start popping up to the surface. Then you skim them off, and then the gnocchi's done.

I was sitting here thinking it's something like that that becomes ... You can look at the thing and tell that something is changed, something is now different internally because of it being more connected to its center, in this case, your stove. That's where my brain was going was gnocchi.

Participant: Sure, yeah, and I'm trying to think of one too. I'm struggling with that right now. I had done counseling a little bit when I was in college, but at that point, I was completely detached from my spirituality. I can't say completely. I was pissed is what I was, but I wasn't seeking. I was looking to myself. I was depending solely on myself to act differently, to feel differently, to experience the world differently, and put a different perspective on things. And I can't do it.

It is not possible for me to live from a true place, and shine the light that I'm able to shine, to have the kids see a sparkle, or whatever word they would use. I don't have that in my power. I've had too much shit happen to me to be able to do that on my own.

I know our bodies [inaudible 00:38:07] and things that have the ability to heal in lots of different ways. Even the ... I can't remember. There's some part of your brain that shrinks or stops growing when it's traumatized. Is it the hippocampus, maybe? Anyway, but even that has the ability to heal and grow. But yeah, I'm not able to do this by myself.

There is something important here about how she discusses relying on the counselor (earlier) and in this section relying on herself. Having her S/R involved her in therapy seems to shift the balance on these things.

Johnny: What is healing?

Participant: I think for me ... I guess I could speak more generally. There's definitely a physicality to healing from trauma. I've tried a lot of different things, not really EMDR, but something similar. For me, healing is my ability to have an imagination again, to imagine a

different outcome, whether that's hope or whatever, to create. There were ... literally, the 20 years that I walked away from my faith, I did not create a single thing, not a single thing. I didn't sing. I didn't play an instrument. I didn't draw, nothing.

In the past three years, since I'm intentionally working on healing and my spiritual growth, that's all I do is create. I cook. I sew. I'm learning to play instruments. I am drawing and painting, and creating in my house, decorating, you name it. That's what I'm able to do now, because I believe I've healed. I've regained an imagination to imagine a different path for my life.

Spirituality gets connected to direction in life a lot. There is the experience of an intentional direction happening at all times.

Johnny: This might feel like a minutia question. You just used the phrase, "intentionally work on my healing." Tell me about that. Tell me about how do you intentionally try to heal, work to heal?

Participant: It is a process of self-awareness that only grows as I continue in the process. But at the very beginning, being aware enough, or God breaking through strongly enough for me to say, "Something's wrong, and I don't want my life to be this way anymore," and then having the courage to look at the ugly shit, and have enough hope or faith to believe that there could be a different future.

For me, it's been very intentional through ... if you're talking the more practical, tangible things, journaling, meditation, medication at times, seeking community. I wanted to isolate, because that's my MO. I retreat. I hide. I go into my head.

I think my biggest addiction my whole life has been my fantasy world and realizing that that's not going to change my life. I can imagine ... and this is a different kind of imagination. This is more from a place of control, and things that weren't really present. But yeah, being intentional reading, I have read ... I can't even tell you how many things I've read about sexual abuse, about narcissism, about centering prayer, about spiritual giants, and the Bible, and on, and on, and on, just become educated.

Part of my intentionality has to do with educating myself. I am a learner. I've got two masters degrees, a lay counseling certificate. I'm going to be certified as a spiritual director. I don't stop, because I'm curious about things, and then everything else on top of that that I read about.

Johnny: Do you want to write a dissertation?

Participant: Yeah, I want to get my PhD some day, so I can be Dr. Participant. Intentionality has been study, studying, understanding what I'm experiencing, and that I'm not crazy. It's a willingness to believe that I'm not crazy, that because I want to believe that I'm just fine, I don't need to do jack shit. I am just fine where I am, and if people don't like it, they can just f off.

But that's a way to live in isolation, which is what I don't want. [inaudible 00:44:59] with trusting or trusted people, being vulnerable with people, willing to test the waters in relationships. That is terrifying, but having the courage to risk that, and do baby steps, and have a lot of grace when I fail, or I make the wrong decision, or share the wrong thing.

As far as the spirituality piece ... Sorry, go ahead.

Johnny: I was going to ask, because I hear all of these items that you're listing, like you said, journaling, meditating, medication, seeking community, reading, I hear all this stuff, again, orienting you toward intentionally working on healing. Then I heard on the other side that you know healing has happened, because you begin to create. And you experience things internally, like more hopefulness, or hope for peace, or centeredness. Is there anything else in the middle there? Is that healing?

Participant: Being able to be present for others is part of my healing, or part of the evidence of my healing. That is where I ... Sorry, go ahead.

Healing is a spiritual process too.

Johnny: When you do these things that point you ... What am I trying to ask? Is there another ingredient, or is it that when you engage with these things intentionally, healing will result?

Participant: Yeah, as far as my belief system goes, and healing together, I think I will always be broken. We will always be broken. I will always have trauma over the sexual abuse. I will always have trauma over my abusive marriage. It will lessen, but the healing, it's not necessarily that it's gone.

The healing, for me, is that I can recognize when I've been triggered, and it doesn't derail me from my center, when I can go, "OK, Participant, you feel that? You know what that is. Take a breath. Figure out where you are right now. Put a pin in it, and come back to

it later when it's a better time. But it's OK. What you're feeling is OK. You're safe." Or whatever internal messages I need to tell myself.

It's not that I will be healed or that I am healed. It is that I am [inaudible 00:48:23] to better care for myself when I'm experiencing a trigger or something upsetting in my life.

Johnny: That's great. I love what you're saying, because it's hard to hear the word healing and not think of a broken bone. It was broken, and now it's fused back together, and it works again. What I'm hearing in what you're talking about with healing is, you said healing is the ability to more and more stay in your center, which jumped me back to how you were talking about spirituality is the thing that gets you into your center.

Participant: And it's also, for me, healing is not the getting rid of the bad as much as being able to receive the good. It's the ability to desire again, the ability to want more, and that what I want, it may not necessarily be spiritual. I want to go into the mission field, hell no, I'm not going into the mission field. It's not like wanting something that's necessarily spiritual or Biblical, but just the mere ... I lived with a lot of lack my whole life in a space of just deficit, and never really desired anything, didn't desire more of anything, because I didn't believe that there was more.

For me, healing is the ability to live and desire. I may not actually get what I want, but being able to say, "OK, I [inaudible 00:50:48] I want." I want to know ... I'm not going to give you that example, because I'll start crying. Knowing what I want, and also knowing that I might not get it immediately, and being able to mourn that, but also still hold onto that desire at the same time.

Receiving from S/R in the therapy process

Johnny: Yep. This is all really good, and I'm very grateful. All right, I'm going to circle back to one thing and ask you for something. You are an artistic, creative person. You also have musical talent. Can you give me a metaphor about how spirituality operates in your counseling process that involves the tuning of an instrument?

Participant: I think ... I'll use my own instrument, my voice, because that's really my instrument. I don't really play any other instruments. But I am on the worship team at my church. When I am practicing a song that I'm leading, I will sing a capella and record myself on my phone. Then when I play it back, I cringe, because I don't know if anybody likes the sound of their own voice. I can hear the echo as I'm talking

to you, and it's like, yow.

I listen. Tuning any instrument involves listening, and I think my ability to listen is what [inaudible 00:53:33] in my therapy. It's not talking. It's not reading. It's listening. And it's not listening to [Counselor]. And it's not even always listening to my own voice audibly. It's listening to my heart. It's listening to the subtleties of my body, the subtleties of my spirit, as scripture says, the still small voice.

Centering on S/R

And Experiencing S/R as an aspect of identity

Centering is showing up here again. She mentioned herself and her counselor. She is contrasting "Relying on herself" (earlier) with this here- listening to her heart. I think this speaks to the experience that spirituality is something "out there" and it is rooted in a deep place within the person. So it is "out there" and "in here."

In my seeking, in my shouting, because I don't pray in a very reverent way sometimes. I pray in fits, and swearing, and anger, and rage. When I do that audibly, and I stop, and I [inaudible 00:54:35] listen, I hear him respond to me. Sometimes it seems audible. I know it's not.

Having a spiritual experience

But listening is really ... when you're tuning an instrument, that's the only way you know that it's in tune. That's the only way I know that I'm in tune is when I clear the clutter of the other instruments, and I sing acapella on my phone. It's the only way that I know if I am in time, if I need to add more vibrato to a certain part of a song, if there's space to embellish, if there's space to grow, or if there needs to be more space in the song itself, to build, or to just rest. For me, I think that would be the metaphor.

Johnny: Yeah, what was coming to my mind too was just thinking about a different understanding of healing. There's a huge difference between an instrument that is broken and an instrument that's out of tune. Neither of them will play correctly, but they're different things. A broken instrument probably would need to be repaired, but an out of tune instrument would just need a listening, attentive, aware ear that could bring it back into tune.

Participant: Yeah, so I guess if you look at it that way, I was speaking of, I guess, the out of tune part. If I look at the broken side of it ... Sorry, my cats

are fighting. When I started therapy, I was a broken instrument. My voice was a broken instrument in even more ways than just the metaphor, just the inability to even name what was the reality of my life, which I've only recently named in the past six months, and not having sung in so long, believing that I didn't have a vivid singing voice anymore, whatever the reason was.

In that way, my instrument was broken. In my therapy and in my spiritual formation that happens at the same time, my instrument was repaired, and it's been a process of tuning.

Johnny: Yeah, that's helpful. I think the other thought I was having as you were ... The way you described spirituality as centering in your process, it sounded like a very ... there is no arrival. You're always ... I think that's what made it jump to mind. There aren't any musicians who ever expect to not have to retune their instrument. It's like, no, no, that's just part of the creation process. You make sure you're ... are we dialed in right? Good, we are. Now we can create something beautiful.

I'm aware of our time. Let me ...

Participant: I have time, unless you need to go, if you have more questions.

Johnny: I do need to go, because I am actually picking my sister up from the airport.

Participant 7606002

Participant: [inaudible 00:00:02]

Johnny: Alright, Participant. The first question I have for you, I'll set the stage for it a little bit, is just that as a person who, simply put, your spirituality matters to you. You believe, and you experience, a spiritual layer to the world. My wish for you is how does that stuff, the stuff of spirituality, how does it get from wherever it is into your therapy process? How's it get there?

Participant: How does it get into my therapy process? It's interesting, and I was actually just going over some of the questions. I apologize if I'm jumping a little bit. I think even in the setup of your question, [inaudible 00:01:11], there's a slight assumption that it's separate, and it's something to be brought in. I think I don't necessarily view it as that, because it's so a part of who I am and how I understand myself, how I understand the world, that I can't even understand how you would separate it out. You know what I mean?

Identifying as a spiritual/religious person

Johnny: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Participant: It's not even something that's ... My gut reaction was to say, "Well, I bring it in."

Because I want to talk about it, or I talked about that in my first session with my therapist, and said, "This is a part of my worldview," whatever. Then I realized ... That was maybe some of the ways I did it more formally, but I just can't imagine going through counseling and not having that component, because it's so intertwined.

Johnny: Yeah. Yeah, that makes sense. You added a word in there. You said "formally." Which is, it's something I've heard as I've talked to different people, is that maybe there's a larger experience of, "It's already there. It's not separate."

Then there's a qualifier. Like sometimes it's formally addressed or spoken to, sometimes it's informally brought in. I'm curious if you could say more about that.

Participant: Yeah. I guess what I mean when I say that is, I have a couple therapists where I've said, like [Bree 00:02:39], "I am Christian, I'm a pastor. I'm whatever term you want to use, so spirituality and

religion, religious practices, are a big part of who I am and how I understand my identity and my worldview."

But even if I hadn't said that, that would still be true. So I think formal versus not formal for me means more like did we actually articulate that that's what it was, or were we talking about things that I would consider spiritual components without naming them as such.

Experiencing S/R in therapy: overt-covert

Johnny: Yep. So the-

Participant: Then when you talk about identity, that's a naturally spiritual topic for me. I might not outright say, "There's a spiritual component to my identity," or something like that, but me, those ... you can't separate those.

Johnny: So, did we articulate that or not? It doesn't necessarily change the experience for you of whether or not spirituality is there and happening.

Participant: Right. I think it just might change the mode in which it's engaged.

Johnny: Okay. Let me add another ... This is kind of going to the second question, but I resonate with what you're saying about life is spiritual, my experience is spiritual, so that you can't just parse it out. Then I'm also thinking that there are times where we have particular experiences, sometimes dramatic, like the one you had in Africa, where it's like, "That was ... God was present."

Participant: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Johnny: I guess I'm curious, how do you know if you think of that as a gradient, how do you know when something is a spiritual experience in therapy?

Participant: Good question. I think ... Two things, and thinking of it as the spectrum, again, I would say, for me, whenever I'm doing inner work, it's always spiritual. I think it's just a matter of how maybe directly ... I'm going to think of how to articulate this. I guess my gut wants to say, "Oh, it feels more spiritual, or spiritual in a ... " I don't think it's necessarily more or less, though in some ways it feels that way. I think when we feel ... I think I have a very strong theology of suffering. It's not that we think that God is present in a way differently to people who are suffering, but that God shows up

in a particular way. It's not more or less, it's just particular. Maybe feel more tangible in that moment. I think when people experience that, that's when we often use, "Oh, I had a spiritual experience."

Experiencing S/R in therapy
Being attentive to S/R

It feels more tangible instead of ethereal. I think that would maybe be the scale, more, for me. It's not like more or less, but how tangible to my current lived experience it feels in that moment.

Okay. Tell me your question again, because I don't think I answered it.

Johnny: No, you're doing great. Actually, if it's okay with you, I'm going to just do two followup questions.

Participant: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Johnny: One is just to play devil's advocate a bit. If you went into therapy and you spent the first five minutes with your counselor talking about billing and scheduling, would that have a spiritual element to it?

Participant: There's a part of me that wants to say yes. I think in terms of, because for me-

Johnny: It's not a trick question. I will take a yes.

Participant: Okay. I guess let me explain my thought process. Also, connectedness, one of my top strengths. I was talking to somebody about this today. In my mind, everything [inaudible 00:07:32].

To me, when you're talking about billing, and scheduling, or whatever, you're talking about stewardship of resources. For me, my therapist isn't cheap. It's actually quite a big deal for me to spend the money I do to go to therapy. But that is something that I have decided is a high enough value in my life, and I am going to make sacrifices in other ways to be able to pay for that. And I have worked out an agreement with my boss at work so that I can go on work time or whatever.

In that sense, does it initially seem spiritual? No. And functionally, in a lot of ways, it's probably not. But I think there's a component to it ... Everything that takes, for me, and even for people who are less privileged than I am, to be able to show up to therapy, pay for

therapy, take the time, that's addressing a lot of different things that I feel like are all have some kind of spiritual component.

So, even though it doesn't feel that way, I think underneath there are some themes in that.

Seeing spirituality in all things

Johnny: Absolutely. It sounds like these two contrasted elements of ... I feel like I'm reverberating. Am I? No?

Participant: Not really. A little bit, but not really.

Johnny: Alright. These two contrasted elements of billing versus a "spiritual moment" in therapy. It is not a matter of whether or not they are spiritual. It sounds like there's a different descriptor or qualifier, and maybe this is going back to the "tangible" word that you used.

Participant: Yeah. And how it feels.

Johnny: Yeah. Tell me more about that. You've said it feels tangible. What is your experience internally, could be thought, could be spirit, could be emotion, that cues you to the fact that there's something tangibly spiritual happening?

Participant: This is bringing me way back to my Evangelical roots. I think one of the biggest things for me, because I'm a body learner, and I didn't have a language for this for a long time, but I've always had particular physical sensations that I thought was normal, or I thought that everybody had them, and we just didn't really talk about them or something like that. Then I started talking about them, and people kind of gave me a weird look, like, "What on earth are you talking about?"

Then I learned to not talk about them. Then once I got older and was around more people and realized though it might not be typical, it's not atypical, either. And had some key people that really helped me learn how to talk about them. I think one of the biggest indicators for me is I will feel things in certain places in my body that let me know different things.

One of the most common for me is I will get particular stress or pressure in my stomach, which often is a safety issue for me. Like when I meet people, I'll often have physical reactions to them. That's part of it. Sometimes I'll have pressure in my chest or on my throat, which also tell me different things. I've noticed the more

processed something becomes in therapy, it'll often start in my stomach and move its way up. That was an indication for me that we're making progress.

Being attentive- to self

Sometimes I feel like I'm hearing from the Spirit, it's saying certain things to me. Then you have to pray to discern that, because we believe God always ... [inaudible 00:11:36] that God says, so if you hear something once, asking for confirmation. Those types of things. Often it's just kind of ... Sometimes it's a particular sensation, sometimes it's just like an aura, like you can ... I don't know. You just get kind of ...

Being attentive- to spirituality

I lack language to talk about this. I apologize. You just feel a sense, and over time, if you develop the gift, you can differentiate between what is the Spirit and what isn't. I think I'm still learning that a lot. It's been one of my disciplines this year, is to try to give more space to that.

It's interesting, I was thinking about this, too. I don't know if you've heard of empaths?

Johnny: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Participant: I feel like that's just the New Agey word for people who have the gift of discernment.

Johnny: Sure.

Participant: Or people who are sensitive spiritually.

Johnny: Right.

Participant: I had a mentor of mine say, we always think of our spiritual selves, our being being inside our physical body, and she's like, "I think it's the opposite. I think our physical body lies within our spiritual presence."

I think that really resonated with me, in terms of ... Again, like auras. Again, I think depending on what tradition you come from, even if it's not a religious one, we all have language to describe what I feel like is getting at the same truth.

Yeah. Did that get at your question?

Experiencing S/R in all things

Johnny: Mm-hmm (affirmative). It sounds like there's a felt experience for you, and some of those feeling happen within your physical body, and some of those feeling happen more within your spirit and on more of a ... the phrasing that was coming to mind was like more of an intuitive feeling.

Participant: Yep. Yeah. But I don't know how to describe that. When I try to describe it, people who haven't experienced it, it sounds crazy. It's like, only when people who have experience are the ones that like, "Oh, yeah, I get it."

I never could actually articulate [inaudible 00:14:04].

Johnny: Having that stuff, particularly let's say the tangible. The tangible layer of your spiritual experiences. Having that stuff present in your counseling, what do you gain from having it there? What does it do?

Participant: A lot of things. Oftentimes its indicators. For me, like I said, safety is a big one. We did some work when I was having a particular pressure right on my neck, and it was dealing with how I use my voice, and how I felt like my voice was taken away from me in certain situations, and what did that mean to feel like there was a pressure here. It was like a physical board was kind of sitting on my throat.

Until my counselor was able to help walk me through articulating that, I couldn't quite put my finger on what it was. Do you know what I mean?

Johnny: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Participant: As we talked about it, too, the sensations became more particular. It was like once I named it then they became either stronger or more, instead of it just feeling like, "Oh, I generally have a pressure on my chest," well, once I thought about it, and sat with it for a second, I could say, "No. It's actually a specific pressure right here."

It enabled me to, I think, understand more about what it was, why it was happening. I even noticed, because my therapist has done several more somatic-based therapies with me in that way, and it's really actually reduced my trauma symptoms. I've experienced a particular kind of freedom, actually, in having up talk about those.

Yeah. It's been really physically healing, actually, in particular ways.

Experiencing S/R in therapy- physical (overt?)

Johnny: Physically healing. Tell me what healing is?

Participant: Generally, or in that particular instance?

Johnny: Yeah, sure. Sure. Wherever you want to go with it.

Participant: I think in that instance ... Clerical collars were a trigger for me. Growing up in the Evangelical church, I had never been in a room with a clerical collar until I was like 24. So, I didn't know that until I was in seminary, and my preaching professor came out. I was supposed to go into the room to preach, and she came out in full clerical collar and robe, and I had a panic attack and fainted.

Johnny: Oh, wow.

Participant: Almost fainted in the middle of the seminary. I learned the hard way that that was a trigger for me. For the next few years, I couldn't even be in a room with somebody in a clerical collar. I would start to have a panic attack.

But, when I started doing some trauma-specific work with my therapist, and particularly once we started doing more somatic-based stuff, I first noticed that I was able to sit in a room with somebody, the same woman, actually, it was like four years apart, sit in the same room with her, eventually have a conversation with her. Eventually I could hug her.

Now, my symptoms are basically gone. I still don't like them, necessarily, but I can sit next to somebody in a collar and feel okay for a large part. That feels very specific. I think that healed a number of things.

Because it was a trigger without even ... It's not like somebody abused me while wearing a clerical collar. That would be a very obvious, direct correlation. But nothing like that had happened. Somehow my brain made some kind of connection, and experienced that symbol as a threat.

Because not only did it heal my symptoms, but I think it also helped me realize my own sense of agency, and my own sense of power and voice, to say, "I'm okay, and whatever it was that my body thought was threatening about this, I trust now that I can be okay and that

I'm safe. And that if I'm not safe, I know how to get myself out."

I think there were a number of layers for me in that. Even just to say, because at first it was just being able to vocalize, speak, "Well, cannot be in a room with somebody."

Even that [inaudible 00:18:58]. That took me a little bit to be able to say. So I think that whole process of what does it mean for me to use my voice to advocate for myself? And to say [inaudible 00:19:10], and eventually get to the point where it wasn't as much of an issue.

Memo: There is a definite balance here between the spiritual and the therapeutic. She seems to be weaving them together and using some of the language interchangeably. They both seem important with the spiritual being more primary.

Johnny: Yeah. Yeah. So, healing, with this example as the backdrop, it sounds like ... a couple words you used that seemed like elements of healing was like experiencing safety, of if not experiencing safety, then experiencing your own power or autonomy.

Participant: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Johnny: Is that ... Here's one of those redundancy moments.

Participant: That's okay.

Johnny: Let me just ask it again, from where we are now. Tell me what healing is?

Participant: As best I understand it at this point, I think healing is the ability to experience reconciliation from something that was once broken in a way that connects a person more to themselves, more to God, and more to other people, in a way that is honoring and holistic.

Receiving from S/R in therapy- healing, wholeness

Johnny: So there's a ... Healing involves something that's broken? It involves ... sorry, go ahead.

Participant: I was going to say, it's interesting, that was what I was first caught up on, because I'm wondering ... Healing is so heavily associated with the medical model, and I worked in hospitals for so many years. So, in order for something to heal, you have to first assume that something is broken or hurt. So that's what I was saying. If something is already whole, can it experience healing? I don't know.

The word, the definition by how I understand healing, would lead me to say no. If it needs to be healed, it suggests that it is broken or hurt in some way. Which I think, thinking broadly, I would say in our fallen nature there is an automatic brokenness that we experience. So even on that level, there's something that is not right, generally, about how the world functions, and therefore how we are able to function in the world.

I'm trying to think, could something heal if it was whole? But then I thought, I literally don't know what wholeness would look like on this side of heaven, because we don't experience that. A wholeness in a way that it has never been broken, ever. Yeah. I think you can experience wholeness as on the other side of pain, or suffering, or brokenness, but not ... I don't know if I'm able to comprehend the forefront of [inaudible 00:22:37].

Receiving from S/R in therapy- wholeness

Johnny: Yeah. My thought, not yours, but just because I'm intrigued by conversations like this, was that ... The thought that went through my mind was, if something is already whole, or even a aspect of our experience is whole, it doesn't need healing. When it changes, you've maybe moved into the category of growth?

Participant: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah.

Johnny: To go to that medical model you were talking about. It's like, if you had a broken arm, you get it to heal, and then you strengthen it. But, anyway.

Participant: Yeah. I think it's that we don't have a lot of language around that. I'm thinking even like spiritual developmental models. We just don't have a lot of that kind of ...

Johnny: When I asked the question, what happens because spirituality, those tangible spirituality, is part of your counseling, it seemed like the first thing that came up, or the first word that caught my attention, was "healing."

What else would you say you've gained ... ? What does spirituality in your counseling process, what does it do? If you thought of it as more of a verb than a noun, if you thought of it as more of an action than a static description, what does it do?

Participant: It integrates, and restores. It brings connection. I think ... Now I'm

thinking of our last conversation, but it helps to make whole.

Receiving from S/R in therapy- connection, restoration

Johnny: Brings connection between what and what?

Participant: Both parts of ourselves. I think that we break apart. I think of the dissonance we often feel. In different ways, it helps reconcile those. But also, I know for me, helps also connection with other people. I think of what we know now about neuroplasticity, and when people experience healthy relationships, and how that recreates neural pathways. Even when I'm going, and I start to experience ... it's systems theory.

If I start to experience integration in my own self, the way I'm now going to show up in my world and in my relationships is going to be different, and that's either going to facilitate more connection with people, or it's going to create disconnection with parts of my life that were unhealthy. So, not disconnection necessarily in a bad way, but in a way that we experience the seasons outside. Some things have to die in order for life to come again. So, I seek connectedness in that way. Does that make sense?

Memo- again, hearing some of that balance between the spiritual and the therapeutic.

Johnny: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Would it be accurate to say that healing, or the integration you're talking about, or the connection you're talking about, would it be accurate to say that it would be incomplete without spirituality?

Participant: I would say so. I'm sure a lot of people would say no. But again, what I would consider "spiritual" is pretty broad.

Johnny: Right.

Participant: I would say yeah, but there are a lot of people that would probably say, "Oh, I don't incorporate spirituality in my counseling, and I experience it as great, and connect," and whatever.

I would push back and say, "You might not formally do it, but that doesn't mean you're not doing it. Because we are all spiritual beings. So, to deal with our own selves means to deal with our spirituality, whatever that looks like."

Being attentive to S/R: indirect

Johnny: Yeah. What else would you add about what does it do, if spirituality is an active energy? It's an active part of the experience. What does it do when it's engaged?

Participant: It's hard for me to think of anything other than healing. I also have this image of like digging. For me, spirituality, since it gets at the core of who people are, what we understand about being human, incorporating also means you get down to the deepest part of one's soul. I've had lots of conversations critiquing particular types of interventions because they focus primarily on behavior instead of motivation, or attachment, or other things that kind of get more to why our brains express things in particular ways. I think of spirituality doing that, too. It digs down to what the core of something is about instead of just saying, "Well, I'm experiencing really bad anxiety."

Identifying as a spiritual/religious person

This language speaks to the deep aspect of identity that S/R is experienced as.

"Okay, great, well, let me give you some breathing exercises, or let's talk about something ... "

Even if you've, "Okay, well the core of your anxiety, you had a really bad relationship with your mom. Let's talk about that."

Well, why? I still think that can help. But again, it's like layers. So what if I think of different interventions stewarding different outcomes for various layers, I think of spirituality helping dive down to the most core part. Because you're talking about what it means to be, [inaudible 00:29:42].

Johnny: Perhaps this would be your answer to one of the other questions. If not, I'll gladly take another one. But if you were to give a picture or metaphor for how spirituality operates in your therapy?

Participant: Without it giving it much thought, the first thing that ... The image that came to my mind, I'm sure this is [inaudible 00:30:29] a perfect solution, but I thought of myself dancing in a field. The spirituality was the wind, or the presence that's surrounding me, but also guiding my movements, and I can almost see ... Okay, if you think of Pocahontas, when she would move, how the leaves-

Johnny: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Go on.

Participant: I just think of like when the leaves would follow, you could see the strands of the wind. How they drew it. That's the kind of image that comes to my mind. I think when dancing and I fall, [inaudible 00:31:23] catch me as I fall so I don't fall as hard. Or if it helps prop me back up. I think of it just kind of surrounding me.

***Receiving from S/R in therapy- guidance
Experiencing S/R in all things***

Johnny: Surrounding you, and guiding?

Participant: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Johnny: And it sounded like supporting?

Participant: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Johnny: Couple of questions to dig into the metaphor. Where is your counselor in relation to this metaphor?

Participant: Walking alongside, and witnessing.

Johnny: Would that be true of all the counselors you've had?

Participant: In different ways, yes. They're all bearing witness. I'm thinking of one I had when I was in a particularly stuck place. I think of myself sitting on the ground, and her sitting across from me, Indian style. I see one of them almost jogging, and leaping next to me. Kind of depends on the work we were doing at the time, and the phase that I was in, and how our relationship functioned because of that, if that makes sense.

Being Attentive: Therapist as witness

Johnny: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah. When you say that the wind ... You said guiding? Tell me about guiding.

Participant: I think, if you think of a broad open field, you could go anywhere. But I think of ... because I don't also want to think of myself embodying that movement. I don't want to fight it. I want to be guided by it, and I want to be in relationship with it, and in the middle of it. It's kind of gently ... I don't know.

Okay, so I see dancer [inaudible 00:34:14]. It's like in partnering. You're never working against each other. Your movements are always complementary, but there's something, part of how,

particularly men, when they lead, that you have to push against in your frame to know where to go. There's naturally a tension that you feel as you're trying to move seamlessly together. I think of it kind of like that. That there's a partnership, but we both have the same goal. But I have to be kind of in tension with it to know how to move appropriately.

Johnny: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Participant: It's kind of telling me, or showing me, rather, how to move, where to move, how to go, but also supporting me in that. There's some rubbing that also comes with that.

Johnny: How does spirituality support you?

Participant: Generally?

Johnny: Sure.

Participant: Or in the metaphor?

Johnny: Let's do in life.

Participant: Okay. I think the biggest thing is it gives me a frame of reference. Especially in my work. Maybe we talked about this before. The main reason I went to seminary was because I knew if I wanted to do trauma work, or if I wanted to be a social worker in any capacity, in a way, I was going to be bearing witness to some of the worst things that people experience in life. I wanted to be able to witness that, and be present, and come home and still be able to believe in God.

S/R is fundamental to worldview

I think, on days when that is really hard, it gives me a reference point for why, what to do, what is mine to hold and what is not mine to hold. And to trust that. That God facilitates the work through me, but that it's not actually my work to do. That means that at the end of the day, I can do my best and go home, and trust that God is going to hold, and continue to do, that work. Because it wasn't mine to do in the first place.

S/R is the center of therapeutic work

I think that even in my own pain, too, in my own trauma, and my own suffering, I'm able to have that framework of, "Well, why did this happen?"

It's like, "Well, we experience a level of brokenness, and God still facilitates [inaudible 00:37:08] in spite of that."

So what is the invitation? I had a therapist that used to always ask me that. "What's the invitation?"

I think in that way, it gives me space. Even thinking more specifically, it gives me space to know how to lament well. How to know that God shows up in a particular way with people who are suffering. It gives me a bigger picture to know that suffering is not the end. We get a picture of reconciliation, and what shalom looks like. I think it helps me ground myself, and orient myself in my own story, and how my story overlaps with other people's stories, and the meta-narrative.

Johnny: Yep. That's super helpful. When you think of your counseling process, or even a counseling session, as you're moving through your field, how is it that you come upon that feeling, that support? How does the support enter in?

Participant: Of spirituality? Like the wind?

Johnny: Yeah.

Participant: I guess it's always been there, but there's something about ... When I picture it, it seems like its gets life from my chest. Like it comes out of that. But it's not its source, necessarily, but that's how it gets facilitated out and around me, if that makes sense. But it was never not there.

Experiencing S/R in all things

Johnny: Yeah. I'll share this, just because I think you mentioned last time you kind of enjoy this topic, and were curious about it. It's interesting, because in this process of research, I'm supposed to pay attention to my own assumptions, and my own expectations of what I think people are going to say. It was really interesting, because I was telling my wife, I was like, "Yeah, I'm going to ask all my participants how "it," how spirituality, gets into therapy."

I was like, "My expectation is that everyone is going to say, "Oh, well, God puts it there. It comes from God."

Literally, no one has said that.

Participant: That's so great.

Johnny: Literally, no one has said that. Almost every single person has said, "Me.Yeah, I bring it in. It walks in the room with me, because it's part of my experience of the world."

Anyway, what's interesting to me has been, my presumption, my own presupposition has been that there will be things that could be described about how spirituality operates in the counseling process, and there'd be some things that could be identified. Like, "I carry it with me."

"I believe the whole world is spiritual, so it's a spiritual encounter for me."

I presumed at some point that we would also then encounter more mystery. Just hit that point of like, "I don't know, it just does."

What's been noteworthy for me is that the mystery doesn't seem to reside for people in how spirituality shows up. They're kind of like, "No, I walk in with it."

Or it's like, "How does it show up?"

They're like, "Well, we talk about it."

"Oh, right. Okay."

But the mystery seems to be more in what it does once it's present. How is it that spirituality provides support? How is it that when I'm in tune with my spirituality, I feel more supported? How is it that spirituality adds a perspective, or a vantage point on what's going ... ? How does it do that?

Anything you'd add to that? Any thoughts you have about that?

Participant: Can you ask it one more time? How it ... ?

Johnny: How is it that it supports us? Or, how is it that it ... ? I don't know. Even going back to the medical example you were giving. Someone who understood Ibuprofen could probably explain to me why, when you take an Ibuprofen, it gets into your bloodstream and it goes to this site in your body, and it begins to relieve the pain. And give a more detailed description of how it relieves the pain. So think about that around the, how is it that God or spirituality, how does it support us? How does it offer perspective?

Participant: I think how people experience support is also different. I think that could change greatly between people. But I think for me, this kind of gets on the stuff we've touched on, but it helps me identify things about who I am. It answers a lot of the existential questions for me. Who am I? Why am I here? What is the meaning of everything? How do I understand myself in relation to other people?

I think having that understanding ... Well, we don't understand completely. We get to a point where we say, "I understand up to this extent, and then the rest of it, I just don't know how it works, but I can just trust that it does."

I think it gives me a structure to my worldview. It helps me answer those questions about who I am, why I am the way I am, why I experience the world the way that I do. How do I relate to other people? How do you facilitate healing or wholeness? And that. But I think having that framework ... I feel like as I'm describing it, it sounds very intellectual. Like, "It gives me this intellectual understanding."

***S/R as part of worldview
Identifying as S/R person***

That's not what I mean, though part of it is intellectual, in a sense. But it just gives me a sense of how to orient myself in the world. Generally. I think being able to do that is really helpful for me to then decide, "Okay, well, if this is how the world works, and this is what it means to be human, if this is what it means for me to be human, if this is what it means for me to function in the world, then I can do x, y, z."

Or, "I can understand that this is then the vision of God's vision for the world, or God's vision for me, or God's vision for restoration and wholeness," and then I know how to orient myself in that, and I know how to move forward and get a sense of direction and purpose.

Johnny: I'm totally using your articulation and also your seminary background and thoughtfulness, and experience of ministry around this, because ... You'll probably just relate to this experience, since you've ministered and cared for people and whatnot, but I was talking to another participant who described it as, it gives perspective. I was like, "How does spirituality give us perspective?"

Her answer was, "Because it is perspective. It gives perspective

because it is perspective. It's just perspective."

I was like, "Thank you. Yeah, that's great."

I think there's two thoughts that are coming to mind. One of them is, in what you were just describing, the thing that stood out to me is that it almost seems like the support and the perspective, at this moment, they seem contingent on the guiding. In the sense that I feel supported, or I feel perspective, or I feel a sense of maybe peace when I get a glimpse that there is actually spirituality in the world.

There's actually a God with actual intention for me, and for the world, and that I don't always know how it's unfolding, but I encounter these moments where I am particularly reminded of, "Right. God is taking me somewhere. Or, there is something God wants me to see, or a deeper understanding God wants me to have."

I'm not married to that idea, but would love your thoughts on it.

Participant: Yeah. I think for me, and this might be part of my personality, I'm very directional. I'm not someone who is happy just kind of sitting around and doing the same stuff all the time. I create a vision board, and I have six categories of goals, and I do quarterly reviews of my goals. I create action plans if I'm not meeting my goals. That's just how I function. I think, for me, and again, this kind of gets back to why I went to seminary in the first place. For me, I can't just sit and listen to people's trauma stories and say, "That's the end."

For me, there has to be more. And, I think that's scriptural. If we look at the picture we're given in Revelation, we're not all just fumbling around for the sake of fumbling around. God wants to reconcile. God wants to make new. I think, yeah, I needed to know, even if I don't know the details of it, I need to know that ... Or at least the heart behind it. That God wants to reconcile, and that God fiercely loves people and wants to see people whole and help make people whole.

Receiving from S/R- Hope

Johnny: Yeah. I'm going to need to chew on that piece of it. Part of it is that the very qualitative approach that I'm taking to this, the methodology behind it is a directional one. At the end, the theory doesn't paint a static picture of an experience, it's supposed to present more of a dynamic, a influences b, bleeds into c, kind of wraps around this way and does this thing.

I think that's part of why it's striking me at this moment, is, yeah, just the role ... Feeling a sense of being guided, or that there's a place that we're being drawn to or led to has cut across almost everyone I've spoken with as being a poignant element of spirituality counseling. Probably the three words or categories that have shown up across everyone have been guiding, perspective, and healing.

Participant: Yeah. It feels like for me, if there's no direction, then, I don't want to say there's no purpose, because there can still be purpose. But purpose, to me, suggests in some way that there's an outcome of some sort. And not totally. That doesn't ... Now that I'm saying it out loud, that doesn't necessarily sit right.

Receiving from S/R- Hope, Direction

Johnny: The words that are coming to mind are intentional versus aimless.

Participant: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Again, I just ... I'm trying to figure out, is it just ... Do I have this perspective because that's how I'm wired, and so that's how I read scripture, and that's how I've understood to internalize this? Or, is that true, regardless of my ... ? I can't really know that, because I can only understand it in terms of my own capacity to understand it.

I just, when I read scripture, and see the vision, it feels directional in some way. You can't put God in time, but the Bible tells a story, and this has a point where Christ comes again, and all things are reconciled. And they do. That's directional. At that point, I think once Christ has come again, then our purpose is just ... just sort of God, right? Live in this garden-esque [crosstalk 00:52:21].

Johnny: Right. There is a narrative arc that's moving. Yeah. Everything that you've contributed has already been helpful. But then, also, this moment of dialogue partner is super helpful, because I'm also bouncing it off my own experience in counseling, or my own experience of things that have needed to be healed in me or in my story. I kind of think of it experientially as those deep breath moments, where, at least for me, I have a lot of anxiety. It's like, anxiety, anxiety, "I don't know why this happened, I don't know why this is happening. I'm hurting here, I'm hurting there."

Then there's those moments of just like, "Oh, wait. Oh, right, okay."

I'm just sitting here thinking that I feel like those moments are almost always accompanied by, "There's something I didn't see before, or there's something unfolding that I didn't see before." Like,

"Previously this looked like a scatter plot. But now, now it's been turned and I see how these things line up in a direction."

Participant: Yeah. Yeah. When I was in seminary and I first started really dealing with ... Well, I had kind of done it before, but dealing in a new way with the fact that I was sexually abused as a kid, and I remember talking to my therapist, who is a reformed pastor. I made some comment like, "Well, God ..."

It was the whole providence question right away. If God allowed it, or God [inaudible 00:54:11], or whatever. I made some comment of like, "Well, God allowed it so that God could bring good out of it," or something like that.

She just kind of stopped me, and looked at me, and she goes, "I don't know." She's like, "God allowed it, and God brought good out of it. I don't know if you could say, 'so that.'"

We were just talking about the relationship between those two statements. That was really helpful. It was hard. When she first said that to me, I was just like, "I don't quite know what to do with that."

At that point, I hadn't peeled enough to ... I needed that. I needed that to be the reason. Like, "God allowed this thing to happen to me in order that all these other good things could happen."

Being attentive to S/R in times of doubt or pain

She was just like, "Well, what if it just is, and what if God grieves that with you, and separately God draws good out of it."

Counselor as guide

That, for me, was just helpful. Now I've gotten to the point where I can say, "I don't know why God allowed me to be abused."

It's terrible, and it has hurt me in any number of ways, and I know that God grieves that pain with me. I know that it hurts God at least as much, if not more, than it hurts me, and God has used that. I don't know if I'd be in the field that I'm in if that hadn't happened. I don't know if I'd have the capacity to hold people's pain and stories to the extent that I do, had that not happened. I don't know.

I feel the need less, I guess this is my point, to make them correlated. They can both be true, and they can just be held together, not necessarily in relationship with each other. I think for

a while I needed that.

Johnny: Maybe this would come to our last question, which I want to fit in, because I've already kept you over time. What is hard or challenging about having your spirituality tangibly a part of your counseling?

Participant: What is hard?

Johnny: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Participant: It's painful.

Johnny: Okay.

Participant: It makes you deal with the deepest parts of your soul. In the best way and in the worst way. I think, especially in the last few months in the work that I've been doing with my counselor, it's always been fairly easy for me, and not that you've been able to tell this, but fairly easy for me to articulate things about myself or about my life, and why things happen or how I experience it. The more I integrate tangibly spiritual stuff in it, the less that is true. It's really frustrating for me. I get to a point where I'm just like, "I just don't know. I don't know."

Or there's this, or ... It's very rare for me to feel fear. I'm just not naturally a very fearful person. Incorporating spirituality and getting at that stuff, I have been terrified. And I hate that feeling. I think, yeah. All the things that make it great are the same exact things that make it hard, and painful.

Johnny: Yeah. Yeah. Cool. Is there anything else, from anything we've talked about, that you'd like to add?

Participant: I don't think so.

Johnny: Let me tell you ... Let me thank you for your time. Thank you. And tell you what the next steps are. I am going to be taking this stuff and doing a similar process that I did with the last round. Transcribing it, starting to analyze it, forming it into more of a theory for my research. Then, somewhere in that process will be a determination with my advisor of whether or not I need a third round of interviews or not.

Participant: Okay.

Johnny: It's not for lack of enjoying these conversations, but we're hoping no

on the third round.

Participant: Right. This is a lot of work.

Johnny: It is. So it'll either be reaching out to you for a third round interview, or it will be reaching out to you to let you know that that's not necessarily, but showing you the theory that I've come up with, and gathering feedback from you about whether or not it captures your experience.

I will also be following up and sending you a Amazon gift card just like last time.

Participant: Forgot about that. Thanks.

Johnny: Yeah. Anything you want to say before we end?

Participant: No. I've just really enjoyed this. It's helped me articulate things that I haven't had to articulate before, so it's helpful, and I appreciate it.

Johnny: It was very, very helpful for me. Then I have one other little thing, which is a total aside. Since you mentioned being such an organized, directional person, it just made me think, I just came across and started using this iPhone app called Strides.

Participant: Ooh. Okay.

Johnny: It's fabulous. You set different goals for yourself. Like, "I want to read something spiritually nourishing, or something professional three times a week."

So you set these different goals, like frequency, number of times a day, or number of times a week, or the reverse. "I don't want to do more than twice a week of caffeine," or something like that.

Then you check in every day and you log whether you did it, and it shows you your arc over time of how close you are of getting to your goal or not.

Participant: I love that.

Johnny: Yeah.

Participant: That would be so helpful. Yeah. Because every once in a while ... Because we go a whole quarter. Sometimes depending on what the goal is, you need a whole quarter to actually make progress. There's

other ones, it's like, "Wow. I totally dropped the ball on that."

Johnny: Right.

Participant: Like reading is one of my goals. Read a book a month or whatever.

Johnny: Yeah. Anyway.

Participant: Thank you. Strides.

Johnny: Strides. Yeah. Alright. Thank you so much. I will be in touch.

Participant: Sounds good. Thanks, Johnny.

Johnny: Alright. Bye bye.

Participant 7606003

Johnny: ... clients feel about when it's addressed, to me those questions have kind of been answered. I'm much more curious about kind of more identifying what it does when it is present in the counseling process. So, for someone whose faith really matters to them and it's involved in their counseling, what does it do? How does it operate? What kind of a thing is it?

So, the questions that I'm gonna have today and the follow-up questions that I'll have as we talk might feel like they're really ruminating and circling around that, but that's kind of exactly what I need. Do you have any questions about that?

Participant: Nope.

Johnny: Great. All right. Then, the first question to start us off is just when you think about your faith ... Are you getting feedback on me?

Participant: Little bit.

Johnny: I'm not getting any from you.

Participant: Okay. It's not feedback. It's more like you're just kind of going in and out, like quiet and poor quality, and then louder. I can still understand you, though.

Johnny: Okay. Good.

So, the question is for a person whose faith is very important to them and it's been involved in their counseling process, that's in the session, outside the session, just all throughout that process, the question is how does spirituality enter in? How does it get from something that you believe about life, the world ... How does it get from there into your counseling process?

Participant: Well, I think that you could ask that same question, and you'd probably receive the same ... You could ask that question just about any other part of my life, not just counseling, and you'd probably receive a similar answer. For example, I'm a teacher. So, you could ask the same question of how does my faith enter into my teaching and the mechanics of it would probably be pretty similar. That's

just that because my faith is the center point of who I am and how I try to live my life. That's the lens through which I'm seeing everything, including how I teach, including how I relate to my spouse, how I relate to my family, the rest of my family, my friends, and how I relate to my counseling in emotional and spiritual recovery.

Hold on a quick second. Sorry. Hey.

My cats are just ... One of them is eating something, and she's not supposed to.

Johnny: Okay. So-

Participant: [inaudible 00:02:59].

Johnny: Because it's so central to you and who you are, it sounds like it's something that you just carry in with you into the counseling process.

Participant: Yes. I think it kind of goes both ways. I think I carried into my counseling process, but I expected that from whoever it was that I was seeing. So, to see somebody who I think wouldn't have been Bible-based and who wouldn't have been a Christian as well, I think, was almost out of the question for me.

Johnny: It came in through you, but it also sounds like it did enter some through the counselor that you selected.

Memo: 1/10/2017

Bringing spirituality and religion into counseling

Across all the participants, the answer to this first question was pretty simple and straight forward. S/R gets into therapy because I bring it with me. This client highlights one of the details- that for some clients, they also had the expectation that the counselor would bring it as well.

Participant: I'm sorry. Can you repeat what you just said?

Johnny: Let me get a headset and see if that improves the audio for you.

Participant: Okay. Thanks.

Johnny: All right. Can you hear me now?

Participant: That's better.

Johnny: Is it?

Participant: Yes.

Johnny: Okay. Good.

One more second. Okay, let's see how that does.

So, it entered into the process through you, but it also sounds like it entered in through the counselor that you selected.

Participant: Yes. Absolutely. I think it went both ways, but that also wasn't by accident.

Johnny: What do you mean by that?

Participant: I specifically have sought out Christian counselors who were willing to ...

Johnny: Is there anything else you would highlight about how your faith enters into your counseling process?

Note: I had an issue with this recording. Because I switched to a headset, I lost the audio from the participant for some of this interview.

Silence: (silence)

Johnny: Well, actually, let me ask the second one that might illuminate that.

How do you know when something in counseling is spiritual or religious?

Silence: (silence)

Johnny: Mm-hmm (affirmative). So, one of the things I heard as you described that was that your counseling offers you different vantage points or perspectives on things that have happened to you and that integrating God offers a particularly valuable perspective.

Silence: (silence)

Johnny: That does. What sorts of things happen when you look through that bigger window?

Silence: (silence)

Johnny: What would you say that is? What is healing?

Silence: (silence)

Johnny: You said a couple of things in there of being okay with that or finding peace with that. What things would you say result from healing? Because I have experienced healing, now I feel or now I think or now I experience ...

Silence: (silence)

Johnny: So, there's some forgiveness that comes from healing and you mentioned peace. How would you describe your experience of peace?

Silence: (silence)

Johnny: Override it how? Override it in what way?

I'm sorry. Override it in what way?

Silence: (silence)

Johnny: You mentioned again that part of peace is that difference in perspective of lens of a child versus lens of who you are now.

Silence: (silence)

Johnny: And you gave me this picture of the windows. But I also had a question about ... I don't know it that was part of your answer, but I had a question about is there a picture or metaphor you can give me about how spirituality operates in your counseling?

Silence: (silence)

Johnny: I did.

Silence: (silence)

- Silence: What is it about your faith acting as a lens? Do you have any sense of what it is about your faith that allows you to see things clearly or differently? How does it do that?
- Johnny: (silence)
- Silence: So, it wouldn't make sense to remove that in counseling. In fact, it's incredibly necessary for you to have it there. The fact that it's there in counseling or in your life in general, how is it that faith is capable-
- Participant: [inaudible 00:23:32].
- Johnny: I know. We're going to keep going at this.
Can you hear me now?
- Participant: Yes.
- Johnny: How is it that faith is able to influence our perspective like that?
- Participant: How is it able to influence our perspective like that? Is that what you said?
- Johnny: Yeah.
- Participant: Well, I think as a Christian ... I don't know how far back we could go with this, philosophically speaking. As humans, one thing that we are very much preoccupied with is good and bad; what is good, what is bad. We're very much preoccupied with morality. So, I think that as a Christian, I think my beliefs are very much centered on God. He is the ultimate good. He is the standard for what is good and because he is perfect good, then I also know that, just logically speaking, there is also an antithesis to who he is and that is evil. That interplay of where am I in that mix, where am I in that ... I guess in the Christian [inaudible 00:25:03] it would be the spiritual warfare, the spiritual battle that's going on. Essentially, whose side am I on for one.
- I really believe that Jesus is the only way that I can ever call myself on God's side because I am fundamentally a broken person and I sin, I do wrong and that's something I've

always been really aware of about myself. I have to imagine that just because I really believe it's human nature to be preoccupied with these things. There are probably a whole lot of other people who feel the same way. Maybe a relationship with Jesus is how it taps into that ... As humans, we're also very relational people and if we're so preoccupied with good and bad, most of us want to be on the good side.

I think that it's so central to who I am even as a human. I'm almost like ... even my lizard brain wants to be on the good side. I know that I can't be on the good side on my own. I can't earn my way to the good side. Jesus, I believe, is the only way to that to be on God's team. So, that being said ... I kind of forgot your question. I'm sorry.

How does faith bring perspective?

Memo: 1/10/2018

Describing beliefs

This section does not feel on target with the purpose of the interview. She is describing some important aspects of her beliefs but is not really speaking to how those beliefs and practices impact the counseling process.

Johnny:

Yeah.

Participant:

So, the perspective is that. A lot of people have the perspective of, I guess you could say Hedonists, maybe just like their perspective is seeking pleasure, seeking comfort. I'm not saying I don't have Hedonistic tendencies at all. I think the perspective that faith brings is going "Oh, look at that. I've got some hedonistic tendencies?" I believe that that's selfish and sinful or if you're John Piper, maybe you can say that it's good to be a Christian Hedonist in some ways. I don't know. You can turn that back into joy.

There's lots of different ways you can pursue ... You can look at that in a lot of different ways. For me, I might say "Ooh, that's kind of sinful. I don't want to be a Hedonist. I want to turn my focus back on Jesus. My goal in life is Jesus, not comfort." I guess a perspective is ... How does it bring perspective? Well, it is the perspective. It's not my perspective, then I'm trying to bring it back to being my perspective, which means that it's the perspective. It's almost circular. Because of that, I have to say then it is the

perspective. Does that make sense?

Memo: 1/10/2018

Again, these statements feel very abstract. I think she is trying to describe the centrality and significance of her beliefs. However, the way she is communicating it makes it hard to draw a visible line between her beliefs and the impact they have on her counseling process.

Johnny:

Yep.

This is shifting gears little bit in that, but what's hard or challenging about having faith involved in your counseling process?

Participant:

I think it's challenging because it brings a whole different level of vulnerability. It's already vulnerable to talk about traumatic things in your life. It's intensely more vulnerable to talk about them and then talk about the ways that they've weakened your relationship with God. Sometimes, it's that they've strengthened them. They've strengthened your relationship with God, for sure, but there's always an element of admitting sin. It's much nicer to talk about trauma when you can just say "Oh, well. I was the victim here. I did nothing wrong." Faith kind of forces you to admit that that's not the case. Even if you weren't necessarily doing anything wrong in the event that caused your trauma or something like that, you could become completely innocent there.

Because God is a perfect God, if you have in any way pushed him away, that is sinful because that's not ... There is no justification for it is what I'm saying. That in and of itself is the spiritual part that needs healing. That is why I chose Christian spiritual counseling versus traditional counseling because traditional counseling would never address that. Because my relationship God is so important to me, it's almost just as important, if not more important, that my relationship with God heals alongside my heart and my mind.

Memo: 1/10/2018

This is getting a bit more on target. But, she is still talking more about the experience of addressing S/R- it's a vulnerable experience because she sees it as a deep and valuable part of herself. But, the impact is tough to see. It does seem that one result is that involving S/R in the therapy process causes a focus

on things that may not have been focused on. And, in particular, it invites spiritual questions about the things being discussed and addressed in therapy.

- Johnny: Right. So, it's challenging because it's more vulnerable and it's challenging because it addresses your role in things, sinfulness in yourself that shows up in your life.
- Participant: Right. Even if it's just in the ways that I've reacted or responded to trauma.
- Johnny: Anything else that's challenging about having faith as part of your counseling?
- Participant: I think it can be easy to overlook some of the more practical problems or practical bumps in the road that come along in the relationship between the counselor and the counselee. For example, it was so important to me that I have a Christian spiritual counselor that I just was looking for somebody that, from other people in my life that I trusted, people that recommended that person, I was looking for somebody with good recommendations. But I kind of overlooked some of the more practical aspects of my counseling in that some of my issues are very specific to women. It would have been really helpful, and I think beneficial, to have a female perspective on some of my issues.
- To give specifics, I struggle with infertility. It would have been really helpful to have a female counselor who could maybe kind of understand what I meant when I said it feels like that's a strike to my womanhood, the fact that I'm infertile. Telling a male counselor that ... He didn't understand. I can't blame him for that. I'm sure that wasn't because he didn't want to, but I there's a part of that that he really just couldn't understand.
- Maybe that's just me in the high importance that I placed on my counselor being a Christian and incorporating and really having my counseling be through that lens, but I didn't think maybe it'd be an important thing to look for a female counselor who does this, not just someone who does this.
- Johnny: I like how you put that. That overlooked some practical problems or considerations. So, because your faith is so important to you and that was the primary criteria, you

didn't consider these other things that might be helpful.

Participant: No. Actually, I think in my naivete, I kind of maybe actually had the thought that well, it all kind of comes back to my relationship with God, so maybe it doesn't really matter all that much. Then, I found that actually it did matter a lot.

Memo: 1/10/2018 *Prioritizing spirituality*

This section is the most intriguing to me so far. She is doing a good job of talking about ways that her spiritual beliefs can have a negative impact on the counseling relationship. It is as if she is seeing spiritual beliefs as her only need rather than an important need. In the process, she missed other important needs of hers. So there is a double edged nature to the trust that comes from having a Christian counselor. On one hand, it built trust for her. On the other hand, it caused her to neglect some things of importance.

Johnny: Anything else you would add on that?

Participant: Yes. I wouldn't say that the fact that that was not a part of my counseling made it worthless or even bad. It was just one thing. I would still say that my counseling experience was incredibly valuable.

Johnny: Anything more on that?

Participant: No. Did you have any questions about it?

Johnny: Uh-uh. Just wanted to make sure you said everything you needed to.

Participant: What's that?

Johnny: Just wanted to make sure you said everything you needed to.

Participant: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Johnny: Is there anything else you want to add about anything we've talked about?

Participant: A complaint that I have about Christian counseling, in general, and that is as somebody who is searching for a Christian counselor, it is extremely difficult to get information about whether or not a counselor is legitimate, whether or not they actually even have a license because I

think that there are a lot of very well meaning people without licenses and maybe without any real training at all who advertise themselves as counselors and they're not necessarily equipped to actually deal with ... to be therapists or to actually do the job well and not do more damage. That's really concerning to me.

I think it actually gives a legitimate and really good Christian counselors a bad rap because there are some people who call themselves counselors and advertise their services, but they're really not or they're not credentialed at all. They think that the words Christian and counselor are pretty vague. They can mean a lot of things to a lot of different people.

Johnny: So, that might also be something challenging about having your faith involved in your counseling is it can be hard to identify a legitimate counselor.

Participant: Yes. I've now had experiences with ... I think I told you this before. I had a counselor who was Christian, basically, in name only; didn't really incorporate it into anything that was going on in counseling at all. That wasn't the lens that she was looking through at all. She didn't even really try to bring it in. It was weird. Then, I had Tim, who you know, who is amazing, awesome, totally incorporate ... not just incorporated it, but he ... "My counseling was through the lens of my faith and through the lens of my relationship with God." He was awesome.

Then, I had this other guy who, I think, he was trying to kind of do the same thing in terms of my faith being the lens through which we did counseling. I just think we had maybe some personality clashes or something like that; just didn't work out that well. We parted ways peaceably, but probably sooner than I would've hoped.

So, all of that being said, for all of those three counselors, I felt like I spent the first six, seven, eight weeks just trying to feel them out, make sure that they were what they were saying. I was highly, highly critical of everything they said. Everything that happened during our sessions I took with a gigantic grain of salt and I was extremely on my guard.

So, basically the first eight weeks of any counselor that I had was just me kind of going "Are you legitimate?" Of course,

before I even went in, I always made sure that they had actual credentials and things like that. Again, because I think that they're when somebody says that they're counselor, even if they are credentialed, it could mean so many different things to them. At best, best case scenario, they're like Tim and that's the lens through which they do their counseling, but they also believe that psychology is a real thing and should be used in counseling or worst case scenario, they call themselves a Christian counselor and really, they're just a Christian who wants to talk through people's problems with them, which is very well intentioned and everything, but sometimes they can do a whole lot of damage. Then, they might just be somebody in between who's a real credentialed counselor, but just says that they're a Christian, but that occasionally they may ask "So, how does that affect your relationship with God?" the last five minutes of the counseling session and go "Okay. Thanks for sharing that," and then move on.

Memo: 1/10/2018

More of the same here- she is speaking about her faith but not really in how it impacted her process in therapy. This feels like it is more about the process of finding a counselor than it is about the actual process in counseling.

Johnny: Right. That's helpful.

Participant: There's a big, big difference.

Johnny: Anything else you'd add about anything we've talked about?

Participant: Just one last thing is that I think a great thing about Christian counseling that I can't necessarily speak for other counseling is that there is this ... because it's through the lens of your faith, I think there's this fundamental understanding that you're never done yet, that you're never gonna reach this point of "Okay, I'm done," because just like our faith, we're constantly growing in relationship with God. We're constantly doing our best to become better images of Christ. We're never done.

I think that because faith is so central, excuse me, to the counseling that I've experienced, because faith was the center point of it, I feel very free to go back when I feel like I need to. That I don't have to be like, "Oh, but I thought I was done," or "I thought all these things were fixed." I think that there is this freedom that comes and you know that you're

always a work in progress, and that's both spiritually and emotionally and mentally, too.

Memo: 1/10/2018

This has some relevance in that she is talking about the idea that faith interacts with the growth/counseling process. This seems to connect to the idea from other participants who spoke about God guiding their process or having an intention for the direction they were heading.

Participant 7606004

Johnny: Hello?

Participant: Hey, Johnny, it's Participant. How are you?

Johnny: Good, how are you doing, Participant?

Participant: Doing all right, thanks. Man, I'm sorry, yeah, I was waiting for your call and then I just realized I couldn't call you through FaceTime because of WiFi. We could do two different things. I could go find a WiFi network in the next 15 minutes, or maybe we could reschedule?

Johnny: We could do either of those, or we could do phone like this.

Participant: Okay. Well, I'm happy with that as well.

Johnny: Okay.

Participant: If it works for you.

Johnny: Yeah, let's do it.

Participant: Okay, cool.

Johnny: Are you in a good spot to talk?

Participant: Yeah, absolutely.

Johnny: Awesome. First of all, as always, thank you so much for giving me some of your time and some of your story in counseling. I remembered a lot of our first interview and just how vivid of a spiritual experience you've had in your life, and how important Don has been for you.

Participant: Yeah.

Johnny: Yeah, I'm just very grateful for that.

Participant: You bet. Yeah.

Johnny: Where we're going to pick up and kind of dial in is, if you remember, I'm researching how spirituality and religion really kind of operate, what kind of an ingredient they are within the counseling process? That's throughout the counseling process: in the room, outside the

room, anywhere where spirituality or religion might enter into things. Today, I want to dial in with those questions that I had sent you to ... Some of this is going to feel like we're really maybe ruminating around on something and really kind of hopefully drilling in, so a few of these questions might feel like I'm circling around or doubling back on things, but that's kind of exactly what I need.

Participant: Okay.

Johnny: I just kind of ... I'll start off with this question, and I'll frame it a little bit is: I think of the people I'm interviewing like yourself, who've been in therapy and had a positive experience. They've felt growth from it and they consider spirituality and religion to be a part of that process for them. My first question is, within that context, how does spirituality, how does religion, how does it get into your counseling process? It comes from somewhere into your process. How would you describe that?

Participant: We did some, we maybe chatted last time. I expressed my spirituality as something that sort of forms all of my decisions. It's not necessarily something that I think about instantly, but it definitely is ... Since spirituality is important to me, it is pretty fundamental to who I am. I'm not aware of it if my spirituality is going to ... I'm certain my spirituality is going to be forming my thoughts. I kind of look at my spirit ... the core of me as being a ... the spirit and the core of me sort of are maybe synonymous. So, it's really salvational. I think based on my sense of experience with God that's true and vibrant, I will ... in the counseling period ... within counseling I will be resorting to my sense of what is the good me. Where is my core?

Experiencing S/R as central

Experiencing S/R as an aspect of self

Johnny: Okay.

Participant: That's where [inaudible 00:04:26] I'm trying to access. What's the core of me saying? If I'm struggling through a specific issue, I may be striving to find what the core of me is saying about that.

Centering on S/R

Johnny: The way you're describing that, with it being, you've used the word "fundamental", you've used "important", you've used "core". It

sounds like spirituality and religion enter your counseling process through you.

Participant: Yes. Yes.

Johnny: Like you're carrying them into the room, into the process.

Participant: Yes. Yup. Not ... I would say it's really like ... in my counseling my ... a counselor does not resort to talking about things from a spiritual level unless maybe I'm trying to go there. Trying to position it, which I tend to appreciate.

Bringing S/R into therapy

Johnny: Okay. Yup. It's really coming from within you, because of how core, how central it is to who you are? Does it come from any other place? Would that also be true with the rest of your life, where spirituality and religion enter into your experience, comes from within you?

Participant: Yes. I think it's true for everything. In certain aspects I'm less inclined to turn towards that foundational sense of myself.

Johnny: Okay.

Participant: Where I may be more inclined to do something that feels selfish or immediate, in a gut tradition sense. I think if I were to ask the simple question of, "Does this benefit the whole of me, do whatever I'm doing?" That's gonna be a spiritual question.

Centering on S/R

Johnny: Okay.

Participant: Like whether it's you know how I conduct myself when I drive a car, what I'm doing at work, the types of things that I say to my friends, or if I'm surfing how I interact with people out there. It's all, I mean all of that stuff is important to how I ... important by the foundational, spiritual ...

Memo: 1/10/2018

Bringing spirituality into therapy

So, this participant is articulating more of the same as other participants- spiritual/religion is a core part of me therefore, it walks into the room with me. It is part of who I am, so it becomes part of the therapy process. The path toward addressing that can happen implicitly or explicitly and it can come

from the client or the counselor.

Johnny: Okay, yeah.

Participant: ... sense of myself.

Johnny: That actually might Segway really well into the second question, which again might feel like some of the answers might feel obvious. We're just gonna ruminate just a little bit on them. How do you know when something is spiritual or religious in your counseling?

Participant: I guess it ... again I think it all is ... it all can come ... I mean it can have a spiritual component to it. So, I don't ask the question so much as, "Is this spiritual or not?" So much as, "How does this ... what is the key component of ... how does this impact spirituality?"

***Being a spiritual person?
Centering on S/R***

Johnny: Okay.

Participant: Or how does my spirituality influence my [inaudible 00:08:17]? How my spirituality influences things? I think it's less of if but how, or what.

Johnny: Which makes sense when you describe spirituality as something that's very core, very fundamental to who you are. It then potentially could be a part of everything that you do.

Participant: Right. Yeah.

Johnny: Now, just for the sake of being a devil's advocate. Let's say you walk into counseling and you sit down with your counselor and he asks you about your weekend. You shoot the breeze for a little while, talking about what you did over the weekend. Would something as kind of pedestrian, or as ordinary as that, would that follow that same principal for you of it is spiritual, it's not if it's how is it spiritual?

Participant: Yeah. I think the ... I don't know, my [inaudible 00:09:23] connecting with someone is even if we're just sort of talking about, yeah shooting the breeze, and we're just sort of connecting on simple stuff, I've never been someone who enjoys small talk for the sake of small talk. In fact, I hated small talk as a kid, not even realizing some

of the goodness in it. Now I realize there's goodness in small talk. That's a means to get yourself into more of a connection with someone. So I think in the scenario that you described with the counselor, I would be shooting the breeze about the weekend to kind of form up our connection. Our connection, I think, might be somewhat spiritual. I think that's what I'm after. It's like having that sort of whole connection with someone, especially my counselor.

Experiencing S/R in all things

Johnny: Yeah. Then, let me move to the other end of the spectrum. Even small talk for you has spiritual underpinnings to it, particularly because of the role it serves in connecting with the other person. Let's move all the way to the other end, and let's say you have a more, what you might say obviously spiritual moment. I think about the way you ... you know you had previously talked about the kind of dark time that you went through and how that was a very inherent, this was a very kind of pronounced spiritual experience for you. How would you then ... How might you then describe? Is that spiritual in the same way as small talk is spiritual or is there like an adjective or something we need to add on to what kind of a spiritual experience that is?

Participant: Yeah, there's probably a big adjective to be added on to there. I'd say that's sort of ... it goes in with a lot more of a pursuit and certain ... threatening of your spirituality ...

Johnny: Oh okay.

Participant: ... in a way that's ... I don't know if it's necessarily a quality thing so much as a quantity thing. Yeah, but I think you know it's much more steeped in spirituality. Again I think I had described, and it's been a little while, but I think I would describe that as, that experience that I had as something that could be rationally for the most part I think many of those experiences could be rationally explained. With this small exception, there's a few that were certainly like, "Wow! That was either a total crazy hallucination." That I think rationality would really struggle and strain to put language around, or that was struggle I think how science tries to do often. It really tries to make sense of something that from the basis that it can be rationally explained, but there's just certain parts of my experience that are much more resolutely and ... a resonating sense that it's spiritual.

Experiencing S/R Overtly Addressing spirituality:: overtly

Johnny: Yeah.

Participant: I'm struggling to say exactly ... to answer exactly your question, but it feels like there are some certain things that are so heavy with spirituality and so sort of lacking in other components that the main [inaudible 00:14:18] then is to be spiritual. Just like there are some things that are so heavily rational, that I might say, "Well, there's probably a small spiritual component to that." But we're talking simple arithmetic, that's a pretty rational thing. Two plus two is four. It's fairly rational. Just like I think, there's probably certain spiritual experiences that fairly lacking in the rational or certain physical.

Experiencing S/R overtly

Johnny: Yeah. No, you're giving me a lot here. 'Cause what I'm hearing is, the adjectives you used were like "immersive", "dripping", "steeped", and yet what came to mind for me was just like that some ... all of your experiences are spiritual because spirituality is fundamental to who you are. But some experiences feel particularly, I'll add one other word, they feel particularly saturated with spirituality.

Participant: Yeah, yeah that's "dripping" and "steeped". They're definitely cons ... fairly, yeah saturated is a good word for those all. Yup.

Alternate wording: Experiencing S/R Richly?

Memo: 1/10/2018

I think he is describing this overt versus subtle aspect of spirituality in therapy. Some things are very obviously spiritual while other things, it is more nuanced. But, at this point, we have not dialed in on how this stuff impacts his counseling process. Only that it is present and what places it is visible in.

Johnny: And then it sounds like you added one more piece in, kind of in those moments, when there's a very steeped, saturated, spiritual experience, that you experience kind of resonating. So, it sounded to me like you kind of experience and feel something internally that says, "This is one of those saturated, spiritual moments."

Participant: Yeah. Yeah, definitely.

Johnny: Anything in particular that I should know about that resonating feeling?

Participant: I mean I think ... When you ... As you grow up you learn what is ...

what feels like truth, and what feels like ... there's an intuition in you that you can ... this is sort of I think one of like our greatest gifts is [inaudible 00:17:00], you know we have this intuitive sense. We don't have to sort through a lot of details. We just sort of have ... feel something. And very often, that intuition is accurate. It's based on our ability to receive huge amount of inputs at the same time and form a conclusion quickly. I think it's that kind of sense that as growing up kid in a ... with a faith background, and wrestling through a lot of these questions as a child, as a young adult, and being on different ends of the spectrum in terms of belief, my intuitive sense has been hooked. So, I think that's what I'm speaking to is just that ability to kind of feel like, "Yeah, this seems solid." I don't know how else to describe it other than that. Does that kind of get at your question?

Sensing spirituality

Johnny: Yeah, it does. So, there is a ... kind of in keeping with the nature of what spirituality is, there is a more of an intuitive sense of recognizing ... kind of intuiting when a saturated spiritual moment is happening. I think the other thing I'm thinking about is then within counseling you may have, all of the moments have a spiritual layer to them because you fundamentally are a spiritual person. Some of the moments may be particularly saturated with spirituality. Then I'm thinking about how you had a counselor who, prior to Don, who you felt like didn't really appreciate this layer of your experience.

Participant: Right.

Johnny: So, I'm then thinking like it's not like it removes spirituality from the equation, because that's something that is within you. But I'm wondering if it can inhibit the saturated spiritual experiences within that counseling relationship.

Participant: To have a counselor that is not as ... or doesn't really recognize that experience as much? Is that what you mean?

Johnny: Yeah.

Participant: That was ... I think that was certainly my experience, granted my counselor did come from a faith background, particularly Christian, but I think there was a lack of ... yeah maybe depth or desire to relate to things spiritually in an integrated fashion.

Experiencing S/R with the therapist::dimension lacking depth, lacking connection

Johnny: Okay. Yup. And then that's helpful. Now I'm really gonna bank on you, I believe you've said you're an enneagram 4, if I remember correctly?

Participant: Aha.

Johnny: I'm gonna bank on this enneagram 4 artistry. All right?

Participant: Okay.

Johnny: Can you give me a picture or metaphor that will help me understand how spirituality or religion operates in your counseling process?

Participant: I mean certainly it's the water that I swim in. There's other things that are ... that are ... there's light, there's air, there's other elements that are involved. There's land, there's earth. There's a lot of other things that are a part of my experience in counseling, but when I'm living life and I'm fully emersed in life, I'm in this spiritual water.

Experiencing spirituality in all of life

Johnny: Okay.

Participant: So, when I'm in counseling I sort of go into that. Sometimes I have to be ... you know I'm submerged and it's hard to make sense of stuff and expresses all these. So there can be an event that may be [inaudible 00:21:53] spirituality. I think that's possible and true for my experience, but it's so much richer where you have that ability to go, "I'm in the water."

Johnny: Yeah. And to ...

Participant: So, I guess soaking in there.

Johnny: I love that metaphor and to kind of build on it in terms of counseling, is your counselor in the water with you?

Participant: Yeah, I would say so. Yeah and relates ... some of his experience of water or water similar to that will give me stories or relate to other people's stories, to say, "Hey, here's kinda what the water's like from this perspective." Or, "Here's how the water has been tainted from ..." you know you read books of people that you know one person boarding, or better descriptions. That helps in the water.

Johnny: And was your previous counselor, who was less receptive to this

stuff, were they in the water with you?

Participant: No, not the same.

Johnny: Okay. It's like that other counselor was wanting you to get out of the water or maybe move into the more shallow end.

Participant: Yeah, or like yeah, yeah, or just didn't even ... might have even been inclined to say, "There is no water." Or, "Your water is not as ... you're making up things about the water." Or you know ... in my experience with my current counselor is like, "No, I think what you're saying about the water makes sense. That seems true."

Memo: Feeling known/Being validated

However, we are still talking about what spirituality is to this person and then what it looks like in counseling, or how it enters. But, we haven't broken into the impact that it has on the process.

Sharing S/R experiences with the counselor::connecting to describing to dismissing

Johnny: Yeah.

Participant: Validating in one sense, but yet so much more than just validating.

Johnny: Yeah, and so that's gonna segue well into the next question. You're a spiritual person, that's fundamental to who you are, you carry that into counseling. There are some moments in counseling and in life that are more saturated with spirituality. Spirituality is like the water you swim in. And then you have, again you have these two contrasting counselors. One that was more inviting and one that wasn't. What does it do for you to experience spirituality and religion in counseling? And I'll emphasize that piece of ... if you remember from, which you probably don't, it's my job to remember. The aim of my research is really on going, "Okay, when that spirituality is present, what is it like? And then what does it do? What does it do for Participant to have spirituality as a part of his counseling process?"

Participant: I think it just allows that counseling process to be much more integrated. It removes my fear that counseling is just going to be generally focused on a certain set of ... a certain set ... I tend to think that there's ... taking the religion to the purely scientific ... there could be such a strong appearance to the purely scientific that when the spiritual dimension is just maybe equated or if it could be given some space in counseling. I think ... I haven't had the experience of

talking to a counselor who's just purely rational, but that would be my fear is having a counselor who's purely rational.

Addressing S/R in therapy

Johnny: Yeah.

Participant: Maybe it does [inaudible 00:27:02] my sense of ... my sense of ... yeah the divine line.

Johnny: Right. So, you said that it allows the counseling process to be integrated. Say a few more things about what's getting integrated?

Participant: Just myself. Myself, my experience applied. It can be much more fully integrated. As I've said my belief, my sense, and my experience of the world that we are a certain degree spiritual and to have every side, I've known that about myself. So, I'm able to have an experience of counseling that is ... that [inaudible 00:28:09] that. So thus it's integrated.

Johnny: Yeah. So, in some ways it's like you get to bring more of your whole person to the process?

Participant: Aha. Yeah. Exactly.

Johnny: Okay. So, you're spiritual when counseling invites that spirituality, it's more integrated with who you are. You're bringing more of yourself and then there's goodness that comes from that.

Participant: Right. Yes.

Johnny: And that goodness looks like what?

Participant: That goodness looks like a rare ... [inaudible 00:29:09], it looks like a greater awareness of I would say just of the preacher. A greater awareness of myself. Yeah, it's ... yeah.

Johnny: Yeah. So, it seems like part of the benefit of the benefit, the goodness, is um ... like I don't hear you saying, "Because my spirituality is integrated into my counseling then I feel better. I have less anxiety." I hear you saying, and maybe that is part of it, but I hear you saying you're able to bring more of yourself and the things that are most fundamental to who you are.

Participant: Right. I think that the byproduct ... I mean the goal, the end, the end goal of counseling is certainly to feel less anxiety, to feel more

emotionally and mentally healthy. That's the end goal, but I think that's only possibly through a truer sense of how things are, both in yourself and in the world. Since there's a ... I mean I have a quality in spirituality in my life, having that ability to process good things from a spiritual dimension allows me to relate things in that way, and relate through anxiety, process the spiritual components of anxiety. Yeah. I guess like ...

Memo: 1/10/2018

Accepting of the present moment

Validating the person

Now, he is beginning to speak more on the center of the target. He is highlighting a few key spheres that S/R in therapy impacts- his view of himself, and his acceptance of how things are.

Centering on S/R

Johnny: Yeah.

Participant: I think about one particular scenario where a counselor gave me a book about decision making that was written by some Catholic authors, and there's some just really sound, solid, reasonable wisdom in there. But this spiritual component to it as well just makes it so much more rich, and full, and complete. Well, it's like my decision made to have a sort of mystical quality to it as well.

Personal Expression from metasyntesis

Being directed

And now he is adding in the layer of spirituality impacting how we move *forward* in life. There is a direction to it. It isn't just a line, it is vector- it has directionality.

Johnny: Yeah.

Participant: Mystical, not meaning unexplanatory, but mystical in a connecting with the divine.

Centering on S/R- properties here? Mystical, intellectual, in practice?

Johnny: Yeah. Yup. So more the definition of mystic as a person who seeks experiences with God.

Participant: Exactly. Yes.

Johnny: So, there's this ... So refine this for me. So, I hear you talking about how having the goodness that comes from this is you get this rare,

richer awareness of kinda the fundamentals of who you are and what resonates as true to you in the world. Then there's this byproduct of where that is going to impact things like anxiety. What I'm hearing in that is like ... I'm hearing this sense of like reconnecting to what is true and then attempting to continue living out of that place?

Participant: Yes. Yes. Yeah, definitely. It's ... yeah being able to attach on a spiritual component in counseling allows me to acknowledge that in myself, acknowledge that about my experience, how to validate it, my counselor and to continue living of that more fully once we end the counseling session.

Centering on S/R

Here are three spheres of impact lined up with one another—the self, the current moment, the path forward.

Johnny: This is a hard question, I think. How do you know when you're living out of it more fully?

Participant: I don't know. I don't know if we ever really know that we're living fully out of life, but I think there's an experience of life where people can just interact with me and say, "Wow! It seems like you're doing really well." And I can be like, "Oh wow! Yeah, I think you're right. I am doing really well." It takes a community of people to be aware of all that.

Being more centered

Johnny: So, it sounds like there's one element where you're setting aside time with things like counseling to refocus on this fundamental thing for yourself. And that one of the reflection points into that is that others around you will begin to notice that you're carrying a different demeanor?

Participant: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. Yeah, I think for sure. People in my life will definitely recognize a general state of health [inaudible 00:35:45] of good health. Many people comment on that.

Johnny: Again this is possibly a large question, but why do you think that is? Why is it that reconnecting with this fundamental spiritual part of yourself, the things that resonate as true for you, why is it that doing that changes the very way that people experience us?

Participant: I mean I think that's like truth of the point, that you've become a set ... that writing on is that my life is you know more than just body

and brain and emotion. I think the fact that I believe in a spiritual component of myself and I nurture it, and I work on it in secret, and in solitude, and in counseling. When it feels healthy and well people recognize a general overall state of healthiness in me. I think that is confirmation that this secret part of me is there.

Johnny: Yeah.

Participant: So, yeah. Does that get at your question?

Johnny: It is. Yeah. That's one of the fun things about this topic for me is in some senses there is no bullseye on this topic.

Participant: Aha.

Johnny: Because it is a ... like you said it's not a concrete, rational experience. So I just am really appreciating circling around it with you. Let me circle one word you said. You said, "People will notice a healthiness." I think about how we might look at a person's physical body, and in general there's things we would look at and go, "They look healthy or unhealthy." Like that person looks pale. That person looks gaunt. They look ... you can see on their physical body things that kind of signal health or unhealth. I'm curious what comes to mind for you? What are the signals of health that result from spirituality?

Participant: You can see it in someone's visage. I think.

Johnny: See it in their what?

Participant: Their visage, like you know you see it on their face. It reflects in the way they talk. If they're irritable or angry or just they are ... I think since we're total humans, we're made up of these components of spirituality, physicality, mentality, and emotions, that any one component will affect the other. So people can see signs of a spiritual unhealth in just someone's physical appearance.

Johnny: Yeah. Yup.

Participant: I think that like ... I mean ... I think that sort of asks the question, "Well, what about people who are not putting any work into their spirituality?" People who would outwardly deny that there's a spiritual component of themselves. I think that people find food for themselves whether or not they know that they're feeding themselves from an emotional, spiritual sort of way.

- Johnny: Right.
- Participant: And they just become real you know ... they live in some facet maybe that becomes apparent in how [inaudible 00:40:56].
- Johnny: You mentioned a couple of descriptors for unhealthy, like irritable, and angry. What would be the descriptors of healthy?
- Participant: Vibrant, passionate. I tend to think that the fruits of the spirit love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control. I look for signs of those in my life to have a sense that I'm healthy and keeping myself [inaudible 00:41:39].
- Johnny: Yeah.
- Participant: If any of those are missing, I know, "Wow! I've felt really impatient." Or, "Wow it's really [inaudible 00:41:54] or [inaudible 00:41:57]." That's a signal to me that my spiritual life is being comprised in some way.
- Johnny: Yeah. So, much like if you took your temperature and it registered a 101, you would know your body was fighting an infection, in much the same way you could go, "If I begin to see a lack of some of these things or a presence of other things in my life, it orients me to say there's something going on for me spiritually that I'm not addressing."
- Participant: Right. Correct.
- Johnny: I'm aware of our time, that we have about five minutes left.
- Participant: Okay. Yeah.
- Johnny: Let me hit on the last question and then get some final thoughts from you. What is challenging or hard about having spirituality or religion in your counseling process?
- Participant: Just the fact that it ... it could be tough to describe. It doesn't by itself readily that it's hard to find language around spirituality that isn't you know [inaudible 00:43:24], to find authentic [inaudible 00:43:29] really accurately describe something that doesn't feel over processed through a church community. Through the language of church community. That I think can be negative. Where people use just the language they heard their pastor say, or something they read in a book, or just what everybody else is saying. To find authentic, true, accurate language that describes your spirituality

that people can relate to, is I think probably the hardest part or that has been one of the hardest parts.

Johnny: Yeah. Well, what strikes me as you say that is that's kinda one of the very things I encounter in this research is I'm talking with you right now about something that is incredibly fundamental to who you are and equally as hard to describe thoroughly.

Participant: Yeah. Yeah, totally. Yeah, bingo.

Johnny: Which honestly is part of why I'm needing ... I've noticed this throughout a lot of my interviews, I'm needing to circle it and come back to it because I think by the nature of what it is, it was easy for some of this portion of the interview descriptions to kind of land on, "Well, spirituality it's just everything to me. It's just everything." Which is like, yup it's everything and man, it's really hard to get some language around what does that mean.

Participant: Oh man, totally.

Johnny: So thinking about that is there anything you would add that comes to mind? Anything that feels relevant? Anything you want me to know? Any word you would put more color around?

Participant: Apart from like it's everything or ... ?

Johnny: About our whole conversation today.

Participant: I mean just that like I think ... I'm glad that you're doing this research, I think it seems to have just some more research based validity around someone's spiritual experience and how it relates to ... relates to one of the more formative, sort of decided ... it's a decided process, the counseling process. It's something that you know someone's in counseling because they chose to be in counseling. There's two scenarios where they're ordered to be in counseling, but I think and most of our otherwise formative experiences are like growing up with parents, siblings, things that you don't really choose. So, in this case this is a decided process that we go through and to be able to engage in spirituality and realize that there's validity to it in the counseling experience I think just allows counseling to be much more whole and healing.

Johnny: Whole and healing. That is a word that has come up previously and I'm gonna ask you if you can put a few more things around it. Healing.

Participant: Yeah, I think life ... what I felt in my own experience of life and this is maybe not everyone's, but life inherently will hurt us and we'll develop scars or to [inaudible 00:48:08] that requires proper healing in order for us to move through. Healing emotionally looks like being able to acknowledge those hurts, put some language around it, mourn it, whatever. Go through a spiritual process toward it, whatever it takes. Healing looks like, yeah we get wounded through various ways through life.

What we decide to do with those wounds or we can either not decide to do anything or we decide to treat those wounds by going to counseling, whether we know that that's exactly why we're going to counseling or not. Some people are going to counseling just to get medicated or whatever, or just 'cause they think that would help them go through a process a little better. I think the goal of it is to sort of heal yourself, to get better at doing life, and make up for deficiencies that you didn't have when you were younger or deficiencies in your understanding of life and who you are when you were younger. So all that I think is healing.

Johnny: I might tap into your creative side another moment here. And this is gonna sound like an SAT question, one of those SAT analogies. Spirituality is to healing, as what is to what?

Participant: Spirituality is to healing ... I mean the feeling that I have is like when we're healing there's a ... you can apply something to the wound, you can [inaudible 00:50:48] it, but this is sort of the wound healing itself. The wound from the inside moving the healing outward. It's like ... all I can think of is the imagery of a wound closing itself up inwardly or from the inside out.

Johnny: Yeah. That's helpful.

Participant: Wow! Failing this SAT question.

Johnny: Dude, I threw it out there and I'm sitting here thinking I don't even know how I would answer it.

Participant: Yes, not sure exactly how I'd answer that one real specifically, but it is definitely remarkable how ... to me it's remarkable how the body knows how to heal itself, and that to me is like what spirituality is capable of. It's the ... Often we'll have a wound that requires a lot of different sources of healing, but if the body is not on board with that process it's gonna be a long road.

Johnny: Yeah.

Participant: So, I'd say like ... let's see spirituality is like ... or spirituality and counseling, is that the question?

Johnny: Spirituality is to healing?

Participant: Oh, is to healing? As like, I don't know, yoga is to limberness. It's not necessary to being limber, but it is a ... it's a set of ... and I mean yoga in like sort of just the physical yoga, it's the practice of exploring your body in its range of motion. So ...

Johnny: Yeah, this is helpful. It's hard, but I might hold on to this question for my future. And I might have to answer it myself too.

Participant: Yeah, yeah. I dare you.

Johnny: Yeah. 'Cause I'm sitting here going, "Spirituality is to healing as fertilizer is to growth, or a key is to a car?" I'm kinda bouncing through these different metaphors of the role that spirituality plays.

Participant: Yeah. It's not super clear to me.

Johnny: Yeah. Yeah.

Participant: Yeah, I think it's a really good question. It's like the ... I mean if you think of ... I guess like a component of a car, machinery, it's ... I don't know like it doesn't ... it's ...

Johnny: It's like it's more like engine oil than it is gasoline.

Participant: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah.

Participant 7606005

Participant: How are you doing?

Johnny: I'm doing well, how are you?

Participant: Doing well, it's been a little while.

Johnny: It has been. It's been too long.

Participant: Yeah.

Johnny: But I'm finally here and very grateful for your willingness to do another interview with me.

Participant: Of course.

Johnny: Is now still work for the next 45, 50 minutes or so?

Participant: Yeah, definitely, now is a good time.

Johnny: Awesome, so let me give you a quick refresher on what my research is doing and then into what the questions today are really going to focus on and then we'll tackle through the questions and talk about them.

Participant: Cool.

Johnny: So the reminder from my research is that it is not just focused on do clients want to discuss spirituality or religion in their counseling, it's not focused on how do they feel about, it's really much more focused on what does it do for their process. So, when it is something that's important to them and it is something that's present, what kind of a thing is it? And so, the questions today are really going to be focused much more on that like, where does spirituality come from in the counseling process, what does it do once it's there, what kind of things does it produce for the person?

So a few of the questions or follow up questions might feel redundant, but that's a little bit of what I need is to keep circling around and fill in more of the picture.

Participant: Cool.

Johnny: That make sense?

Participant: Yeah.

Johnny: Do you have any questions about that?

Participant: No, yeah I think I'm ready to go.

Johnny: Awesome, so then the first question is really knowing that you're a person who has been in counseling, you've had your counseling process and that spirituality and religion are part of your life, they're something that's important to you. I think my question is how does that stuff that you believe in, spirituality and religion that stuff that you experience, how does it enter into your counseling process? Like how does it get there?

Participant: Yeah, so I think that it kind of gets there I guess in a couple ways. For one, well I guess there's sort of two ways I'm thinking about right now, there are sometimes I'll just directly bring it up knowing that [Counselor] is a pastor on staff [inaudible 00:02:30] church, just knowing that kind of makes me feel like that's clearly a topic that's on the table. That being said, I think I've mentioned in our meeting that I actually did see a counselor in San Diego when I was living there and I actually would still talk about religious topics with that therapist as well, despite knowing that for him, he would not consider himself a religious man, knowing that was something that was so much a part of my upbringing, it would still be something I would bring up just to reveal context around the situation that I wanted to make sure that he sort of understood that, hey, this is why this might be a bigger issue to me, this other situation, because of this backdrop.

Memo: As with almost all my other participants, the S/R simply enters counseling through them- they bring it in.

I think one way definitely is that I'll directly bring it up. I would say that I bring it up more than [Counselor] does. I rarely catch him trying to steer our conversation that way, which actually sort of deprives me. It's kind of interesting, I sort of assumed coming into counseling at a Christian establishment that it would sort of be christian counseling. I don't know if I would go as far as to say that that's really what I feel like the counseling has been, I think that it's definitely more, to me it feels like standard psychological counseling that if we want to discuss some spiritual or religious topics, those are definitely on the table as they would be anywhere else, and [Counselor] has more context and background in that to be able to speak to that. But it definitely feels to me a lot different than what I would imagine pastoral would be, anyway I might be getting off

topic here but that's kind of my initial thoughts around that oftentimes I'll directly bring it up and sometimes it will be referenced a bit more subtly by [Counselor] as well if it relates.

There is a variation of how overtly to subtly S/R is referenced or addressed.

Johnny: Okay. And so, it sounds like most of the time the spirituality, faith, religion, it enters into your counseling because either you or your counselor bring it up, in your case, most of the time it's you bringing it up?

Participant: Exactly, I'll be having some kind of ... typically, usually the topics I bring up are something I'm maybe struggling with or it relates to something I feel bad about or have some kind of negative emotion about and what I'm struggling with, and so typically, somehow there will be some kind of relation to religion among that or somehow I'll feel like it's related, even if tangentially and so I'll at that point bring it up-

Memo: 1/10/2018 Addressing spirituality in counseling

Like many other participants, they primarily see themselves bringing S/R with them into the therapy process. Then, for some participants, it is important that they experience some congruence with their counselor in this area.

Johnny: Yeah, so let me ask you about that, like what ... you said negative emotions or something that you're struggling with, what kinds of things prompt you to bring it up?

Participant: I would say more often than not it would probably be a relationship matter. And, I think that that's one area that it's sort of difficult in this day and age to be religious, especially with the media and with what is normal either in San Francisco or just among my friend group as an early 30s person where, you know ... yeah so typically, [inaudible 00:05:50] romantic relationships where I'm like, "Hey you know," ... sometimes for example I might feel like a tension where I'm like, "Listen, I haven't really been dating that much and I feel like part of that might be to blame on religion," because I just feel like there's a set way of dating somebody inside the church whereas most of my friends, I see that they have this different progression where they just meet somebody they like, they hook up, they do whatever, which is not, at least in the branch of Christianity that I grew up in, like that's not so much acceptable to do something that's a physical thing before you're married.

That was definitely like a kind of recurring theme, I would say, just talking about religion as it affects romantic relationships. And, probably the other time I would bring up the most in my counseling would probably be if I was talking about goals and things that I haven't really worked on or accomplished or I would feel like at this point in my life I would be expecting myself to be further along in certain areas. I think for me, just sort of developing my own space like apart from my upbringing has been a challenge, so I feel like as a kid, I was very much like my family is Christian and [inaudible 00:07:06] because I was raised in the faith, but now I'm 30, I haven't lived with my family for quite a while that I haven't necessarily made it my own thing and it hasn't always been as prioritized in my life as much as it is for my parents.

So, that kind of struggle about like oh, you know I feel like this is something I grew up with but I haven't really made it my own, I feel like my relationship with God isn't something I'm proud of or something that really exists, so those kinds of questions, those are kind of the [inaudible 00:07:37] things I'll talk to [Counselor] about.

Memo: 1/10/2018

Being directed by S/R

This section strikes me that goals connect to S/R for him. It seems that many participants connect S/R to a sense of direction in their life. So, when they think about where they are and where they want to go, S/R is strongly connected with any topics related to where the person is heading in life.

Johnny: And that's helpful, and is there any ... like see where religion and faith play a role in both of those, is there anything that those two topics have in common that kind of provokes them to be spiritual or religious topics?

Participant: I think that my common thing across both of those is in both cases I feel like maybe I should be doing something or I should be doing something that I don't want to or I'm not, and so I think that for me that kind of common thread there would just be that I feel like somehow I'm not measuring up in those ways or there's some kind of friction where I'm like, "This is how it's supposed to be, this is how things are, these things don't align, and therefore I feel some negative emotions around that."

Memo: 1/10/2018

He is speaking in more of a negative sense here but he is articulating the connection between spirituality/religion and

the growth/change process. S/R becomes very interwoven with where a person feels they are heading and then also acts as part of the vehicle for how they get there.

Johnny: Okay. Yeah, well and that kind of goes back to what you were saying earlier that broadly speaking the negative emotions bring up, and I guess one thing that I want to clarify, is it that you feel these negative emotions from the circumstances and so you're reflecting on religion's role in that? Or is your faith, religion, spirituality something that you're wanting to rely on in the midst of those negative emotions?

Participant: Sorry, what was the first option that you just said?

Johnny: More reflecting on religion's role in kind of contributing to these hard emotions?

Participant: Yeah, I think that it would be more that than trying to rely on religion to comfort me or something. I would say it's more about figuring out, "Hey, I feel like this is something that is important on some level and should be important yet, it's not that important to me and I feel like I need to figure this out for my life to basically assess what are my priorities, and so that's kind of been something that I've tried to definitely flesh out with [Counselor] at times.

Johnny: Yeah. That makes sense. And how do you, I'll shift to the second question, how do you know when something in counseling is spiritual or religious?

Participant: That's a good question, I was sort of just reflecting on the questions a little bit before our call and it's kind of an interesting question, I don't know exactly how spirituality is defined here because in my upbringing, spirituality was sort of synonymous with religious, but in this day and age I think that a lot of things are spiritual, and San Francisco for example, a lot of people would consider themselves spiritual but not religious. And so, yeah just sort of thinking about that definition I mean, I guess for me, unless I really think about it, my default mode is something is spiritual or religious when it relates to Christianity, I would say, that's kind of been my default. I could sort of stretch that to say well, you know, for example there are a lot of philosophical slash spiritual writings that are kind of in the self help genre, so I would say that I probably read things that are known in the community as spiritual, I think that's not typically my definition, that's not usually what I would think. So, I guess what I would say, just thinking back on my therapy, I would probably say typically for me something is spiritual when it relates to

Christianity, I would say.

Centering on S/R

Johnny: Okay, and so when the topic or the circumstance has a connected relationship to Christianity?

Participant: Yeah, I mean, I'm trying to think. I don't think it would necessarily need to be so explicit to say like, "Oh, we have to be talking about Jesus or the church or the disciples," it wouldn't necessarily go that far, I think that it could have a religious make up too if for example we're talking values or we're talking about ... I think there are degrees to how spiritual I would say that conversation is. But yeah I think that there are some times that conversations that have, [Counselor] and I, where we're talking about something there's just sort of an unspoken understanding that because of this religious faith, something makes sense or it's obvious as to why you would think a certain thing or act a certain way, and we don't have to say, "Oh, because of Christianity and because this is like [inaudible 00:12:44]," you know, something like that. So, I would say that that would be somewhat spiritual as well, conversations like that.

Johnny: And so you said there's some degrees of religion, spirituality in counseling, some of them would be incredibly overt, whereas others might be more subtle, but there's a shared understanding that the topic you're engaging is a religious one.

Participant: Right, or religion plays some kind of role in that and there's kind of a contextual layer that's not maybe explicitly discussed but it's understood that this relates to religion.

Johnny: Yeah. And anything you'd add on those more subtle ... anything you experience internally, anything that's common to the topics that says, "This involves religion for me?"

Memo: 1/10/2018

This section feels less about the impact of S/R and more about the experience of addressing S/R in therapy. He is hitting some of the same categories I have identified previously- explicit versus implicit. S/R being a contextual layer for the person coming in to therapy.

Participant: Good question, yeah for sure, another maybe subtle thing, it probably becomes less subtle typically too because this will oftentimes we'll kind of explicitly the religious aspect, like when we talk about my parents, because it's such a big part of their lives and

their specific brand of spirituality that that's a part of any discussion relating to my parents because it's so ingrained, like their specific kind of version of Christianity is such a part of who they are that any conversation talking about them really is going to be spiritual. So yeah, that for sure. Trying to think of any other topics that might ... feel like the ones that we discussed are probably the main ones.

Johnny: Okay, and when you were saying there are times where you might be discussing something in counseling with [Counselor] and there's kind of this shared understanding that it makes sense, kind of because of or that religion plays a part in making sense of it, can you say anything more about that?

Participant: Yeah, I mean kind of going back to the example that I maybe mentioned before, like I think that ... or maybe to contrast with my previous counselor, with my previous counselor, it felt like there were sometimes a disconnect a little bit when we talked about women or dating because we would sort of talk about some insecurities I had and some mental hang ups or avoidance behaviors around wanting to date and basically my old counselor, I'm definitely not saying anything negative about him, but basically one of his methods of sort of relating would be to show some of his own experiences at times, like around dating and just talk about that.

And almost like this, "What about this, what about that, what about thinking about it this way, what about thinking about it that way?" And that was very much from kind of like an agnostic or not very religious perspective and I was kind of like, "Well, we've talked about religion though, and for me that wouldn't really make sense or it wouldn't work because I think that acting in that way might compromise my values," whereas with [Counselor], we wouldn't have to have that explicit conversation or that reminder about those things because he would just automatically know, "Oh, obviously Participant wouldn't be trying to meet this girl and quickly sleep with her or this and that because I understand the place that he's coming from spiritually," and I would attribute some of that ... I think it's a little more natural if the counselor is of the same faith, because like I said just less has to be explicitly stated or reminded because it's just like, "Oh, obviously I understand, I grew up in a somewhat similar situation," perhaps.

**Memo: Another participant mentioned this same dynamic-
having congruence in S/R with the counselor increases trust
but also can leave some things unaddressed/unspoken.
This also makes me wonder if the other counselor could hold a
different set of values but not create the same dynamic of**

having a “disconnect.”

Johnny: Right. And that was the second or third time you've used the word values. And kind of hearing this instance where with your previous counselor you might be discussing something that they aren't realizing involves your values and that those values are influenced by your religion.

Participant: Yeah, I think that, not to go too off topic here, but I think that in general it's a little bit hard to fully understand certain values, to use that word again, if you aren't a part of the religion or you didn't grow up in it, it's like for example, if somebody grew up in it and then later stepped way and said, "Hey this isn't for me," I think that even then you could have a great understanding around maybe certain predicaments or conflicts, whereas I think it's a lot easier for people who have never been religious to just be like, "Oh, I don't understand, why don't you just take the pieces you like and leave the other pieces and just forget about the other pieces."

Being understood. Feeling known.

And it's like actually, sure maybe that's a popular view in some places in the church at times, but I think that a lot of folks would sort of understand better if they had been a part of the church or they grew up in that or their pastor for example, they'd understand that no, actually that could create a pretty big conflict where you would feel like, "Hey that's not congruent," and so I just think that at times it's difficult to convey that this is sort of a sticking point if somebody doesn't really have that background.

Johnny: And so, they won't have as clear of an understanding of the values that are carried, but then because this is your personal counseling, it seems like they then wouldn't have as much of an understanding of you.

Participant: Exactly. And potentially, ultimately the recommendations might not be as relevant or counseling isn't all about recommendations so maybe just like the level of empathy that can be shared, maybe that's not as deep or just the level to which I feel understood might be a little bit, it might kind of more quickly [inaudible 00:19:09], "Oh well you know this is just an area that this person might not be able to help me as much because they just can't quite relate to this," and it's not like throw everything out, I need somebody new, it's just like, "We've gone as deep as we can on this particular topic, they're not going to really understand even though they might want to."

Being understood.

***Experiencing closeness with the counselor.
Relating to the therapist***

Johnny: That makes sense. You said you reviewed the questions, so maybe you have one loaded for me, but can you give me a picture or metaphor that would help me understand how spirituality and religion operates in your counseling?

Participant: That's a good question, I don't have one ready to go, let me think a little bit about this. So, any kind of visual description maybe?

Johnny: Yeah.

Participant: Okay. Let me see, let me just think about this for a minute actually. I mean, I guess I'll just with the thing that just popped into my head first, but yeah I guess I almost sort of view it a little bit as like a blanket that kind of is just not like over the top, but like for example if we think about the main room that [Counselor] and I are in, it seems like a blanket that's pretty large and not a regular one that you can sort of weave throughout the room and be around us both and kind of on the floor and I think that for me that metaphor or the meaning there is it just kind of goes back to that shared context, just shared understanding. So, yeah that as the first image that kind of popped into my head, it's kind of like, if color matters, like a pastel yellow blanket that's sort of quite large.

***Experiencing all of life as spiritual/religious
Experiencing all of counseling as spiritual/religious***

Sharing context with the therapist

Johnny: Yeah. And it's kind of in the room, it's weaving around you and [Counselor], and does the blanket provide anything, do anything?

Participant: Yeah, I mean I guess in my mind it's sort of for whatever reason seems kind of comforting, somewhat warm, it's not really moving. And it's sort of like just around everything, it's not like it's snugly wrapping me or [Counselor], like there's still the normal amount of space between us.

Johnny: But it's there, and you said it goes around you and [Counselor] and I was wondering how would it be different with your other counselor?

Participant: That's a good question, I would think that it basically wouldn't really be present at all because I think that for me it symbolizes that

shared understanding and as much as i liked my other counselor and it's not a comparison with [Counselor], I think that he's just coming from a different place and the two of us, I think religion is more of like an academic topic where he's interested in it, but it's very much from a place that's more removed.

Johnny: Yeah. And so, then building off of that, what does it do to have spirituality or religion as a part of your counseling? So, what does it do to have that blanket in the room?

Participant: Yeah, I think that it does put me at ease more, I think that going back to the attributes of the blanket I would say that yeah, I feel more comfortable and the reason for that would just be that it's nice to know, even in like a counseling setting where you hypothetically should be the most accepted, it's an accepting environment, it's just nice to know ... I mean, religion and spirituality is sort of a touchy subject I think, so there's no wondering, "Hey, is this person secretly judging me?" Even if they might not want to, it's inherently built in, is there any kind of like judgment or like, "That's stupid," or I don't know, it's just nice to know that 100% we're on the same page on this topic.

This is more speaking to the contents of my metasynthesis- what is experienced when addressing S/R in therapy.

It's just nice, I wouldn't say this is a common feeling of mine, but with my other therapist, potentially I maybe could experience a little bit of frustration here and there and to be like, "You know, we sort of talked about this a few times, I sort of feel like you might not fully understand what this means to me, even though I tried to sort of explain, hey this is where I'm coming from, but now we're having that conversation again." So, yeah another thing that it does is it's more concise, I don't have to paint the picture explicitly every single time that we talk about something that relates to it, it's understood. And I think that that, for me, has always been an important part of counseling.

For example, such a deterrent to finding someone new if I ever wanted to would just be like, "Oh my god, I have so much context with a person like [Counselor], I would have to relay all that groundwork and all that foundation," I don't know if this is necessarily a good way to think about counseling, but kind of the way I've thought about it is that it's very important for this person to understand me as well as possible, and then from that place we can work on personal growth. So, with that frame in mind, to go to somebody who doesn't understand religion very well, it feels like

we might be limited by that. So yeah, kind of all those things or sort of ways and I can elaborate on any of them if you're curious.

This piece doesn't feel particular to S/R in therapy- I think this would be true with any counselor and their long term client.

Johnny: Yeah, I'm hearing the shared understanding as a big thing, as a valuable thing. And the shared understanding leading to better understanding of you, and then I'm hearing some things that feel more like kind of like because religion is present, kind of because, then statements. Because it's more present, then I feel more at ease, I feel more comfortable.

Participant: Yeah, and so that for me was in part just due to understanding that I'm accepted, that I'm not being judged, yeah and I mean to even kind of go further in that, I think that for better or worse, oftentimes I can be a little bit more trusting of another person, too, if I'm like, "Hey, we have the same vocabulary," to go back to the discussion on values, "We have the same values, at least allegedly." A greater chance of having more in common if we both share this, and so I think that that's a comforting thought for me ... I've always thought that both of these counselors wanted the best thing for me, or even some of my friends, same thing. But then sometimes I'm like, "Oh this person doesn't have the same values, even though they want the best for me, they want something that I actually don't think is the best thing for me."

Having a perception of shared values with the counselor increases trust.

And so it feels a little bit misguided, and so to kind of have that extra assurance, like I'm sort of being led, like I think about counseling as I'm being led at times by this person or this person that I've kind of allowed to have maybe a bit of authority over me, it is comforting to be like, "Hey, we've got the same moral compass, same kind of basic thoughts about right and wrong," I'm more willing to take this person's advice and trust what they have to say.

Moral compass sounds like they share the same centering thing in their life.

Johnny: Yeah. And so, it sounds like your spirituality, your religion has the most influence on relating with your counselor.

Participant: Yeah. I think that's a fair statement, yeah.

Johnny: Kind of how you relate to your counselor, how they relate to you. Not as much influence on ... it seems like it has more influence there than it does on like the particular struggles you're bringing into counseling.

Participant: Yeah, I would say that's probably true, although if I were to say like how does religion enter counseling overall, I would say that the struggles I do bring in, that would probably be number two, so yeah religion's largest effect on my counseling, probably would be the way I relate. But then, number two I would say it is probably those problems that I do bring in, that seems like number two, but I agree with the ordering there.

Johnny: Yeah, and how does spirituality or religion impact the struggles?

Participant: Yeah, I mean I think that right now it's for me, I think that a decent number of my struggles in life are related to religion in one way or another, it's just been difficult to figure out the role that religion plays in my life, it's been a source of guilt at times just because it's such a thing for my parents, so maybe in some ways, maybe it's kind of subconscious, but like I'm not measuring up to what their expectations are, just kind of that discrepancy, what's expected of me versus what I'm doing. Just sort of wondering ... because yeah, Christianity in particular is pretty specific on the requirements and [inaudible 00:29:38] and if you don't depending on which teachings you really listen to or which preachers you listen to, there are varying kinds of consequences for that, ranging from not going to heaven to missing out on riches in heaven to having the worst life on earth.

Memo: This feels like a dimensional aspect of addressing S/R that is important. It is one for a problem to be related to S/R but it is another thing for it to be about the actual S/R

So, yeah I think that for me it is sort of like an identity question and like an, "Oh, I need to arrive at who I'm supposed to be," and I still have this massive part of any person's life that is very much sort of un-figured out. It seems like I've stagnated, it seems like I'm not progressing, I don't really know what I'm doing. It's something that at times I've read a lot about, thought about, prayed about. And so yeah, I think there are a lot of questions around that, at times other things take priority in my talks with [Counselor], typically like things related to social interactions with just various people in my life. But I think that that is an underlying one when talking about hang ups I've had for a while, I'd say that just the box of religion has been one that we go back to fairly regularly.

Spirituality and religion is seen as an aspect of identity.

Johnny: Yeah. And I heard you saying it's questions of identity and questions of value came up again. It seems like any topic that gets near values or identity kind of automatically tips over into the religion category.

Participant: Yeah I would say that, yeah. For me, I can't really think of ... now that I'm thinking about values, I can think of some that don't necessarily seem like or seem to tangentially relate to religion, I would say like the word values in my head does make me think of religion.

Johnny: And thinking about the results, both positive and negative, from having spirituality, religion, part of your counseling. So, when you go in and you have a conversation with [Counselor] that is very religious, it involves your values that you're really kind of trying to work something out that is in that category, what comes from that?

Participant: That's a good question, I think that, like I alluded to earlier, I think that sometimes the interaction has been a little bit different than what I expected and I think that at times I sort of assume that I would get a little bit more direct, "This is what you should do, listen I'm a pastor, here's how you should think about this, here's what you should pray about," or, "Here's what you should do," and this and that. I think from what I've seen, [Counselor]'s style is very much not that, I think potentially he's not trying to be like, "Oh just do this, X-Y-Z, there you go, boom." I think it's more about pushing the responsibility back on me to be like, "What do you think you should do?" Kind of that way. But we do talk about these topics, what is the outcome?

Johnny: And that could be cognitive, it can be in the way you live or in the way you feel or like anything that feels like a result from that.

Participant: Okay. Well, I'm trying to think. In terms of the way I live, I don't think that much has really changed. I think that for example, we've sometimes talked about certain topics relating to values that stem from religion and a couple of those conversations have looked like, "Hey, you know you were in a very difficult situation," like I was in a very difficult situation where my values felt like they were being threatened, I won't go into a lot of details, but it's sort of a bachelor party situation where certain people wanted to get some strippers for my friend and I was kind of acting as a best man in this scenario and I was like, "Damn it, this is totally not going the way I wanted to," so I was telling [Counselor] all about it and so that was kind of like, "Hey you basically weren't a pushover, you stood your ground

and you basically stood by something that was important to you, that's awesome." So sometimes there are conversations like that and nothing really changed in that I didn't live any differently, so in that case I would say that felt good.

Other times, I think that at times I've desired more, "Do this, do that," and [Counselor] being sort of like, "I'm a pastor, let me tell you how it is," and so I haven't gotten that, and like I said I don't necessarily think that's a bad thing, I think it's intentional. I think that at times I want a little more direction on that, so I'm not saying that this wouldn't necessarily change, but sometimes I've kind of wanted something that would motivate me to go to church more or motivate me to seek God more or something like that and those things haven't really happened, either on the [Counselor] taking control or on my own behaviors. I think that some of the struggles around prioritizing God and church, those have been struggles I've had for years and those haven't necessarily changed that much.

The center for this client remains the same even though he sees struggles over his life around how much he prioritizes it or what he is actually experiencing in it at any given moment.

But, I think that sometimes there have been things that [Counselor] has said that have made me kind of think a little bit differently about religion. I think one example was I was reading a book or a series of books or something by John Piper and [Counselor] actually has a lot of background with John Piper, I think he grew up in a church that was very much of that same leaning. And I think that one thing that was interesting about that was that he kind of said, I don't remember exactly how direct this was, he was like, "Maybe potentially take that with a grain of salt, that is one preacher, that's one view, that's one sect of Christianity," or whatever.

It might be interesting to sort of think about ... not let that be the end all, be all. So, I think in that scenario I was going, "Oh, that's interesting to hear, that's really cool that he actually knows a lot about this particular guy who I'm currently interested in," that is helping me kind of maybe gain a little bit more ... I think I was kind of troubled by some of the things that John Piper had said, so just sort of hearing [Counselor] go, "Hey I'm pretty familiar with that, maybe consider that that's not the only way to think about this," that kind of maybe gave me some comfort, "Okay, that's good to hear." So, that's kind of one case, where it's a little bit different actually because I feel like most of our interactions aren't that way.

It seems like there are moments where the counselor is seen as being a guide around spirituality. It could be authority, it could be guiding, but the result is a more direct role of suggesting direction. This section also seems to relate to the trust and connection that can be formed by sharing common ground or experience.

Johnny: Yeah. And you've mentioned the direction thing several times, and it seems like ... like you said, the fact that [Counselor] is a pastor, your counseling is in a Christian church context, that it seems like that compared to the other counselor you saw, you kind of expected there might be more directiveness, particularly spiritual directiveness, religious directiveness from [Counselor].

Participant: A little bit, I thought it almost be like 50% psychological counseling, 50% pastoral ... I don't actually know what that means, pastoral care. But in my mind that means like a little bit of spiritual information, assuming that the patient, in this case me, is okay with that, which I would say I am. I could see how that could get sort of messy from a medical, psychological perspective potentially, but I guess I did going into a ... I was like this is the first time I've seen a Christian counselor, and not only that, this guy is a pastor, and so I think I expected there to be more like, "Okay now we're going to pray about this," or all of my stuff comes through this lens, and I don't feel that.

To be honest, I do kind of appreciate in some ways that [Counselor] isn't always like, "The Christian perspective is X, Y, and Z." He definitely feels more like a person and less like, "I'm a pastor," and I do actually appreciate that, even just in the little things. I feel like I can swear in my counseling sessions with [Counselor] and he'll go and actually swear as well, it feels like it's a little bit more relatable, more human and not just like, "I'm an acting pastor, I've got the collar on, I only say holy things and if there's anything in my own background," there's none of that which I do appreciate.

Johnny: Yeah. And I think it's noteworthy to me that you even expected like there would be more direction, because that's kind of like even the discipline that we refer to within Christianity of spiritual direction, there's this sense of yeah there's a little bit more directiveness, and why don't you try this. And so, I hear that desire for direction, and then you mentioned a couple times, used the phrase, particularly with the John Piper thing that [Counselor]'s feedback allowed you to think about it a little bit differently.

Participant: Yeah.

Johnny: I'm wondering if that is also ... something that I've heard other folks that I'm interviewing, one of the words that has come up a lot has been, "Because religion is so important to me and my values, engaging in it allows me to have a different perspective on something," so I'm wondering if that's similar or if it feels like a different thing to you?

Participant: Interesting, so just to repeat what you had said, so that because religion is such an important part of a person's life, engaging it allows them to think about something differently, is that what you said?

Johnny: Yeah, one of the results I keep hearing is, "It gave me a different perspective on X. By having that religious conversation," so I kind of heard that same pattern here, like "By talking about what I was reading with John Piper and engaging that with [Counselor], I then had a different perspective, not just John Piper but on my religion."

Participant: Yeah, that's a good point. Yeah, so because [Counselor] is a Christian and a pastor, I think that for example, let's just go back to the example of my other counselor and if we were to have a discussion where he were to say something like, "Oh, you know it sounds like hypothetically you're talking about this girl or you're talking about in general and how you would potentially like to basically act in a certain way, but you feel like that's not in line with your religion, why don't you potentially think about just acting however you want and letting the chips fall where they may and pick and choose the parts of religion that you like?" That would have very little weight to me, to be honest, to hear that from someone who is not Christian, because I'm like, "Honestly you don't really know what you're talking about, that's a very common sentiment in the non-religious world." I mean, in part in the religious world as well, and so for whatever reason I would say I'm much less receptive to that kind of feedback and it's almost like, there's very little a non-religious person could say that would make me change my mind about my beliefs, whereas I would say the same is not true, it's different with someone like [Counselor] because I could go, "Actually this person has a deep understanding, I'm positive that he's studied this more than I have."

The example with the previous counselor is a strong one of the counselor not relating to the S/R in a way that feels congruent for the client for how valuable it is to them.

And so, like I said, it's sort of rare that he would explicitly say, "You should think about this in this way," but if somehow that were to be said, or just through other conversations too, we could potentially reach a point where I'm like, "Hey that's interesting, I actually am going to think about that or even just change [inaudible 00:42:48] religious topic," whereas I would just lull that off a little bit with other counselors, like, "Well this person doesn't understand. This is not something that we're going to figure out together, this part of it."

Johnny: Yeah, and so again those shared values, the shared religion, that shared world view, it sounds like it brings a couple things into the process for you, it brings comfort, puts you at ease, helps you feel more understood, and then it seems like it also gives more receptivity to particularly values that are religiously rooted for you.

Participant: Definitely.

Johnny: Cool. And, is there anything you would add that's challenging, you mentioned some things that sounded challenging, but anything you would highlight that's challenging about having spirituality and religion involved in your counseling.

Participant: That's a good question, let me think. Honestly, I wouldn't say so and I think that if this counseling had been the way I thought it would be initially, I think that actually could have posed some challenges, so if it was more like spiritual direction and then we intermingled that with counseling to the point where I felt like I was being judged or it was like, "Oh Participant, listen we need you to confess right now because these things you're trying to do," ... I feel like I could honestly go in, in my next session with [Counselor] and be like, "You know what, I sort of feel like I'm falling away from the faith, I honestly want to step away and I just don't really see myself as religious," I don't think that [Counselor] would be like, "Oh my God, Participant, we need to talk about this and do an intervention," I think that he would accept that and it just really feels like he is hands off with that and willing to sort of let a person have their own journey without trying to force religion.

So, this client doesn't want counseling to become an entirely religious experience because that may bring some of the negatives of religion with it (i.e. judgment).

And so, I could see how, in a different situation where it's half and half, it could be challenging, but because we don't do that, I feel like honestly I just don't feel like I would be judged if I were like, "Hey, I'm doing X, Y and Z which are not in line with Christian values," or

you know, "I'm doubting." We've even had discussions about doubting and what does that mean and having the space to doubt and all this other stuff and I've never felt any pressure there so honestly, I can't really think of any challenges that we've had. I don't think the conversation goes to spirituality too much, oftentimes I'm the one who has to take it there. So, I don't really find anything too challenging or stifling that I can think of.

Johnny: It seems like I heard you more say that just now and earlier that had it been more spiritual or pastoral, you might have been worried about feeling judged and also [Counselor] might have felt more holy, less relatable?

Participant: Right. Because it's like then he kind of has to ... I mean maybe not, but it feels like maybe he'd have more like a one dimensional kind of side to him where he has to show, he might be less willing to be like, "Oh well, here's a personal anecdote that's relatable," but it's very much sinful or I don't know. I feel like certain pastors do a bare all sort of thing, but it seems like there would be certain things that he wouldn't be able to say or a role he would be playing if it were more pastoral care. Potentially-

Participant 7606006

Johnny: It's much more focused in on when it is included in counseling, what does it do? How does it operate? What kind of a thing is it? A lot of the questions that I'm gonna be asking today and the follow-up questions, they're gonna be really kind of zeroing in on that. You might feel like some of my follow-up questions get a little bit redundant or like I'm circling back around, and that's just kind of by design, that's sort of exactly what I need.

Participant: Okay.

Johnny: Sound good?

Participant: Sounds good.

Johnny: All right. Do you have any questions before we start?

Participant: No, I don't think so.

Johnny: Great. So, let's start with that first question, which is; as someone who identifies as spiritual, religious, and has seen that in their counseling process ... I think my question is; this spiritual, religious stuff that is valuable to you, that you believe in, how does it get into the counseling process? How does it enter?

Participant: Yeah, one simple, basic thing is prayer. Starting off sessions with prayer, even seeking God, seeking the Holy Spirit during the session. ***Seeking after God.***

There were a lot of times for me during counseling where there were a lot of different directions that we could go, and we would just stop and take a moment to pray and seek the Holy Spirit. I think seeking God, seeking the spirit to guide you, spending time doing that, and prayer was a big part of that.

I think too, just the way that the gospel ties into our stories and for me, a big thing that was really [intellectual] in a relationship with God and through my counseling process, was being able, realizing that Jesus could empathize with me because of his walk on earth as a man, his story, his suffering and the way that that relates to my own story, my own life [inaudible 00:02:20].

Memo: 1/5/2018

Seeking God

In these interviews, I am hoping to focus in on the actual impact of the

spirituality and religion during the therapy process. What does it actually do?

This section feels like it is about what the client and counselor do- they seek after God/spirituality/religion. It then turns toward something else. The client seeks God but then the client experiences God feeling/empathizing for them.

Johnny: Yeah, and so some ways, prayer, seeking God at the beginning or throughout a counseling session, relating the gospel and the life of Jesus to your life circumstances.

Participant: Yeah.

Johnny: Then, would you say anything more about once that prayer, that seeking, after this, for lack of a better word, this thing you believe in, how does it then get from point A to point B? It is something that exists and then it is present in your counseling session.

Participant: Yeah, in times of prayer, especially in times where there wasn't a clear direction of;
Finding direction
where should we go? Both of us would ... Sometimes we would pray out loud, but most of the time we would both pray silently. Sometimes I wouldn't hear anything or feel a strong direction somewhere and he might, or there were definitely times where I felt like, "Okay, I feel like I have some clarity on what direction to take now."

Johnny: Okay.

Participant: That's not, it's not like God was verbally, "You should do this," but just, I feel like speaking through my heart, taking that time to listen and be present, I feel like he spoke that way.

Johnny: Okay.

Participant: To both of us, me and the counselor.

Johnny: It sounds like it would often happen in the context of prayer and that silence and listening and that it would then move into the movement of the session either through you or through your counselor.

Participant: Yeah. Yep.

Johnny: Okay.

Participant: I just thought of another thing too. There were also times in my session where my counselor would bring up Bible verses that were applicable to whatever we were talking about. For me, that translated both as helpful in my spiritual walk and my story, relating to the Bible, God's word to my story and what I was going through, but also then be able to outside of counseling, in my personal life, be able to look at and see the work of God that way on my own.

Johnny: Yeah, so your counselor bringing up Bible verses that applied to what you were going through became relevant to your counseling time and your general life as well?

Memo: 1/5/2018

There are some things present in the early part of this interview that relate to what S/R does in the therapy process. Other items feel like means of getting to that place (prayer, silence, Bible verses). But the result is something different.

This participant talks about direction and clarity of direction and that may be a result of seeking/experiencing God in the therapy process. She also mentions her story. I am struck by the idea of a story also being something that unfolds with some direction. When we are in the middle of a story, we know that there is more coming. I am seeing where spirituality and religion provides a reassurance of the directional nature of therapy.

Participant: Right, yeah.

Johnny: Wow, and then, and some of the things you've mentioned, they're more, we would more, anyone might look at them and say, "It's a spiritual or religious activity," like prayer. How do you know when something that's happening in counseling is spiritual or religious?

Participant: Sorry, can you repeat the question?

Johnny: Yeah, how do you know when something in counseling is spiritual or religious?

Participant: I'm sorry, just one more time. How do I know if something in counseling is spiritual or religious?

Johnny: Yes.

Participant: That's an interesting question. I feel like there was a lot of times

where we would be talking about something that I didn't know about, like codependency for example, or tools for how to cope with things, which I guess I would consider not necessarily spiritual or religious, so things that are more psychological, or giving you tools, teaching. Then there's a relational aspect of it where there might just be empathy or feeling with a counselor. I feel like the things that I would identify as spiritual or religious, were things like prayer, or that included the Bible, and that included talking about Jesus. I guess that's how I kind of differentiated them. *Practicing S/R in Therapy*

- Johnny: That's a great example. Would empathy from your counselor or having a conversation about the role of codependency in your life; would it have any spiritual or religious element to it?
- Participant: I would say most of the time no, unless ... There were times we had a conversation around the fact that Jesus can identify
Small Memo: A similar thing was mentioned earlier around Jesus
 and empathy with my pain, and I can bring that to him. In that way, we were kind of talking about how Jesus can empathize with you. I guess for me, I wouldn't necessarily identify those moments as spiritual.
- Johnny: Let me turn that question around then and just to see if anything else shakes out of it. Would you say then that God only present or active in the moments of prayer or Bible verse.
- Participant: No, I think would probably say inactive the whole time.
- Johnny: Tell me about that.
- Participant: Yeah, I think God is present with me all the time. I think that he is present for my counselor all the time as well, so I think he was present in those times. That's interesting. I guess yeah, those times were spiritual in that I feel like God was always leading our conversations and our times. Yeah, he was present.
Directing therapy? Directing the process? Providing direction?
- Johnny: Yeah, and so God might have been leading your time in those moments whereas, it seems like there are other times when you're praying or utilizing God's word, or seeking God. It's different somehow, that experience of God's activity.
- Participant: Yeah, in the times of prayer or things that I would have identified as more spiritual or religious, I was more aware of his presence and his work. Whereas, I believe and I know that he was working the entire

time, but I just don't necessarily, in other times, I like in the example of codependency, I would definitely [inaudible 00:09:39] God as like, leading that. Although I believe he was, just my awareness was not of that.

Johnny: Yeah, and tell me about that. In moments of prayer, what happens with your awareness that is different?

Participant: I think it's kind of ... To me it was a constant reminder that God is present in my story, that it's not just psychology or two people working on my story, but if my struggles [inaudible 00:10:22] that God is present in all of it.

Perceiving the spiritual

Yeah, I think the biggest thing is, bringing awareness back to, this is actually God [working in these] times.

Johnny: Yeah. Does anything happen internally? Things that you think, or feel, or senses or, perception, does anything happen in those moments when you feel more aware of God?

Participant: Yeah, I think I felt more peaceful is a word I think I felt. It made me feel loved, I know that's not an emotion but [inaudible 00:11:06]. I in general have a hard time believing that God is in the details [inaudible 00:11:15] talking about a lot details of my story. In those times of prayer, or Bible verses, to be focusing on and remember God cares, and is present and [make me feel] loved more.

Memo: 1/5/2018

There seems to be some core stuff here. Focusing on, remembering, perceiving, seeing, sensing all feel very related. It is as if there is a focusing of attention on spirituality and what it has to offer the person. And most of the results are received from that focusing of attention. I am also seeing pieces of spirituality and religion providing order to the process. Participants believe their therapy is heading somewhere.

Johnny: Yeah, and tell me about, if you could, just tell me a little bit more about your experience of peaceful and of loved.

Participant: Yeah, loved I think for me manifests a lot in being seen, so just feeling like known and seen and that somebody is present and cares for me. I'll just give a brief background that abandonment in a big theme in my story, so to feel known and seen and paid attention to, that I'm actually paying attention to God, because that's kind of what loved is like for me in those moments. I [inaudible 00:12:19] peaceful I think that we were just talking about a lot of sensitive

stuff, like deep traumatic things to take the moment of silence and stillness to pray and listen, to listen for God. It kind of gave me a breather and a sense of; it's okay, God is here, all is not in despair that we're talking about, there's something higher that is in control.

Small Memo: Again, this sense of there being order to the process that is unfolding. The pain or issues they are dealing with is not meaningless.

Johnny: Yeah, brings peace. Yeah, there's something higher than what's going on here.

Participant: Yes.

Johnny: Tell me a little bit more about that.

Participant: I think for me that gets into how God is the same always, yesterday, today, forever, [inaudible 00:13:22]. He's not surprised that any of that stuff happened to me or that I'm dealing with it in counseling. It doesn't, whereas for me, that stuff can shake me to my core, to be talking through it. God is not shaken. He's strong and there's something outside of me that is at peace and that is not despairing. I think that brought hope too, peace and hope that this is not all that there is.

Johnny: Yeah, this is not all that there is. Tell me about that word. Tell me about hope.

Participant: I think in my counseling overall I was not one who to despair a lot, but there was so much trauma and pain that I was dealing with that sometimes it was like; is this ever going to end? Is there ever going to be an end to this? Those moments of prayer and taking a break to remember God is present, I think did for me help, like yeah, that despair isn't going to go on forever, but even if it did, God is present in it, [inaudible 00:14:54].

Memo: 1/5/2018

Trusting something outside myself

Here again is this idea of something outside of the client bringing order to the process that is unfolding. Once this order is focused on, there are certain things that result from knowing there is a direction- peace, hope, patience, etc...

Johnny: Okay. It sounds like, let me see if I have this kind of right. You're coming into counseling with some past trauma, pain, issues that

you're working through. You're doing some things with your counselor that actively seek God through prayer or God's word, silence, and those moments kind of bring your awareness, kind of focus your awareness on God's presence in the process, and with that awareness, comes a sense of peace or feeling loved, or hopefulness.

Participant: Yes, that's true. That's correct.

Johnny: Yeah, anything you would adjust about that?

Participant: Nope.

Johnny: Let me ask you, with that, that's a great little primer there. Can you give me a picture or metaphor that would help me understand how this stuff, this spiritual stuff, how it operates in your counseling process?

Participant: I'm having a hard time with this one. Do you mean just like how spiritual [inaudible 00:16:43] past into counseling ...

Johnny: I'm sorry, say that again.

Participant: Do you mean just how the spiritual or religious stuff played into counseling?

Johnny: Yeah, like a metaphor, a picture for what it is, how it operates.

Participant: Well, I do have a picture and it's kind of hard to explain, but there's these water paintings that people do where it's like they put the paint in basically a basin of different colors and use a toothpick to swirl different designs in it.

Johnny: Okay.

Participant: I feel like that is the picture that comes to mind for me for that. I feel like the basin is the elements of counseling, the elements of non-spiritual counseling or [inaudible 00:17:43] overtly Christian, where there's the psychological aspect of it, and the teaching and the relational aspect of it that are all present. I feel like the spiritual is like that toothpick,

Small Memo: noticing again that it is something external to the counseling process that is adding to the process.

making it something even more meaningful and beautiful. I have

always felt like I don't think it would have been as impactful for me, my experience of counseling, if it wasn't, if there wasn't an element of the spiritual, specifically Christian influence in there.

Johnny: Yep, and so you're kind of describing this sort of artistic technique that, where there's, I think you said a basin?

Participant: Mmm-hmm.

Johnny: Then there's and that's representative of the general stuff of counseling.

Participant: Yes.

Johnny: Then the spiritual enters in through those colors that start to be added in and swirled throughout.

Participant: Yes.

Johnny: Yeah.

Participant: Yeah. I feel like it's not like that all parts of our conversations, or a lot of times even most of our conversations included things that were overtly spiritual. Or things that I was aware of spiritually, but there were those times where a swirl would happen or a design would be made because of something that we were doing that involved spirituality or Christianity that was so much more impactful for me.

Memo: Noticing the language here. Counseling is good, spiritual counseling is even better. So, some of the elements may be similar from spiritual to non-spiritual counseling. But the spiritual counseling is so much better and more impactful for the S/R client.

And an example I have of that is learning that Jesus was okay with bringing my tears and my pain to him. That was revolutionary for me. In like the rest of my walk in my individual life and in counseling too, so that's like where you could talk about how emotion is good, crying is good. That would be just a normal color in the basin, but bringing in the fact that this higher power that I have a relationship with actually cares about that pain, and wants to be with me in that pain and I can bring that to him, was like making it even better, making that swirl, making that design, making it beautiful.

- Johnny: Yeah, okay, that's a great example. I think that example is really relevant too, because it's kind of a general counseling topic, the importance of tears and emotion, but then there was this swirl of bringing those tears and that emotion to Jesus.
- Participant: Yeah.
- Johnny: ... And it making the process more beautiful, more meaningful for you. It seems like I'm hearing those same things that you were talking about where it seems like part of it is that dialogue happening in counseling and bringing your awareness to something that's spiritually true?
- Participant: Yes.
- Johnny: Then what was the result? What came out of that?
- Participant: Well, I think in counseling you can walk away with tools and coping mechanisms and hours of time where someone has empathized with you, but I didn't realize until I was done with counseling that the thing that was most impactful for me were the spiritual elements that were, that we spent time on in counseling, were things that helped me to be able to walk through life with Jesus in a way that actually honored my story and was emotionally healthy. I feel like what was the most impactful for me with that was the translation of like; we've done all these things in counseling, but now I know how to apply some of this to my relationship with Christ, outside of counseling. That will serve me for the rest of my life.
- Johnny: Yeah. Yep, and so I think that kind of hits on the, some of the next questions, which is; what do you gain from having spirituality or religion involved in your counseling?
- Participant: Yeah. I think this is true in general, that for myself, I was not raised in the church. I became a Christian when I was in 8th grade, but because of the brokenness of my family, and even the person who shared Christ with me, my view of God was completely inaccurate and was very like, he's a tyrant who is mad at me and just wants me to do good and I'm not doing good enough or whatever. I think one of the huge things that I've gained from having Christianity and spirituality involved in counseling was not just that I was experiencing feelings from things in my story, but my view of God was corrected in a lot of ways, corrected is kind of a weird word to use, but I just mean that I understood more of the actual truth of who God is, the character of God and what that looks like in my life.

To talk about that, to me, talking about my story and my pain, and my past, as well as God, and His character, praying and using Bible verses in counseling was, I feel like for me, that was more powerful than just learning about who God is through church, because a lot of the things that happened in my story influenced the way that I viewed God. I feel like that wasn't something that could have just been healed in me, the way that I view God through a church service. It was through so many sessions of talking through things and also through having a counselor who was also a Christian and a man of God who was safe and to see like, God's character actually is different than I thought and that's a good thing.

Johnny: Yeah, so your two things in there, two broad categories in there. I heard healing from things in your story that you floated in there and then a deeper understanding changed perspective on who God is.

Participant: Yeah. I think that there were things that I would not categorize as overtly spiritual that did come help in my healing process, but there were a lot of things that were really healing to me because of my relationship with God and Jesus that came about through counseling that wouldn't have necessarily come about in other ways. So that's like the healing aspect, the healing part, yeah. I think they go hand in hand, honestly. I think being able to have my view of God come more in to alignment with what is actually true, resulted in even more healing for me. I just keep thinking of the fact that Jesus cares and empathizes. I did not believe that going into counseling. I did believe it coming out, but not only did I believe it but I had moments of bringing my pain to him and feeling he cared, but I feel like the healing of having a better view of who he is, kind of went hand in hand.

Memo: Noticing the repetition of the phrase "hand in hand." These things are not easily separated from one another even though S/R seems to contribute particular and valuable things to the therapy process.

Johnny: Yeah, and tell me if you can a little more about healing. What is it? How do you know it's happening?

Participant: Yeah, honestly I feel like that's a huge ... I don't know if I can completely wrap my own thoughts around what I think healing is, but one thing that I think is the biggest for me is empathy and being seen and validated, at least for me. There was a lot of stuff that happened to me growing up that I tried to talk about with people in my life that was just ignored or minimized or just not cared about. For me, it was like; I can't change those things that happened. They

did happen. It was very healing to have somebody say, "Actually yeah, that was wrong." That is worth mourning and we can mourn that... so, that was healing.

I think too, there's internal healing like that. I think is an internal healing type thing, but then relational healing. There were, I in my counseling especially focused on my relationship with my mom in terms of relational healing. There were a lot of other topics we talked about. There were a lot of conversations that I had with my mom as a result of counseling that ended up being very healing because I had the tools, and understanding to both honor and care for my own heart, to be able to have those conversations and God really let that, brought healing in that.

Memo: I am not sure how to reconcile the idea of healing with the idea of a direction. Both are processes. Perhaps it comes as part of the fact that S/R is believed to be a source (for direction) and that this source is a good and healing source.

Recentering on the idea of what S/R does and how it operates. It provides direction toward healing? Toward growth?

Johnny: Yeah.

Participant: Yeah, those are the two things that come to mind.

Johnny: What happens on the other side of healing? Once something internal heals, then I can what?

Participant: I'll give two answers. I think once something is internally healed, I'm able to walk in greater freedom and not be chained to old, either despair, like emotional issues, or sin or habits that resulted from those things in my life. A great example of that is codependency. For me that codependency and idolizing people go hand in hand, so to know that I am secure and loved with my relationship with the Lord. I don't have to enmesh myself with other people to be okay and be loved. That's an emotional thing. I'm ok, but also there's freedom of I don't walk in relation to codependency anymore. I've been freed from that.

Johnny: Yeah.

Participant: I think there's an internal, emotional healing that on a daily basis there's not as much suffering. Not that it's about minimizing suffering, but there's not as much unnecessary suffering for things that [inaudible 00:30:32]. Also, I'm able to live with greater freedom

and healthiness [inaudible 00:30:39].

Johnny: Yep. That makes sense. What, if anything, would you say is challenging or hard about having spirituality and religion in your counseling?

Participant: I think that there were definitely times when Bible verses got brought into the conversation where it just created more questions for me and more like, ok, what about this, what about this? I think it made me confront my questions that I had for God and about God, things that I had struggled with and wrestled with in being a Christ follower.

I also think it encouraged me, or really caused me to have to surrender more, which is really at face value a good thing, but was hard because it was giving up control. I came into counseling thinking; we will work on all these things and then all these things. [inaudible 00:31:56] making everything pretty so I could move on in life. It's way more out of control, way more fluid than I expected it to be. So think that sort of piece, bringing God into the equation, surrendering to him [inaudible 00:32:16]. Here's a good example of this.

One time in counseling my counselor was like, "Hey, think of your story, and your journey in counseling like your bedroom. Your bedroom is really messy. And, God is going to leave you to pick up one sock at a time. Maybe today it's like here, let's just pick up this sock put it in the drawer. Maybe next week it's like that shirt over there. But He's leading that and I think that I was like; I just want it to be clean. That was frustrating to me and also amazing. But, I think that was hard.

Johnny: Yeah. Yeah, and what, as we're talking through this, what else is coming to mind that you feel like might be relevant or helpful to add into the mix?

Memo: 1/5/2018

This metaphor about God guiding the cleaning up of a room has the same elements of direction. S/R providing a sense of order to the therapy process. The image of being on a trail in the woods and having a trail guide comes to mind. Just the presence of the trail guide brings direction and hope about the process.

Participant: I guess the thing that I was thinking earlier that I didn't say is just that I feel like my relationship with my counselor and my

relationship with God, and the spirituality that was brought into our counseling sessions, went hand in hand for me. I feel like my experience in counseling, even with another Christian counselor, maybe wasn't [inaudible 00:34:00] relationally would not have been as impactful for me as it was because the counselor I had was such a good fit relationally, and was a man. A lot of my story has to do with brokenness with my mom, but there was a lot more brokenness with men in my life.

For me to have the example of a Christian man who was safe and has boundaries and allowed me to share my thoughts there were like, things that made me uncomfortable. There weren't ever boundaries crossed but things that made me uncomfortable, to be able to have that relationship honestly really helped me to believe the character of God more because I believe that our relationship with our fathers and our mothers, [inaudible 00:35:03] in general effects our relationship with God... my Dad is way off of anything that resembles God's character. For me to be in relationship that was safe and healthy because there were boundaries. There were parameters that I knew were safe. That just really helped me to have my view of God, his truer character.

Johnny: Yeah. I think there were a number of good things in there. One of them sounded like your fit with your counselor wasn't just because they were a Christian, it was they were a Christian, but there was also a good relational fit and then also some things just about who they were as a person that kind of fit into elements of your story.

Participant: Yes.

Johnny: Yeah. Then relating with your counselor and how that influenced your story and your healing also went hand in hand with relation to God. The two kind of weaved together.

Participant: Yeah, I feel like it's because it was like having a living example. Obviously my counselor is not God, but it was like a living example of ... I just think that my relationship with my dad in no way helped me to see God clearly because of who he was as a man when I was growing up. My relationship with my counselor helped me to see... It's not like my whole view of God was based on my counselor at all, that's not true. It just helped me in the things that we were talking about, about Jesus and about God that I was like, "Oh, I can actually see how [inaudible 00:37:06]. I'm actually experiencing [inaudible 00:37:11] and empathy with someone who is safe that I could never experience [inaudible 00:37:16]. I feel like I got ...

Participant 7606007

Participant: Okay, can you hear me?

Memo: 1/7/2018

My initial impression after the interview was that this one felt like a bit of an outlier. I am not sure if that will prove to be true as I examine the transcript itself.

Johnny: I can hear you.

Participant: Okay, that works.

Johnny: Excellent. Thank you for making some time for me. Are you at your home in the East Bay?

Participant: Yes, I am, in the backyard.

Johnny: All right, then I think I'm going to pause the video because I think we had trouble with that last time.

Participant: Right. It's better if we do the audio only if that's okay.

Johnny: Yep, that works for me.

Participant: In terms of bandwidth.

Johnny: Yes. Thank you so much. Is the next hour a good time for you still?

Participant: Yep, it's still a good time.

Johnny: Awesome. Let me give you a quick refresher about what I'm doing and where our interview today fits into that. Then I'll have some questions that we're going to go through. The only caveat I'm giving on these is that this is the second round and so I'm trying to really drill in on a very specific part. It might feel like we are circling and doing a bit of redundancy, but that's exactly what I need.

Participant: Okay. I have been warned.

Johnny: All right, good. First of all, I wanted to reflect back and thank you, not just for your time but for sharing about your horrific loss with your child. That story did not leave me, and I'm very appreciative that you'd be willing to share it with me.

Participant: Okay.

Johnny: In terms of what I'm doing, I am really trying to focus in not just on whether or not spirituality should be in counseling or whether clients want it in counseling, but really what it does once it's there, how does it operate, what kinds of things come from it, when it's present, what does it do, kind of things. Today, I'm really going to be focusing in on that particular aspect a little bit more than we did last time.

The first question to get us started then is, as you described to me last time, you're a person of faith, you're a person who identifies with spirituality or religion, and that's played a role in your counseling. My question for you is, and I'll ask the question and then define it a little bit, is, how does spirituality or religion or faith, how does it enter into your counseling process? Knowing that it's a thing that you value and believe, how does it get into your therapy?

Participant: Yeah, it's a good question. Let's see. Maybe the ... Sorry, I looked at your questions ahead of time. In terms of trust, if the counselor is coming from a similar perspective or is even open to religious beliefs that I have, that lets me relax ... Because actually, the origin of psychology, which really has influenced therapy, was with a lot of people that were very hostile to Christianity.

Memo: 1/7/2018

This section is a good example of the focus piece. This information about the origins of psychology- he shared the same information during our first time together. It seems like it is an important topic or relevant information to him.

Johnny: That's right, yep.

Participant: [crosstalk 00:03:59] Christianity is the problem. I think that makes people nervous and concerned. If this approach ... Right, because it's approaches, CBT and EMDR. If has its origin in Freud and Yung, you've got to wonder, "Okay, now what's contaminating that?" A good example is, in talking to my therapist, using a particular tool, psychological tool, and it had the assumption that ... Is my video on? It is, right?

Johnny: I don't see you.

Participant: You don't see me? Okay, got it. Okay, good. The green thing's on, but all right, good. Anyway, okay. It maybe has some assumptions that

the self is actually created complete ... or is good in itself, and if we just get away from these things then the self is good. That contradicts some basic Christian doctrines. Then I can talk to my therapist and say, "Okay, now, I noticed this. What's your reaction to that?" It's not like it ruins the whole thing, but I could have the comfort that we have the same perspective.

Memo: 1/7/2018

When I think about centering on my target for these interviews- what does S/R do in the therapy process- this is not about that. It is more about the counselor and the level of trust between the counselor and the client. Or perhaps, it could be about how S/R can enter the therapy process in different ways but it is not about what S/R does.

Johnny: Let me ask you on that, you can trust when the counselor is coming from the same perspective, a similar perspective. If the counselor is coming from that similar perspective, is that then where faith, spirituality originates from for you?

Participant: [inaudible 00:06:12] I'm not sure what you mean. Maybe rephrase that.

Johnny: If the counselor comes from a similar perspective, would you say then that spirituality and faith enter counseling through the counselor?

Participant: No, no, I wouldn't. That's why I didn't understand it. No, it's ... I have to think of why I say this. It enters through me. I bring it there, and it's why that's part of my life and reaction to, say, grief or other things. It's just helpful. It's helpful if he has the same perspective.

This piece cuts across most (if not all) the participants. That regardless of the congruence between the client and counselor.... S/R enters therapy through the client FIRST and primarily.

I would say it's not a ... There's some circumstances. When things were really bad, I actually went to a psychiatrist. He definitely wasn't a Christian, but he was great and just very competent. I think there's circumstances. I've been in both, for the long-term talk therapy, that's helpful. Anyway, getting back to your question. I think I bring it.

Johnny: You bring it.

Participant: Its origin is me.

- Johnny: The origin is you. The therapist can be helpful and inviting, and circumstantially it can feel necessary to have that. But even more fundamentally, faith/spirituality enters the counseling process through you.
- Participant: That's correct.
- Johnny: It's something you carry around in your life in general and then also into therapy.
- Participant: Right, exactly. Then if the counselor is open to that perspective or has a similar perspective, then that's ... I can trust more.
- Johnny: Knowing they have the same perspective, you can trust more. Trust what specifically?
- Participant: Trust the approaches that they're taking, using CBT, using other, I don't know what you'd call it, modalities, other approaches, other tools that therapists use. None of them are perfect. I get that, and I don't have a problem with that.

Memo: 1/7/2018

Trusting the direction of counseling

This piece feels like it is more on target with my core question for this round. The spirituality allows for trust in the directions that are being explored.

- Johnny: It allows you to trust some of their modality, their suggestion, their approaches that they offer?
- Participant: Right.
- Johnny: It allows you to trust that more.
- Participant: Right, exactly.
- Johnny: It enters through you, but then the counselor can augment that by sharing the same perspective.
- Participant: Right. That's helpful when they do. And it opens up some things to talk about, too.
- Johnny: Sure.

Participant: Yeah, feeling distant from God and how that impacts your life. So, the overt addressing/experiencing seems to come into play.

Johnny: That brings up an interesting kind of nuance. You bring the spirituality with you into the therapy process, but sharing that perspective with your counselor allows you to trust them more and it opens up ... It sounds like speaking, it allows you to speak more directly about your faith, your experience of God.

Participant: Exactly. People who have suffered grief or tragedy, they struggle with ... They [inaudible 00:10:21] now I understand why. I think, like I told you, we have two ... Our daughter just brought back so many memories going to church. What we did is changed where we sat because it just brought back so many memories. I completely understand when people stop going to church. It's tough. It brings up a lot of things. There's tough times. Easter is a tough time. Christmas is a tough time. There's just times we took a break. Part of what happens is you feel dead to God. I can remember thinking, "Oh, I can talk about this to my counselor. It's okay." It's nice that you could talk about that important part of your life, and that you're just completely dead.

Johnny: Participant, how do you know ... Spirituality, faith, it's something you carry throughout your life, something you carry into therapy. In your counseling, how do you know when something is particularly spiritual?

Participant: I don't separate it. I can tell you now. There's some things that are overtly spiritual. Boy, I'm sorry if I'm repeating myself.

Johnny: No, go for it.

Participant: Our daughter died in June of 2010. Obviously that first Christmas was difficult. We went to ... I forget if I told you this. We went to a church service called the Blue Christmas Service, or longest night Christmas service, just because, especially for people who are experiencing grief in their lives ... It's at a beautiful church in [Benicia 00:12:42], built in the 1800s. It's just an absolutely gorgeous place. They have this every year. We've actually gone every year since. That's overtly spiritual, but that's something that I can ... my reaction and that experience, I can talk to my counselor about. That's an example of something overtly spiritual.

Johnny: I like that put that specify around there, because I think that's something I've encountered in myself and in the people I've spoken with, is that it's very hard to parse through. Since spirituality/faith

is such a fundamental part of our experience, the most obvious answer is all of life is spiritual. That is true, but then I like how you said there are some things that are overtly spiritual. I guess I'm curious what you experience, maybe in your counseling process, that tells you something is overly spiritual.

Participant: Yeah, I don't separate it.

Johnny: That works.

Participant: Let's see. It comes up maybe with right and wrong. Sometimes you have wrong reactions to things, and just seeing that that's really common, that other people have that response, that's helpful. Even though it's wrong, we acknowledge it's wrong, it's helpful to be able to talk about that.

Johnny: Yeah, yep. All of those things that you experience in counseling are or have a spiritual element to them because it's not something that you separate in life as spiritual and not spiritual.

Participant: Right, exactly. But like I said, there's some things that are overt. I could think of some, but it's not like ... Yeah, I think it's not like visiting a pastor. We don't pray before or after. I think you could. There's nothing wrong with that. One of my counselors did, but yeah.

Johnny: Yeah, I'm curious with that. Let me push just one step further, because like you're saying, it's not necessarily, "Did the counselor pray or not pray?" I guess I wonder, what do you experience or feel internally that maybe tells you, "My spirituality, my faith, my God was very present in that counseling session or in that part of the counseling process?"

Participant: When it brings something up that ... Like I said, where I see in one of the techniques that a counselor is using. CBT is one example, where there seems like there's a little bit of a conflict or it's not quite fitting with at least my view of Christianity. It's something I can talk about, or even tease him about. We can talk through it, and often he'll have the same thing. He'll have seen that and say, "Yeah. No, I know what you're talking about. Here's another author or another approach. I've actually studied under this guy who has more of Christian-oriented approaches. I see what you're saying." That's helpful, that he just [inaudible 00:17:27].

Recommending directions

Johnny: Let me shift to the third question, and feel free to think about this

one for a moment. Can you give me a picture or a metaphor that would help me understand how spirituality, religion, faith ... how they operate in your counseling process?

Participant: Yeah. I saw that one. I wrote this down. I think you already mentioned it, but I just wanted to let you know, I wrote this down ahead of time.

Johnny: Good.

Participant: What I wrote down is a lens. It's sort of like looking ... having glasses, and you look through those glasses and see everything.

Johnny: Your faith in counseling serves as ... They're like a pair of glasses, a pair of lenses that you look through.

Participant: In terms of the therapy and the discussion of therapy and dealing with things.

Johnny: It sounds like you look at your counselor, your counselor's approach, but then also I would imagine your own grief.

Participant: Right, and the origin of evil in the world. That's related to that. Yeah, and how do we respond? Yeah, absolutely.

Johnny: Your faith serves as a pair of glasses, a pair of lenses that you wear. Where is God in relation to those glasses?

Participant: No, it's hard to answer that question. Maybe explain that a little bit more.

Johnny: Admittedly, I don't have much more of an explanation other than wanting to unpack the metaphor a little further.

Participant: I think maybe he created that lens. I'm not sure. That's the origin of that lens.

Johnny: Okay. It's relevant to me that you use that word, origin. That's some of ... Even that first question, how does spirituality enter into your counseling, is ... I think as I spoke with everyone and I'm trying to get into the minutia of this research topic, is that people experience their spirituality, their faith, they experience God as the source, the origin of things. As rudimentary as it might sound, it's like God has these things that He would like for us to have, and then there's this process of how we go about experiencing them. I see that playing out in different ways in some of the metaphors that people are using

to describe this stuff in their therapy.

Participant: Oh, interesting.

Johnny: Does that feel ... What are your thoughts on that?

Participant: The thing that comes to mind is not something on topic, is in ... For me, there's a lot of psychology, which is very wrapped up in therapy and counseling. It has its origin really at war with Christianity, and the favor has been returned. There's elements of Christianity where people even deny that there's such a thing as mental illness. I'm telling you, I'm aware of that, and I see that. You have to be selective in who ... I have stopped people at the door to my house the week that my daughter died and just wouldn't even let them in. I was nice to them, but just because I knew that was their approach, they didn't really see mental illness as an illness but as sin. Anyway, it's important to not be on the defensive.

Johnny: I'm seeing some of the last question, what is challenging or hard. I hear a challenge in that. If you have friends or people in your community who really see a combativeness between the two, that can be very hard to stomach.

Participant: When other people experience mental illness, and particularly suicide, yeah, they often come to us. Now we're the experts. Sometimes they'll ask, "Is there a good book that I can read about a Christian perspective on suicide?" I say, "You know, no, there isn't. Sorry." There isn't a good book. In the [inaudible 00:23:53] group that I'm a part of, sort of a more conservative evangelical Christianity, what I tell people is, "You might have to think about moving outside your denomination, and you might have to move outside ... " One of the best books that I've read that's been the most helpful was by a guy who's an atheist and background is Jewish. Anyway, that's tougher. You have to ... I could do that. That takes some critical thinking. But not everybody can do that. They want something that they can completely trust. It doesn't exist for some of the really difficult things.

Memo: 1/7/2018

It is noteworthy to me that he wanted a Christian perspective on suicide and couldn't find one and that this was very distressing for him. It brings me back to this theme of S/R being relied upon to provide perspective and direction. And it is almost expected that it would provide these things. This is captured in his metaphor of S/R as a pair of glasses through which he sees the world.

Johnny: Yeah. Like you said, you've been able ... I think you mentioned this last time. You're able to venture into these other perspectives, other researchers, other authors, but I could see where it would present a potential disappointment or loneliness of wishing there was a good honoring conservative Christian perspective on what you've gone through.

Participant: Yeah. It is. I think that's the key. I don't know if I told you. I wrote up a kind of 10 most important things. One of them is, you actually find good friendships, and it's not a bad thing, stepping outside your denomination, stepping outside your faith. That's good. I think that's actually ... God likes that, that we're examples to ... I forget if I told you. To get past in a meeting for my advice on whether ... It was the husband. His wife wanted to go the a séance to talk to his daughter. What a question to get asked, huh?

Johnny: Yeah.

Participant: But it's almost an honor that the guy would trust me, that he would want my opinion. He's a physician, and he's Jewish but atheist, and just really struggling. I think that's good that that person can be a friend and ask you a question like that. That's amazing, amazing.

Johnny: It sounds like your process of dealing with your loss, with your grief, with your faith, that it's really changed and opened different doors for who and how you relate to people.

Participant: Yeah, absolutely. You see the flaws. You see the flaws. I think I understand why this area of Christianity that I'm in ... Why are we weak in mental health? It's because maybe we're good on personal responsibilities, but that leads to not really getting mental illness. People say stupid things, and then you realize and you can appreciate, "Hey." Methodists, they're really strong on this. They American Baptists, the more liberal Baptists, they're really strong on this. Not that I agree with them with everything.

Memo: 1/7/2018

Again, he wanted to be able to rely on his S/R in order to have perspective on mental illness. And it was distressing when he could not find as much as he wanted.

Johnny: It sounds like having your faith, being with a counselor who can really invite your faith and invite these things, it's allowed you to really explore and wrestle with maybe all the questions you have.

- Participant: Right. Actually, I've talked to him about that, why is that, why are we in general bad on mental illness. That's a big club. That's a big club on suicide. I'm not being hyper-critical. That is a big [inaudible 00:29:09] of people who don't do well on mental illness and stigmatize it, and the same for suicide. It's not just conservative Christians. That's a huge club. That's true, and I can talk about this.
- Johnny: What does it do? What does it shift or change internally for you to be able to engage those things, to be able to go into your counselor and talk about what your experience has been and talk about how it relates to your faith?
- Participant: Just having trust, confidence, yeah, being able to relax, and then to be able to say, "I feel dead to God." I never sang in church. It really bothers me when people try to explain too much why there's evil, why God allows evil. That's complicated. People should shut up more and just be there. I really like Tim Keller, Keller's approach. He wrote a book on walking through grief. This is a guy who ... I think he had cancer. His wife has Crohn's disease. Their church went through 9/11. He wrote this book on grief, and there's three parts to it, typical pastor. One of the parts is the theological part. He wrote in the introduction, "If you have recently suffered grief, you might want to skip that part. Go on to the other practical parts." I thought, "Whoa, that guy knows what he's talking about." Sorry if I'm repeating it. I said that the last time.
- Johnny: No.
- Participant: I bought the book just to read that sentence. I still haven't read the first part.
- Johnny: This is where so much of your process and your pain lives, is in the loss of your child and then all of these deep, largely unanswerable, painful questions, how much it's really affected your faith and your experience of God.
- Participant: And life. I had to quit my job. I just couldn't take the stress anymore. Boy, that kind of thing is common. Everybody's different. Some people are able to lose themselves in their work. I'm okay with that, but not me.
- Johnny: Right. It sounds like with your faith ... In your counseling process it seems like you're able to talk directly about all the places where the pain lives.
- Participant: Definitely, yeah. That's true. That's a big part of it. Elizabeth made

her first attempt or was stopped at the Golden Gate Bridge a year before she actually died by suicide, and during that whole year struggling and praying. I forget if I mentioned. There was a person at the bridge who tried to talk Elizabeth out of it. She crawled over. She went over the ... What do you call it? Over the-

Johnny: The rail.

Participant: ... barrier, yeah, to sit with Elizabeth. She was a Christian. Anyway. Lots of reactions to that, including anger. You run into a lot of people who are [inaudible 00:35:21] of God. I tell my wife, I'm more of, and she knows this, take a passive-aggressive approach, but if there's still anger behind that. Like I said, dead to God.

Johnny: Right, more of a Cold War.

Participant: Yeah, exactly. It's nice. You got Psalm 88 to back you up. I don't know if you know that one.

Johnny: I do.

Participant: You can always read that and understand.

Johnny: Let me broaden this back out and just ask. As we're talking, is there anything else that's coming to mind you'd like me to know about this whole ... It isn't a sequence, but for the sake of language, the sequence of God exists, you believe in God, God enters your counseling process and there's effects that happen from having faith present in your process. Is there anything else that comes to mind that you want me to know?

Participant: No, I don't think so. Yeah, it's ... I think competence is first, competence in therapy, like I mentioned. It's just extremely helpful.

Johnny: Right.

Participant: I think it would work even if somebody was just open and not hostile. My wife and I went to a counselor together for a while before Elizabeth's death and after. She was Catholic, so different doctrinal, but that worked fine, just having that perspective.

Johnny: Yeah. Like you've said, it seems like it allows you to relax and to trust and to ... As long as there's no hostility there, you're able to bring more of your experience into your questions.

Participant: Exactly, and trust what's happening, too.

Johnny: Yeah. Anything else you want to add on?

Participant: Yeah, I'm sorry. I can't think of anything more.

Johnny: No? This is perfect.

Participant: I don't think about it that much. It's sort of natural. That's nice. It's natural. Maybe I would notice more if I didn't have it, didn't have a counselor that I could talk to from a spiritual perspective. Yeah, that's probably it. I should appreciate it more.

Johnny: I think you're right. I think that's something I've seen in myself and in a lot of the participants I've gotten to meet with, has just been ... It can be easy to define the lack. If it's not there, I feel unseen or unheard or that they're being hostile and I can't share. It can be hard to turn the other way and say, "Okay, when you have it, what happens?"

Participant: Yeah, right. That's good if it's not perceptible, if it sub-fuses everything.

Johnny: Right.

Participant: Sometimes you talk about something overtly spiritual and other times not.

Participant 7606008

Johnny: ...giving me some of your time. I really enjoyed our first interview together. I appreciated hearing about your own process and your own story and actually we talked on Inauguration Day.

Participant: Yeah. We did. Oh my God.

Johnny: I remember you reflecting on how devastating and depressing it was that America elected a jackass. Wait, no, you didn't say that.

Participant: No, but I felt it.

Johnny: Yeah. Anyway, I remember our time and was very appreciative. I want to give you a quick refresher on what I'm doing, and then I'll set the stage for the first question and we'll go from there.

Participant: Okay.

Johnny: Just a refresher for you is that the thing I'm broadly interested in is spirituality and religion in counseling, but more specifically what kind of role it plays in therapy for people when it is present, when it is something they would like to talk about, what does it do to have it there?

So today, we're going to be dialing in on that, kind of. It will feel a little bit like minutia. You might feel like I'm circling around, maybe asking the same kind of question, and that's sort of exactly what I'm doing. It's kind of what I need right now. Just like you did last time, just reflect on your process for me and we'll see where it goes.

The first question is really with that backdrop, when you think about the fact that spirituality or religion or faith has had a role and has had an influence on your counseling process. My first question is how does spirituality or religion or faith, how does it enter into the counseling process? How does it get there?

Participant: It fluctuates. So I might bring it up or my counselor might bring it up. It's not really constant. I think sometimes when I have a question that's a lot bigger than a really simple ask and answer, that's typically what opens the door for it.

So if I'm really trying to get through my parents being crappy parents, and I get really frustrated because I know a lot of people whose parents aren't crappy or aren't as crappy as mine and so I'm often, like, why? Why did I get that, but they got not this, nearly to

this severity? So I think then that's typically where it comes in.

Johnny: Yeah.

Participant: Discussing that maybe it's not necessarily that some people did something to earn good parents, like our parents have a choice to be crappy.

Johnny: Yeah. I only laugh because the way you say it, it sounded like it's a questionnaire. Would you like to be a crappy parent? Yes.

Participant: Yeah, that's kind of what it feels like. Because I'm like why did someone get these two parents who love each other and love their kid. And I got ones who hate each other and tolerate me.

Johnny: Yep.

Memo: 1/6/2018

Accessing spirituality/Needing Spirituality

Noticing the common theme through this section of questions- particularly large questions- being something that invokes spirituality. However, this doesn't feel like what spirituality does in the therapy process. It feels more like how spirituality is accessed. Or Situations/topics/circumstances that act as doorways toward the spiritual.

Participant: Typically that's when it's like, God will come into it, but it's also really difficult because then I'm like, why the hell, I get these parents but you get these other people, really great parents. So even then it's not a really simple answer. It kind of makes it more complicated.

Johnny: It seems like from what you're saying, in your story there's been this very specific question around why have I been given these crappy parents. But what I'm also hearing is that spirituality may enter into counseling through big questions.

Participant: Yeah. So typically really big questions.
Feeling a need for spirituality

Johnny: What kinds of questions bring it into the room or bring it into your process?

Participant: It always involves a why. Like a why did it happen or why me or why not someone else. Because it's really hard seeing a lot of, just in general there's always stories like, and just in the nick of time something happened, and what could have happened didn't happen.

And then I'm like, there's tons of times that it happened to me. What makes that the exception and me not?

Johnny: Yeah. Big questions, why questions, questions when you're wanting to try to understand why you've experienced something.

Participant: Yeah.

Johnny: And that might play into the next question. When you're engaging something in counseling or in your counseling process, how do you know when something is spiritual?

Participant: I think the easy questions, I think sometimes we might pray at the end of it, so that's obvious, clearly spiritual and/or religious. But aside from that, and the obvious, well, God, where I'll clearly articulate it, I think for me learning to give myself grace for things. If I had a really hard week and I was triggered by something, my typical response is not to be nice to myself about it. I tend to get really angry, like I'm so stupid, why did I let that happen in there or whatever. In a session, really talking about and wrestling through giving myself grace in terms of just because it happened doesn't mean I suck. Just because I responded that way doesn't mean I suck. From there typically it's discussing that God gives me grace for those things, so then that's when it becomes super apparent, clearly talking about God right now.

Addressing spirituality- overtly/directly

Johnny: Right. Some of it sounds like there's specific actions or things that might happen that are spiritual, like prayer or talking about God. But then it sounds like you're describing things that you need or want to see more of in your life or in yourself when you talk about the grace thing.

Participant: I notice there's a lack, and it's something I need to get more of, so then that's typically I think when things might become subtly spiritual without it being super overt.

Johnny: That's terminology that's come up with a few people I've talked to. It's like, well, a lot of things can be spiritual. Some of them are subtle and some of them are very obvious. I remember you shared last time about a day that you went into your counselor. You'd been having what probably could be described as a panic attack about an exam. During that time, you really felt a sense of peace.

Participant: Yeah. If I remember or think of a spiritual moment, that's like top three. Really. It wasn't like we were talking about it from a clinical

level, oh, your body's doing this and you're experiencing this right now, and these hormones are going through your brain, like all these things.

It was feeling like I talked and I said I'm really anxious, I haven't been able to sleep, eat or whatever. I couldn't stop crying and I was just panicking. The world felt like it was imploding in. We just sat there in silence. She started praying silently while I was crying. A few minutes later I was able to calm down and we were able to talk through it a little more, so then that's when it became a little bit more clinical like, okay, here are some things that you can do to try. Even after she prayed silently, then we prayed together.

From there, it went from giving myself the space to be afraid and not being mad at myself for it, because typically both things will happen at the same time. I will be anxious and get mad at myself for being anxious. Trying to step back from that a little bit. So that way I could remember to breathe and plant my feet on the ground and maybe count to five. Those kinds of things.

Memo: 1/6/2018

I am noticing here that spirituality may act on the therapy process by inviting the experience of the person. She mentions her emotions, having space, giving herself grace- all things that may lend themselves to accepting or allowing her own experience. This seems like it is more on the target of what S/R does in the therapy process.

Johnny: That one, like you said, was one of your top three, if I've had spiritual moments in my counseling, that one's in the top three.

Participant: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Johnny: And there's some elements to it like the prayer, her silently praying, the two of you praying, the silence, they look more overtly spiritual. What else about that told you this was a spiritual moment for me?

Participant: I think talking about it from a sense of, when we did start talking about it before we started talking about techniques or whatever, it was what voices are you hearing? What is fueling the anxiety? Talking about it, naming things that are lies. Not that that's overtly spiritual, but I think in order to name a lie, you have to understand what the truth is. Reference point (like having a direction?) So then the question becomes what is the truth that you're comparing it to, what's the baseline?

Johnny: Yeah.

Participant: I think that, probably. I'm not sure if that makes sense.

Johnny: Were there any feelings or sensations for you that typically tell you this is something spiritual?

Participant: I'm able to have an idea that it is when I can, for whatever reason, begin talking or speaking in a situation that I otherwise would not be able to. So, we were talking, and I wasn't particularly eloquent, but even though I was what felt like neck-deep in panic, I was able to slowly start talking, which otherwise totally wouldn't have happened.

Johnny: What would you call that? Being able to talk when you normally can't?

Participant: It kind of feels like a miracle.

Experiencing spirituality

Something unexplainable... outside of our selves? Spirituality gives us something in our process that we otherwise would not have found or accessed.

Johnny: Yeah.

Participant: Without being really super charismatic, I couldn't have done that on my own. Or at least without some really special guidance.

Johnny: One of the things I'm noting is sometimes it's like the size of things that make it spiritual, like when you have a really big, unanswerable question or you have this insurmountable panic.

Feeling overwhelmed?

To come to the other side of that, it's like, if I was able to talk with that insurmountable panic, that's spiritual. There's something spiritual or miraculous going on for that to happen.

Participant: Yeah. I think size definitely is one of the things that at least make me consider that it could be spiritual, because the things that are small that I can wrap my head around are just normal everyday textbook things. It's the bigger things that make me go, okay, this is a little bit bigger than that.

Memo: 1/6/2018

Drawing attention

Some of what she is discussing feels similar to other things I have heard

from participants- the idea of spirituality always being present but certain moments or experiences or questions drawing the attention of the client to that reality. And then, once the attention is focused there, much of what spirituality has to offer is immediately accessible.

Johnny: So there's bigger things, it enters through questions. I like your wording. It felt in that moment like, the fact that you were able to talk when you normally couldn't, felt like a miracle. It felt like something very special. Where did it come from?

Participant: Not me. I think in that moment, my counselor invited me to try and pray, which I'm not the best at, at all. But I didn't have a choice but to at least try. If I would have failed, I wouldn't have been worse off. I feel like my only conclusion is after I was just like, God, I just need help. I just need to be partially grounded right now.
Where am I?

I would say after that I was able to kind of be present. I'm not going to be like, I said that and then everything was great and it was fine.

Johnny: So it kind of came in through prayer, came from God, does that...?

Participant: I think from Him, but then I also had to be willing to at least partially rely on Him for that.

Johnny: So from God but also you.

Participant: Yeah.

Memo: 1/7/2018

Inviting spirituality

Here we have this simple element- spirituality/religion gets into the therapy process because the client brings it/invites it/wants it. It really doesn't seem too much more complicated than that. Many participants talked about it coming from God but many seemed clear- it wouldn't have been present if I hadn't brought it up.

Johnny: This is going to be one of those minutia things. I have to tell you, I was super looking forward to getting to do my second interview with you because I enjoyed the first one so much and I was like, she's going to add something that the other folks I've talked to haven't added. And you already have. I'm very appreciative for that.

Here's the minutia. So you're in this panic moment, and you're really freaking out, I think is the clinical term. Then your counselor invites

you to pray. Then there's kind of this miraculous moment where you're able to talk and begin to move forward and begin to feel grounded. Can you say any more about how that miracle gets from wherever it came from to you?

Participant: The word bravery comes to mind, but I'm not sure if that's right.

Johnny: Okay. Tell me about bravery.

Participant: I think for me, a lot of times I do experience spirituality in climbing mountains that otherwise feel really impregnable is at least when I say, yeah, I'm going to try and take a step. I don't even feel like I can take a step, but I'm going to try it anyway. So I'm going to try and verbalize this really hard memory or I'm going to try and name this really difficult thing. So I think in that moment of panic, because my go-to when I panic is just to check out, because it feels like the only way I'm able to get through it, I cannot stay here and live in this so I'm going to leave for a couple of days. So I feel like the first step was me not leaving, which is not typically my go-to. That in and of itself was really difficult because then it felt like I was stepping into something way over my head.

There is a choice- it might be a brave choice but it seems like in its simplest form, it is a choice.

Choosing to stay, choosing to talk, or at least try to talk. Giving it a chance, I think that's...

Johnny: Yeah. It's interesting because it's something that... you keep using these size metaphors, like climbing a really big mountain. It's like something that is so much larger than you but is also deeply involved to you. The miracle is larger than you but it doesn't happen unless you live into the bravery of trying.

Participant: Yeah. I think that's my biggest thing, just trying, not even that I have to be successful in it, it's not like it's dependent on me. But I have to take some part in it. I just have to participate.

Inviting spirituality

Johnny: So let me go one step further. You have the panic, you're with your counselor, you kind of have this intuitive spiritual sense that you have to try something. You have to take some kind of a step. And you do. What would you describe comes from that? What's the result of I tried and I felt this miraculous moment?

Participant: It's almost like the size of it is, not that it's made smaller because it's still pretty freaking big. It's like climbing a mountain with a rope

versus going freehanded. It's still really hard, but this is going to help you get there. You still have to try, but you're not freehanding it. There's kind of a semblance of a path and a direction.

Johnny: Are there any other words you would use to describe that, like you now have this rope to climb the mountain, there's a path, there's a direction.

Participant: It feels guided. Like there's guidance. So it's not necessarily like the next step is going to be easier, but this is your next step.

Johnny: In those moments, it's not as much about easier or harder but the fact that the next step is being shown.

Participant: Yeah.

Memo: 1/7/2018

Experiencing order? Seeing a path? Moving in a direction?

I don't know what the right code on this is but it feels important. Spirituality seems to immediately add a sense of direction and order to the process. It doesn't even have to change the tasks at hand, it simply offers reassurance that things are moving forward, even when they are hard.

Contrasting this- if you removed spirituality from the situation, it might seem more meaningless or random or hopeless?

This may tie into one of the spiritual outcomes- hope. Belief that things are going to change or not always be the way they are right now?

Johnny: What does it mean to you to have that feeling of guidance or path in your counseling process?

Participant: Sometimes it gives me hope, like okay, after step A there's step B. But then sometimes it feels hopeless because when do the steps stop? I feel like this doesn't just stop at Z. I feel like there's an infinite amount of letters that I have yet to discover.

Johnny: Sometimes hopeful, sometimes hopeless.

Participant: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Johnny: And we're back to the size of the thing you're dealing with. I can see where it would feel hopeful, this thing is huge, but I'm being guided, or hopeless, this thing is huge, it doesn't even matter that I'm being guided because it's so freaking big.

Participant: Right.

Johnny: This is probably my favorite question so far between both my interviews. If you could, is there a picture or a metaphor that you could describe to me to help me understand how spirituality or religion operates in your counseling process?

Participant: I think it's the difference between looking at a forest from the middle of the forest when you're standing in it versus being at a slightly higher or elevated level.

Giving perspective

So I might be really focused on this one tree right now because this one tree is kicking my butt. I'm just like oh my gosh, it's just this tree, or this tree and 10 other trees. But then being able to see, okay, it's a lot. It's not not a big deal. But it's not just this. There's more than this.

Memo: 1/7/2018

The picture of GPS comes to mind. GPS simultaneously tells you two things- where you are and where you are going. One without the other is not helpful but the two together provide direction and movement forward.

Johnny: I hear perspective.

Participant: Yeah.

Johnny: Like you said, getting up out of the forest a little bit. What happens for you from having that vantage point?

Participant: I'm able to see longer-term.

Johnny: Okay.

Participant: I really struggle with that. It's taken me a long time to get through school because when my anxiety happens I can literally only think right now. Like right now, forget tomorrow, forget an hour from now. Right now I'm dying. Or even when I look back on a moment when I had an anxious episode or a memory of something, I can never remember the end of it. It's just from when it started to kind of when it was its worst in that moment. So it almost feels like there was no after, it was just that. Being able to reflect and see that yeah, it did happen, but then this happened.

Experiencing perspective/Gaining perspective

Yesterday I had a counseling session and I was talking about how I had a bad episode last week. I recounted the whole thing and I did

go from beginning to end but I didn't even notice I said the ending. My counselor did, and she's like, I'm so happy it ended that way. And I was like, what? All I can remember was here to where it was its worst, and in my head it's just going on a loop. And she's like, yeah, but then you did this, which you couldn't have even done a year ago. And I was like, oh, you're right.

It still sucked. The first three-fourths of it did suck. But the last fourth happened and I almost always forget that.

Johnny: What does that produce for you?

Participant: That gives me hope. When she said that, and I took a second to notice that, it helped me to compare to that to earlier situations, which is typically what I was doing, I was saying this is no different from when it happened 10 years ago, it's the same thing. But then she was like, no, it's not the same thing because this happened yesterday. It felt the same and all of the sensations were the same, but then this part happened, which was totally different. So it kind of helped me take a step back More perspective language here and realize that things are changing, which is really great.

Johnny: Spirituality kind of helps you zoom out of these large things that you're dealing with and gives you a different perspective or vantage point. Being at that vantage point brings more hope for you.

Participant: Yeah. It brings hope and it helps me realize the strides that I am taking. It is a big mountain, and with a big mountain, you can get a pretty ways up, but technically if we were to measure it, you got pretty high up. But because it's so big you're like, I am still at the freaking bottom of this thing.

Johnny: It's like that joke, how do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time.

Participant: Yep.

Johnny: It sounds like it can be a double-edged thing, because that perspective that causes you to zoom out can give you hopefulness because it gives you that perspective and you can see the strides you've made. It can also give you hopelessness because then you can have perspective on how big the mountain is or how big the forest is.

Participant: Right, and then I'm like, it's really freaking big, oh my God.

Johnny: Yeah.

Memo: 1/7/2018

Spirituality seems to bring perspective and perspective seems to bring hope. I am not sure if these just intrinsically flow from one to another or if there are smaller pieces that link these larger pieces together.

Participant: But then I think that depends also on the topic, too. With my anxiety, typically I think it produces more hopefulness. But then other topics, I'm like, this is freaking useless.

Johnny: Maybe like your relationship with your parents?

Participant: Yeah, that, and a lot of trauma I've gone through. It's just like, ugh. We're cool with anxiety, making some strides, everything else, nope.

Johnny: Any reflections on the difference between those things?

Participant: It's really hard. It's really hard, it's night and day hard. It's a night and day difference.

Johnny: Between the anxiety and trauma?

Participant: Yeah. Between the hopefulness and the hopelessness it feels like two totally different things.

Johnny: Which is noteworthy, because your anxiety has been big, it sounds like. It's really affected you, it can really take over.

Participant: Yeah. It does. But then the hopefulness part of that comes from the fact that I'm about to graduate next fall, which a couple of years ago was not a possibility. I feel like I'm living a dream, like oh my gosh, I just sat with my adviser, I'm graduating? Next semester is going to be really easy, oh my god.

So that's like, crap, like I never thought, I never ever thought. But then on the other hand a lot of the stuff I've gone through I'm like, all my friends are getting married and having babies, and I can't even fathom that, that stresses me out, I just want to cry. And I'm like, wow, I'm still the same as I was when I was 16, that's great.

So I see these huge night and day differences, and then I see things that feel the same but then when I talk about them in a session I'm able to, if I try really hard, see the differences in how far I've come. But it just feels like they're not comparable, like the strides aren't comparable at all, and so that feels more hopeless.

Johnny: There are some things that you have tackled or dealt with in counseling that feel like you can find hope in them, and some of them that just feel much more hopeless.

Memo: 1/7/2018

Accepting the Present Moment

Perceiving direction?

I see these two contrasting pieces again- spirituality helps the person to be in the moment and accept what is happening for them while simultaneously giving hope that the present moment is not all that there is.

Participant: Yeah. There are some things I feel like when I do approach them I'm approaching them from a different place than the last time I was. Even if it's a half step away, I've gone forward a tiny little bit. And then there's other things that it's like we've just been circling around forever and we're just going to circle around it forever. The circling leads to hopelessness? Again, no movement forward.

Johnny: Those things would feel very futile.

Participant: I'm not sure futile is the word, but I think just really sad. It's not that I don't want to, they just feel way bigger, I guess, and impossible sometimes. But I still want to make some kind of strides there.

Johnny: With those things that feel, again, even bigger and you don't feel yourself or see yourself making strides, what does spirituality offer you in those moments?

Participant: Learning to be okay with that. It's going to take time and it's okay if it's not as fast as I would like it to be. That's one thing I've been having to really struggle with. Not putting it on the same timetable as my anxiety. I tend to do that, okay, well, I've been in counseling X amount of years now and here's my anxiety and here's where it was. Great, awesome. Why is this only an inch away from where we started?

Johnny: Right.

Participant: But then we'll talk about learning to be kind to myself in those moments. It's not really fair for me to hold it to the same degree as I hold my anxiety because my anxiety was a result of those things, so it's like, I wasn't born with it. Nor was I born with those things happening, but the anxiety happened afterward as a result.
Accepting the present moment

- Johnny: The things you're making progress on and you see movement and you see growth, your spirituality can give you perspective on that and in turn give you hopefulness. And then these things that feel even larger, that feel like you've made no progress, they feel more insurmountable. The word that was coming to mind for me was your spirituality helps you to accept that.
- Participant: Yeah.
- Johnny: Which are kind of two different things. Hopefulness and acceptance. Hopefulness is like there is more of this sense of believing things can change or be different or that the end of the story isn't written yet. Acceptance is much more about it is what it is, we are where we are.
- Participant: Yeah.
- Johnny: The last question I had on my list is what is challenging or hard about having spirituality or religion.
- Participant: God, everything.
- Johnny: Yeah? And you've talked about some of it, how sometimes it can add more hopelessness. What else would you say is challenging about having spirituality in your counseling process?
- Participant: Sometimes I just really don't want to talk about God at all. Even a little bit. Sometimes it makes a really hard situation feel harder because now it's not just me and this thing. Now it's me, this thing, and God.
- Johnny: Right. So it adds some complexity?
- Participant: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Johnny: It's not as direct, but again, another kind of size imagery for you. Sometimes something that's already kind of big and complicated, bringing God into it just makes it feel more complicated and bigger.
- Participant: Yeah.
- Johnny: Like now, not only do you need to think about this situation or what happened to you and what it means to you, but you also have to think about God, and how God relates to it and what God is or isn't doing for you.

Participant: Which opens a whole other can of questions. I have lots of questions. I'm a really inquisitive person. Then it's like, I already had questions and now we're bringing in God questions to the umpteenth power and I just can't do this today.

Johnny: Yeah. Just can't do it today because...

Participant: It's exhausting. It's really tiring. It feels like hitting a wall sometimes, bringing God into it. There are just some things I'm not going to get answers to. God, why didn't you stop this? But supposedly you stopped something for someone else, and now they're telling everyone it's a miracle and if you pray really hard things get better.

Memo: 1/7/2018

So, it can be exhausting to involve God because God could answer for these questions but doesn't? I am drawn back to the idea of movement. Bringing God in brings perspective on the current moment and the future direction while also bringing questions about why I am in this moment and why we are taking the path we are on.

Johnny: Back to those why questions.

Participant: Yeah. Which are really overwhelming for me personally.

Johnny: Yeah. So spirituality enters into counseling through those why questions. But the why questions are exhausting.

Participant: They can be. They tend to be for a lot of things, but I think the degree of exhaustion varies. There's some exhaustion that's like I'm so tired, but I can do this, and some exhaustion where it's just like I cannot, I will not. Not today at least. Or it's going to take multiple weeks. This is not going to happen in 50 minutes or an hour.

Johnny: Let me look at my list of questions. When you think about spirituality coming into counseling for you, any of these places where it enters in, perspective or hopefulness or acceptance or feeling exhausted, what else, if anything, would you say that you gain or that results from having spirituality in your counseling process?

Participant: Learning to live outside of myself in some situations, so with my anxiety, taking two seconds to say a really simple five-year-old grade-level prayer. Some moments like that where, because with my anxiety leaving out myself sometimes makes it harder because I already feel like I can't do it, and suddenly I feel like I have to do it,

but I can't do it, but I have to do it. Then I'm just back in this infinite loop. Being able to say maybe I can step outside of that and lean on something else, not that it will magically fix everything but it's not just all on me.

I'm slowly, really slowly learning to bless certain stories, which is really hard for me. When I say learning, I mean accepting that maybe that's something I should do, not necessarily doing it yet. But that's different because then I have to think about something in a different light as opposed to where I might want to go and blame myself for it, or hate myself for it.

Johnny: Can you tell me what you mean by blessing certain stories?

Participant: Being able to separate the good and the bad. Yes, this bad thing happened, but being able to see that it's not because everything there was bad. There were some good things that were used for bad, which doesn't make those good things bad, it just means they were misused. At least that's literally what I was told. I'm just reiterating. I haven't gotten to the point where I can accept that yet. But at least being introduced to that idea, because otherwise I would have never seen it that way. I don't inherently see it that way. It's something I have to remind myself or say to myself or write it down, so it takes effort. But just the introduction of that idea.

Johnny: Which is interesting because the metaphor of the trees and being at a higher altitude and seeing them, and then what you're describing here, you would have never seen it that way. It seems like both of them bring a different perspective.

Participant: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Johnny: Both of those things seem to include you seeing something that you didn't see before.

Participant: Yeah. So I think one involves me being able to point out the things that were actually bad and then the things that weren't instead of conflating the two. And the other one is more me seeing the whole picture and not just the really bad part that's in front of me.

Johnny: I wonder what it is about spirituality that changes the way we see things.

Participant: I am not sure. I think it's because it doesn't rely solely on our individual perspective because I know if it did on mine that I would still be seeing things the same way. It's like the challenge of your

perspective.

Participant 7606009

Johnny: Quick reminder of what it is I'm doing and then dial in on the questions that I'd sent you that I'll be reminding you of as we go.

Participant: Okay.

Johnny: So as a refresher, I'm studying spirituality and religion in the counseling process. Really focusing not just on how do you feel about having it there or is it good or bad, those questions are kind of answered for me. The question I'm really focused on is what does it do? How does it operate? What kind of an ingredient is it? When it's present, what comes from it? Kind of things ... So we today are gonna be really trying to zero in on that question. So some of the questions I'm gonna ask you might feel like we're really circling around the same thing, and that's kind of exactly what I need. So I'm gonna just kind of be asking you to reiterate that for me or let's ask it a different way so that hopefully I can extract some of what it is I'm really interested in getting.

How's that sound to you?

Participant: Sounds good.

Johnny: Okay. So let me kick you off with the first question. If I remember from last time, you were one of the folks who I had just no problem getting great stuff from.

Participant: I felt like I was a blubbering mess.

Johnny: It was wonderful. It really was.

Participant: Okay.

Johnny: So the first question, and let me frame it, is like we know spirituality and religion and faith has been a piece of and an important piece of your process.

Participant: Yes.

Johnny: And it's something that you carry in life in general and then it's something that was involved in your counseling process. So with that backdrop, my question for you is how does spirituality or religion or faith, how does it enter into your counseling process? How's it get there?

Participant: Probably, we both bring it. I bring it, because it's part of who I am, then [Counselor], or the counselor, brings it because that's part of who she is. It's invited into the space. Maybe it's already understood between the two of us that's part of the core of who we are, so if we're gonna be real in the room, then that's gonna be part of the conversation.

Accessing spirituality in counseling

Johnny: Yeah. Yep. So it's the core of who you are and you said you bring it into the room with you.

Participant: Mmm-hmm.

Johnny: And so tell me about that. Do you feel like it's something you carry in your life in general and then it walks into the counseling room and your counseling process with you?

Participant: I hope so.

Johnny: Yeah.

Participant: Right. Yeah. That's what I'm striving for. I make time for that every day. Generally that's in the morning time, I've created space to be in the word and praying and have a time of reflection so then when I come, I'm primed, I guess.

Accessing spirituality outside the counseling room

Johnny: Yeah.

Participant: Yep. I want that. I want some clarity. Sometimes when you hear ... If God's working on your heart on something and you've spent your time alone with him, but then you hear someone else kind of reaffirm what you were thinking or correct or add to, it's kind of like a second source, who you know is coming from a good spot themselves, spiritually, then it just helps to solidify whatever that learning is or whatever the process is.

Memo: 1/8/2018

This whole section feels relevant to my core question for this round. She is articulating how S/R gets into therapy and then already beginning to describe some of what it does.

She is also doing a good job of discussing the interaction between her own spirituality and her counselor. I see this in the word "reaffirm." There is already a process going on and the counselor joins into that, it seems.

Johnny: Yeah. Yep. So it's something you're cultivating in your life, setting time aside for, internalizing?

Participant: Yes.

Johnny: And then you carry it into your counseling with you. Then the counseling room, in your case with [Counselor], she shares that same core, and so it's very invited and very present.

Participant: Right. It's not necessarily that every time that we talk about it or that it's the main focus of our talk, but there will be times that she'll interject and it will definitely be something that she'll ask me or ... What did she ask? Have you asked God about this? Wrestling with something. Well, have you spent time asking him that question? No, I haven't. That's what brings the clarity. Maybe this isn't why it's clicking, is I haven't made room for this issue in my time in the morning.

Johnny: Yep. When you talk about it being internal, yeah, I think I'll just ask this question and see where it goes. Where is it?

Participant: Probably like, not a head type of thing. Not like a brain. Wherever that soul is, I think of your heart being your soul, that's where I would feel it. Kind of my chest. Like a heart knowledge versus a head knowledge where I really feel like I understand and ...

Experiencing spirituality in counseling

She is describing her experience of addressing spirituality in counseling and is describing some of the uniqueness of that experience. She is contrasting it sharply with head knowledge and more as a "soul level" experience.

Johnny: Mmm-hmm. Yeah. So it's something more here, soul, heart, in your chest, that you're really carrying around with you. Like you said, it's core or foundational for who you are.

Participant: Right. Right.

Johnny: Yep. Then you said something interesting that kind of segues straight into the second question, which is that sometimes the counselor, [Counselor] will ask you sometimes not, it's always there, but sometimes it's more directly engagement. So my question is how do you know when something in your counseling process is spiritual?

Participant: I would say maybe two folds to that answer. One, when it's spoken

truth, like it matches up with what the scripture has to say, then you just can't deny it. If the feedback that she's giving or whatever's revealed in our conversation, if that aligns with something that's in scripture, then that's something I can trust. It's coming from a place of truth.

Then something, kind of like what I said, when it's maybe something I've been wrestling with, and I need just to hear it from an outside source, it's that little bit of confirmation where I might be insecure. Like am I hearing this right? Validation, maybe.

Johnny: Yep. Yeah, and so you ... When you hear something that resonates as spoken truth that aligns with scripture, aligns with what you know to be true of God, in those moments, you know that that's a spiritual moment? And then the same thing with when there's something that you're wrestling with and you hear something kind of confirming, both of those things feel like this is a spiritual, this is a faith moment. Is that right?

Participant: Yes.

Johnny: Anything else you'd add to that?

Participant: There's been a few times when I've had, when maybe she's said something, and I thought "hmm, I'm not so sure about that." So then it causes me to go and ask God, is that true of me? Or after the counseling session, really have me wrestle with whatever she was trying to clarify or that we might have disagreed on.

Memo: 1/8/2018

This is just an interesting paragraph because she is really describing this intertwining process of spirituality, her counselor, and her own self.

Johnny: Yeah.

Participant: It brings that layer also.

Johnny: Yeah. That's interesting, cause it kind of illuminates the role that your faith plays in your counseling. Cause sometimes you're coming in with it, sometimes it's you're hearing truth that resonates with what you know to be true. Other times you're hearing something that you're unsure of and it directs you back to your faith.

Participant: Right. Maybe for some people who don't have the spirituality piece, they would just call that self reflection afterwards, but I see myself

really bouncing that off of who I know God is and what I'm thinking his course for my life is or whatever he's working on in me.

Johnny: Mmm-hmm.

Participant: Versus just personal growth or self-reflection to take someone's constructive feedback.

Johnny: Yep. So in some senses, what you're saying, tell me if this is right, is that because of your faith, because of your relationship with God, a self-reflection process is a process between you and God.

Participant: Yes. Yes. Yeah. I invite him into that space or I want that counsel, that feedback, kind of that peace that he can provide.

Johnny: Yep. Peace that he can provide. Is that one of the results that you feel? When I'm engaging this aspect of myself and with God, that peace is one of the things that comes away from it?

Participant: Absolutely. Yeah.

Johnny: Okay. This is gonna feel ... This is gonna maybe feel like one of this minutia moments, but yeah ... Tell me what the peace feels like and how does it get from I engage with God, to I walk away with a sense of peace?

Participant: That's a hard one. Hard one without giving a Sunday school answer.

Johnny: Yeah. Well, let's start there. What's the Sunday school answer?

Participant: Well, the Sunday school answer is Jesus is the Prince of Peace. Of course, if you spend time with him, then that's going to be your automatic go to and everything's gonna be fluffy and unicorns and wonderful.

Johnny: I don't think there's a unicorn in the Sunday school answer. I don't know.

Participant: Just that kind of ... Whatever.

Johnny: Has that been your experience?

Participant: Has that been my ... No, no, no. Peace is more, coming to peace, is more of a process

Accepting the present moment

of learning that the part of contentment that comes with peace,

despite your circumstances, the chaos, the dissatisfaction with not being able to control your environment or your people around you but still, again, in that core of you, there's some settling and some peace may be part of that. Hope that you're still gonna be okay despite.

Perceiving hope

You're still enough.

Feeling affirmed

You're still worthy. There's hearts that I think a lot of people come to counseling for, to figure that out about themselves.

Memo: 1/8/2018

This section is reminding me of other things that other participants have said. Thinking about the impact of S/R on the therapy process- she has just articulate a threefold impact. There is hope (related to the future), peace (related to the present experience), and self-image (related to how the person feels about themselves and their circumstances. I have heard these three (or very similar) in other interviews. Previously, the hope piece had stood out to me- showing that there was a process with movement that was taking place. But now, I am seeing the other pieces as well.

Her statements seem very on target for how S/R interacts with her therapy process. I am also noting that she talks about these things in a sense of receiving them from her spirituality. I see this process unfolding of her bringing S/R into therapy, making space for her experience (with her counselor), and then receiving these specific things from her S/R. She brings it, but the S/R gives certain things to her process that weren't necessarily there before. Or certainly weren't as visible.

Johnny: And that's somewhat true of you, too, except you might come to counseling to figure those things out about yourself, but it seems like fundamentally you believe they originate from a different place.

Participant: Yes. Yes. Yes.

Johnny: Cause in that sense, it seems like the Sunday school answer, if we cut it into pieces, there's truth to it. Jesus has these things. He has peace, he has hope, he has love. I need these things. I have to then engage in a process of what?

Participant: Yes. Of what? Yeah. What does that process look like? How do you ...

Johnny: How do you get them?

Participant: How do you get them? And that ... Are you asking me that? Part of it is giving up control of those things in my own self that I am trusting

in my own strength to make those things happen. It's being diligent with the discipline of prayer and of meditating on the word. Giving myself into those good books that would kind of help me wrestle with some of the questions of what's keeping me from that peace. From tapping in. What are those barriers to me believing that those are offered for me too?

Engaging spirituality outside of counseling

Johnny: Yeah. Yep. Yeah, and so it seems like there's a known belief that God has these things that you need. There's a known belief that you need them and desire them. Then the process is dealing with moving things out of the way or reflecting on what needs to be reflected on, setting time aside, engaging the process to connect the two.

Participant: Yes. Yes. Yes.

Johnny: Yeah.

Participant: That's the hard work, is that engagement. How chaotic things can be, and then when I don't practice, I will just call them disciplines, or whatever.

Johnny: Yeah. So let me ... I think this question might fit in here. Feel free to take a second to think about this. Can you give me a picture or metaphor that would help me understand this? That would help me understand how faith, spirituality, religion, operates in your counseling process?

Participant: I think that was one of the questions that you emailed. Right? Okay, I was like this is sounding familiar. I think I've thought about this.

What I thought of was like a mirror that's been spread over with Vaseline.

Johnny: A mirror that's been spread over with Vaseline? Okay.

Participant: Yeah. And I feel like the counseling process is like that wiping away of the Vaseline where, you know, when you looked in that mirror when it was covered, you just see this real foggy image of who you are. A clouded image. Then through the counseling process, you just wipe away that junk that's... hopefully you really figure out your real self and this is truly who I am, how I was designed.

Johnny: Mmm-hmm.

Participant: I thought that was a pretty good one.

Johnny: Yeah. And you know, that resonates with some of the other things that you've already said today. It seems like a big piece of your process and faith in your counseling process is that there are things that can get in the way or can obstruct or can make the mirror cloudy. A lot of your counseling process is in like ...

Participant: This unveiling. Right.

Johnny: And that then, you're able to see yourself, your real self, more clearly.

Participant: Yeah. Or as Christ would want me to be seen.

Feeling affirmed

He doesn't see me with all that clouded Vaseline. He sees a true reflection of him in me, how he wants me to move forward in my life.

Memo: 1/8/2018

Here again is that piece that S/R seems to offer- that there is a direction going forward in life. There is hope, or trust, or belief that the person is being taken in a direction.

Johnny: Yep. Yeah. When you, you have the mirror that's covered in Vaseline, you go in counseling and you wipe it away and you see yourself more clearly. Then what happens?

Participant: Sometimes it gets smudged right back over.

Johnny: Okay.

Participant: It's almost like a step back. I didn't really internalize that. It will take me awhile to really believe that. It maybe still needs some more work in that area of processing.

Memo: Here is some of that deep language or that soul-level language. My mind might get it, but does my heart get it?

Johnny: Yeah.

Participant: But when that light is shed, or when I see that part of myself, then there's a real sense of freedom.

Johnny: Freedom.

Participant: Freedom. Yeah.

Johnny: Freedom from what to what?

Participant: Freedom from feeling bogged down by that anymore, or chained to it. That was something early on that [Counselor] and I talked about like, the chains that were wrapped around my soul and that sort of thing and that was another metaphor I used. I wanted those things to be broken away, and I feel like when she's able to help me wipe away some of that Vaseline or whatever's smudging the mirror, then one of those links in the chain that might be holding me in bondage is broken away, and that's what the freedom is. It's just like, okay, I'm more free to be myself. I really am totally accepted, flawed and all. Yeah.

Memo: maybe a fourth piece? Freedom from the past?

Johnny: Yeah. Free to be yourself, free to be loved for who you are.

Participant: Free to be loved. Free to speak my mind about something. Free to fail at something. Free from others' perceptions of me. I can see myself more clearly and who I am in God's eyes that I don't need to feel like I'm measuring up to others' expectations or perceptions.

Johnny: Yeah. Yep. Yeah, I like your imagery and it speaks to the thing I'm finding myself trying to dial in on, is I'm wanting to describe this process. It's kind of by the nature of the research, it's approached as this active process. Yet, what I keep encountering are these metaphors that almost sound passive, but aren't. Stillness, reflection ... Just bringing myself to that place, to that mirror, and clearing the smudge away, and seeing myself more clearly. Just doing that, goodness comes from that.

Participant: Yeah. That seems so counterintuitive, cause we think in our mind we're supposed to work, work, work. What? You want me to just be? Yeah.

Johnny: Yeah.

Participant: That doesn't seem right, logically, in my brain, but in my heart, wow, that is the process.

Johnny: Yeah.

Participant: I think [Counselor] knows that, cause that's what she brings me back around to is have you created time, have you created space. Just sit with this. We don't need to do anything more. Cause I'll ask

what's my action plan? What's my homework? Nothing. Just ... Yeah.

Johnny: Yeah.

Participant: I'm not sure where that falls in the questions, but that would be something else she brings to the room is she knows that's part of the process.

Johnny: So she serves to remind you.

Participant: Yes. Yes.

Johnny: I know you want something to do, but this is what you really need.

Participant: Right. Because we've been at it for awhile now, she'll remind me okay, this is how far you've come and this is how long it's taken, and this is the process. There is a process unfolding (direction and intention).

Johnny: Yep. Yeah. So I think we're circling the next question of when you experience that, those things for you that you're talking about are spiritual for you. They're faith, their encounters with God.

Participant: Yes.

Johnny: What does it do for you and, bear with me, cause we're circling, what does it do for you to experience that in counseling? What do you gain?

Participant: What do I gain in the session, or what do I gain outside of the session?

Johnny: Either.

Participant: Either. Sometimes we wrestle with is God real, is this all real, or is this just something that I'm making up to make myself feel better? Faith, spirituality. So to hear someone else say it and share their experience and encourage that in you, then it's a confirmation that yes, God is real, yes he's part of this. It helps to solidify the foundation of faith to have someone that you trust incorporating that into their practice as well.

Memo: Doubt?

So having that maybe stronger foundation and then I'm able to apply it to the situations that come up. We're hashing out something

during the session, but then life happens throughout the next couple weeks. Well, there'll be new situations and so I'm able to apply those principals to the new situations and remember whatever she helped me to wipe away, this is how God sees me. I'm quicker to jump to his truth and who I am in him than what I might have struggled with before.

Johnny: Mmm-hmm.

Participant: And believing that about myself, or I would have just seen myself as this smudged look. Of course this is happening to me, or of course I'm getting frustrated by this situation again, because this is who I am.

Receiving affirmation/Being affirmed/Feeling affirmed

Johnny: Yep. So just by having that experience in counseling, so by experiencing your faith, your spirituality in counseling, I'm hearing several things. You see yourself more clearly, or true of who you are. You experience a sense of freedom just by remembering that experience, a sense of freedom. You said hopefulness. And then, by experiencing it and counseling, it sounds like there's a, the words that are coming to mind is remembering but also like rehearsing. Like rehearsing the truth and that, in turn, makes it easier to access, easier to remember, easier to rely on, kind of throughout your life.

Participant: Yes.

Johnny: What would you change about those words?

Participant: Easier to remember, easier to rely on, yes. Easier to believe. It was validated for me in my session, it's validated through my reflection.

Johnny: Yeah.

Participant: So now, moving forward ...

Johnny: Right.

Participant: This really is who I am.

Johnny: Yeah. A very nerdy metaphor is coming to mind for me, which is the way that cell phone towers locate your cell phone. They use three towers and they ping the cell phone from three towers. Between the three towers they're able to locate where it is. So I'm kind of hearing that. There's you and there's God, but when you bring your

counselor into the mix, it helps pinpoint you.

Participant: Yes. Yes. Yes. I guess, ideally, it'd be nice to get to a place where I'm far enough along in the process and the journey that I might not need that third tower. You have a trusted friend or a stronger sense of who I am in God's eyes.

Johnny: Yeah.

Participant: Not quite there yet.

Johnny: Do you feel that will come?

Participant: Uh-huh. Yeah, I do. I do.

Johnny: Yeah. And yet, for now, [Counselor] serves that role for you?

Participant: Right. Right. And other's. It's not just counselor. Trusted friends and certainly my husband. For now, I still need her expertise and maybe a little bit more objective, versus a friend or my spouse who's really probably a little bit more subjective, because the nature of the relationship.

Johnny: Yeah. So there's, I think you're speaking to, there's things you've gained just by the fact that you are a person of faith, you experience that in your counseling process, but then there's also something really positive that you gain from experiencing with your counselor.

Participant: Mmm-hmm. Yes. Because of that difference of relationship. Your husband's supposed to love you and accept you and that sort of thing, and your close friends would do that, but here is someone that I'm presenting my full self to who doesn't have to love me and accept me because they're my spouse or my friend, but still can reflect back truth and call me on things and is helping to reveal this about me and ... right.

Johnny: Mmm-hmm. Yeah. In that reflection process, we're back to your mirror. You have [Counselor], your counselor, you have the mirror, you have the Vaseline. Where is God in the picture?

Participant: Oh, he's using her and circumstances as like the wiper.

Memo: So, she sees God using her counselor- again, she is describing this intertwining nature of her process, her counselor and her spirituality.

- Johnny: Okay.
- Participant: Yeah, yeah. I feel like it's he's using her or using circumstances to wipe away that layer.
- Johnny: So a lot of where you experience God in the counseling process, it sounds like God is ... Sounds like he's not just in one spot.
- Participant: Yeah, he uses her maybe as the vehicle to share his message. Again, that goes back. I know it would be from him if it's truthful. If it's what I know to be of his character, and she's repeating it, or if it's something that he's been working on my heart anyways, and she repeats it again, that's when I trust, wow, this is a message that I need to hear. This is swiping one layer away of that Vaseline where I can see him more clearly, I can see myself more clearly.
- Johnny: Yep. So it almost sounds like ... You've said the word trust a few times, and from one perspective, I would think there's trusting your counselor, but from another perspective, it sounds more like trusting that God is active. That God is at work. It might be through your counselor, it might be through your prayer time, it might be through the word, it might in the session. Any number of these places, but it sounds like moments where she says something that's confirming to you serves as this reminder to trust that God is in your midst.
- Participant: He's in my midst. Yeah.
- Johnny: Does that feel right to you?
- Participant: That would be accurate, yes.
- Johnny: Yeah. Yeah. That might lead to one of the other questions. What's challenging or difficult or hard about experiencing your faith within your counseling process? It seems like it's ...
- Participant: A very deep, vulnerable part of who I am. [inaudible 00:35:21] something that I keep very private I'm sharing here. Generally something that I keep very private that hopefully people would know yes, there's something different about her. Hopefully my character reflects my faith.
She is describing some discomfort with the depth of the vulnerability of sharing about her spiritual experience/her faith.
- Johnny: Yeah. You use a lot of reflecting metaphors.

Participant: Yeah. Yeah.

Johnny: So it's hard because it's a very core, very deep vulnerable part of who you are.

Participant: Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Because if you ... There's a certain expectation that would come out if someone knows that you're a Christian or you're a person of faith, yet you're still struggling with all this junk. So when I bring that into my session, again there's that trust factor, trusting in my counselor that she's not judging me. What, she's calling herself a Christian, yet this is all the junk and baggage that she brings.

Johnny: Yeah.

Participant: She's created that environment that it's safe to bring your faith and your junk.

Johnny: Yeah. Mmm-hmm. The way you described it, it's like both, they're different, but in some ways similarly as deep. If I were to show somebody deeper parts of who I am, when we got much deeper, they would see my faith, they would also see my junk, my challenges, my shortcomings.

Participant: Right. And is she gonna discount my faith when she knows what I've struggled with? That's how I feel about why I wouldn't share myself on deeper levels to people unless I really trusted that they could [inaudible 00:37:44].

Fearing rejection?

Johnny: Yeah.

Participant: The good with the bad or ...

Johnny: Mmm-hmm. Yeah. So there's a challenge in showing more of who you are being seen.

Participant: Yes. Yes. But that's getting easier as the Vaseline is coming off. No, wait. This is how everyone is. It's not just me who wrestles with this. This is ... right.

Johnny: So it sounds like you feel less alone.

Participant: Yes. Absolutely.

Johnny: And as you describe that process of showing more of yourself, I can readily understand why freedom feels like a key outcome for you.

Participant: Yeah. Yeah. It was something I was sharing with my daughters too, cause I was sharing with them, oh, it used to be I couldn't pray or I didn't want to be seen reading my bible when you girls were around or Dad was home. I just really wanted it to be really private and no one to know because I didn't want you to think I'm doing these things, yet I'm yelling and screaming the next hour, then for you to not believe that my faith was real because I was having poor outcomes.

Johnny: Yeah.

Participant: I've learned that through the counseling process that that's okay. It's just part of ... It doesn't make me any less spirituality if I have sin in my life that I'm dealing with or if I'm feeling insecure about things or whatever we're working on. There's that more freedom to engage and be a little bit more open with my faith and risk that being judged like, oh, you don't have it all together yet. Cause I need that time and tapping into that source, so that I, circling back around to that peace and contentment.

Johnny: Yeah.

Participant: This is part of that, the work that I'm doing.

Johnny: Yeah. Tapping into that source.

Participant: Mmm-hmm.

Johnny: Tell me about that.

Participant: That is a long run praying your heart out when there's an issue that you're wrestling with or riding it out and just begging God for answers or looking in scripture and playing the Psalm over the issue.

Johnny: Mmm-hmm.

Participant: As my thoughts are anxious to collect those scriptures that talk about anxiety and [inaudible 00:41:17].

Johnny: Yeah.

Participant: That to me is what's tapping in.

- Johnny: Yeah, and there's that same kind of, that picture we talked about earlier, where God has things you need and it's possible for us to forget or lose touch with them and it sounds like all of these things help you to remember, make time for, put yourself in connection with God and those things that you need.
- Participant: Yes. And to use the word you used before, to rely on that. It proves itself, it works. When the next situation comes around and oh, I handled that totally different now that I've had some truth revealed, some clarity revealed.
- Johnny: Yeah.
- Participant: Those things don't define me. They're just situations that are happening. When I've maybe lost touch with plugging into that source, [Counselor] again, the counselor, then reminds me of those things.
- Johnny: Yeah. Yep. Hmm. This is helpful.
- Participant: Good. I was like, I'm gonna read your article. See what everyone else said.
- Johnny: Yeah. I'm excited to find out what everyone else is gonna say too. But no, this is helpful, and I'm curious. This is gonna be more of an open form question, but what else is ... and this can be anything, about counseling, about your process, about your faith ... What else is coming to mind that you would want me to know?
- Participant: One thing I haven't mentioned is community. I'm not in this alone. I have my spouse who shares in this. I have a few, I'm not someone that has a ton of close friends, I have probably three or four very trusted people who share my faith and who are on this journey with me. Not necessarily the counseling journey, but just parenting of teens or whatever that I'm on. I've got that support network of people who are of like-minded faith that's super helpful. Super helpful. And really good teaching from a really good church.
- Johnny: Mmm-hmm. So that's another key piece for you is the community, not being alone.
- Participant: Right. I don't know that I had that at the beginning of my counseling process. That's been something that I've been able to be open to developing.

- Johnny: Yeah. It sounds like maybe [Counselor]'s helped you with that, too.
- Participant: Right. It encouraged that in that way.
- Johnny: Encouraged you to take risks and be vulnerable about that stuff you keep private inside?
- Participant: Right. Right, yeah. I was already involved in a church community, but as far as seeking out friends, that could be like giving and not necessarily that I was always giving to them, but it was more of a mutual.
- Johnny: Yeah. So community stands out to you in its importance. Anything else? Anything else you want to add, anything you want to add to your picture of the mirror with the Vaseline on it?
- Participant: Something back to sometimes the area gets smudged over again when God is wiped away and I've revealed an area, sometimes, oftentimes, a step back where it gets clouded over again, kind of exploring that. Is that Satan, is that my own sin, is that a lack of faith, disbelief that just ... It's just part of the process I think of trusting that it will fully be clean one day. Maybe not on this side of heaven, but even if it gets smudged over, I'm not discouraged enough that I won't keep coming back.
- Johnny: Mmm-hmm. What keeps you encouraged to keep coming back?
- Participant: Cause I truly believe that God is who he says he is. That is at the core of me.
- Johnny: Yeah.
- Participant: I might be wavering at one point with my faith, but in the long haul, this is who I am. He is who he says he is, and we're gonna get through this.
- Johnny: Yeah. This is who I am. He is who he says he is. It just seems like so much of your counseling process really centers around seeing that or being reminded of that, letting that in other parts of your life.
- All right. Anything else you want to add?
- Participant: That's it.
- Johnny: Okay. I'm aware of our time.

Participant 7606010

Johnny: ... about addressing it, or what role ... Should it be addressed or not? Those questions for me have kind of been answered. It's much more for people who do want spirituality and religion to be a part of their counseling. What kind of role does it play? What does it do for them once it is present?

Participant: Okay.

Johnny: So today, the questions that we have are really going to be zeroing in more on that. We're probably going to spend about ... anywhere from 40 to 50 minutes chatting, and some of these questions might feel like they're repeating or that they're really focusing in on some minutiae, but that's kind of what I need right now is to really zero in on a few particular parts of the theory.

Participant: Okay.

Johnny: Do you have any questions?

Participant: It's still breaking up kind of. I don't know how to pause my video.

Johnny: Oh, no. Okay. Let me see if I can.

Participant: It's better than it was with the video on, but it's still a little breaking up.

Johnny: Okay, well, I'm hearing you really well. I'll get my first question out there and then listen to you for a while and hopefully our connection will clear up a bit.

Participant: Okay.

Johnny: The first question is just, for someone like yourself who has considered their spirituality, their religion, their beliefs, to be part of their counseling process, my question for you is, how does spirituality and religion ... How does it enter into your counseling process? How does it get from something that you believe in general into something that's a part of the counseling that you're doing?

Participant: When I was in counseling, and had a Christian counselor, because I've had experience with both, having a Christian counselor and not. We always started out with prayer.

Johnny: Okay.

Participant: That was helpful to just guide [inaudible 00:02:17] regardless of what was going on before or after counseling. That kind of just helped prepare both me and my counselor for that moment and using that space how God wanted it used.

Johnny: Okay.

Participant: It was helpful because it kind of [inaudible 00:02:40], "Hey I just came from class and it was really stressful," or whatever. Sometimes that was what we focused on, but it just kind of helped give us a starting point, and then we also ended with prayer.

Experiencing spirituality in counseling: Overtly

Johnny: One of the ways that it sounds like your spirituality entered in was through prayer with your counselor.

Participant: Yes.

Johnny: What else? What else would you say? What were the other points of entry?

Participant: Also, depending on what topic we were discussing, he would try to challenge me as to [inaudible 00:03:27] whatever that was, so for example, "I'm feeling a lot of self-contempt today," or whatever, or, "I feel like I need to cut," or something like that. Then he would challenge me, "Well, why do you feel you need to do that?" and I would be like, "Because I don't feel like ... what I did, I deserve punishment." He would challenge me, "Well, what does Scripture say about we're forgiven?" Stuff like that, or, "How does God view you? Why do you feel like your view of yourself is different from God who created you and who sacrificed His son for you? Why do you still feel the need to be so critical of yourself or to pick out flaws that like, Scripture says Jesus sees no flaw, and also He died for us." So that was helpful as well.

Johnny: Yeah. So it would come in through prayer and then it would come in through ... sounds like Scripture, but also kind of challenging or questioning some of the things thing you're believing.

Participant: Yeah, and I'd say also that would serve as a point to go back to, kind of homework sometimes, to meditate on Scripture that would help me cope through a situation. In addition to reframing my thoughts on something, some Scripture can back up like that, so it's not just a secular point of view of therapy, but we did do techniques like that, too. It just kind of backed up what we were doing or added on to

additional therapy techniques.

Memo: 1/8/2019

Addressing spirituality in counseling

So, she is focusing a lot here on how S/R enters into therapy. And for this participant, it seems that the primary ways are very overt or obvious spiritual/religious things- things like prayer, scripture.

Johnny: Yeah. In terms of those other therapy techniques that you mentioned ... because some of the things that you're talking about might ... just the presentation of them, they sound like spiritual or religious activities like prayer or utilizing Scripture or assessing your beliefs, but in terms of these other things that were done in therapy, like more, you might say, counseling-type stuff ... Were those things spiritual or religious at all for you?

Participant: Like separate from the Scripture and prayer?

Johnny: Yeah.

Participant: Not really.

Johnny: Okay.

Participant: Because one thing would be a narrative writing or kind of guided imagery, and it wasn't spiritual in my eyes.

Johnny: Okay.

Participant: Also, just reading books pertaining to whatever the topic was that we were discussing. Sometimes he would have little chapters from books for me to read for homework or something, and it wasn't always faith-based.

Johnny: With those sorts of things, where would you say ... how would you say God was involved or influencing those things?

Participant: The non-spiritual things?

Johnny: Yeah.

Participant: I think for some of the narrative writing I did or really even some of the reading ... He helped those areas get clarity and allow for healing in a way that wasn't necessarily exclusively religious or faith-related, but still it was part of healing process, so I think it was ... he

used those things in that way. He probably [inaudible 00:08:05] directly, [inaudible 00:08:09] or that content, I guess.

Johnny: So there were some things that were very obviously spiritual or involved God, like prayer or Scripture, but then there were other things that might be more secular, but that God was still involved in.

Participant: Yeah, because there were things ... One of the narrative writings, for example ... I wrote about an experience that I had as a child that has stayed with me. It wasn't a bad thing. It was just an emotional experience as a child that I've never let go of, and still impacts me. That narrative writing revisited that in a different way. I still have that memory, but it just was just there, always with me. Exploring why that was impactful to me shed light on how I view situations similar to that, so that was helpful.

Johnny: You said in those types of things, like with that narrative writing, that you could see that God helps to bring clarity to those areas.

Participant: Yes.

Johnny: Could you say more about what clarity is and how you experienced it?

Participant: Yeah. For that instance, for example, it was related to something that I saw on TV. It wasn't a super-impactful thing in that ... I don't know. It was just a small thing, but it stuck with me. I saw something on TV and it just ... As a child, I just got so upset by it and it was because I related it to my dad ... in a good way. It wasn't a negative way. So clarity to see that ... I am very tender-hearted towards that type of situation and just have a lot of compassion and empathy for people. It was like a scene about a kid being bullied or something for his weight, and then even thinking about it again, back when I was in counseling ... I couldn't explain why but it just impacted me so much, and made me emotional.

So we kind of explored, by writing about it, and talking about it more, like why that was so impactful. It was because there's family members who I have that that's happened to, and it just bothers me a lot. We explored how my heart's just more tender-hearted and compassionate towards situations of injustice or wrong that [inaudible 00:11:14]. So it was kind of cool, because I had always seen that type of vulnerability and empathy as a negative thing, but when we discussed that, how it's actually a good thing and that's a very big part of my personality and my character and who God made me to be.

Johnny: Okay, so you're exploring this memory that has stuck with you, that had a strong emotional impact on you, and it sounds like some of the clarity came in seeing yourself differently and the things that you and your heart bring to that situation.

Memo: 1/8/2018

Feeling affirmed

Experiencing healing

This participant feels much more concrete in her descriptions of faith. Things tend to polarize toward either being or not being about faith. Despite that, she describes ways that she sees God/faith active in her process. And begins to pick up on some threads that feel similar to other participants.

Participant: Yes.

Johnny: If I'm hearing you right, that clarity for you feels like it came from God.

Participant: Yes.

Johnny: This is a ... I don't know the answer to this question, but why do you think God does that? Why does He bring the clarity into circumstances like that?

Participant: I think, personally, for me at that time, it was a season of growth in who God made me to be and ... just because that was my senior year of college and I was going to be graduating soon and just still struggling with where I wanted to end up and things I want ... do and I ended up going into social work for grad school, but at that time, just kind of exploring my identity and who God made me to be and ... my life, and how He could use me. So I think even a small memory like that really helped me explore who God made me to be and how even though I may see that as a negative thing or at that time did, how God showed me that that's who He made me to be and that it's not a negative thing. Now in social work, having [inaudible 00:13:47] population who struggle or who are treated like that, it's a very helpful thing and I think that God is using me in this field to love people well and yeah.

Memo: 1/8/2019

This is another area that is standing out to me- season of growth and the idea of healing. In this moment, I am thinking about healing as something that is a process. When we describe that something is healing, we are saying there is a process that is still actively unfolding. If something cannot heal, it

is permanent, it is done. Even if we think about an injury- like a spinal injury that can heal versus one that cannot and the damage is permanent. This is confirming the importance of a process unfolding being part of what spirituality brings to the process.

Johnny: Yeah, yep, that makes ... So that process, and through the process of doing that kind of exercise that your counselor had given to you, God was active in bringing clarity, particularly around who you are and how you're made.

Participant: Yes.

Johnny: And then the other word that you used to go along with that was that you said clarity and that it brought about healing and I was wondering if you could say a little bit more about what is healing? What role did it play in your counseling?

Participant: So for me, I struggled a lot ... and depression, anxiety ...

Johnny: I'm sorry, could you say that again? You struggled a lot with ...

Participant: With cutting and depression and anxiety. So for me, during that time, the healing really ... self, because I tend to be a control freak and want to solve it all on myself,
Accepting the present moment
 like on my own. It's a [inaudible 00:15:25] at that time just ... like bringing healing to I don't have to have everything figured out, that's not ... I'm not supposed to be able to do everything on my own, that's why God is God and we are human. But also like, so that's kind of how the cutting came in, too, you know, God doesn't see the need for me to be punished or ... I am made in His image and I should not be trying to harm myself because I think that I deserve it.

Because [inaudible 00:16:15] covers everything, so it's not really in my hands to judge whether or not I deserve this or that. For the depression, just learning to trust God and His timing and His plan more than what I'm going through and to focus on hope more, too, instead of getting sucked into what's going [inaudible 00:16:42] now or what I think is going to ... future and again, just trusting His plan and that that's better than what I was going through or what I thought would happen.

Johnny: Yeah. So it sounds like a lot of the healing, like you said, it was particularly around struggling with cutting and depression and

anxiety. Then I heard you say that healing really ... Tell me if this wording is right, it helped you to remember or lead into that you don't have to have everything figured out.

Participant: Yep.

Johnny: What would you call that? Living knowing that you don't have to have everything figured out.

Participant: Yeah, that's ... like living ... I don't know how to phrase that. Living without being bound to my circumstances or what I'm capable of doing because God's capable of doing way more than I could ever think I could or dream to do.

Accepting the present moment

Johnny: It sounds like with healing you also used words like trusting God more and focusing on hope more.

Participant: Yep.

Johnny: Would you say those are the things that come out of being healed?

Participant: I think it's part of a process. I don't think that [inaudible 00:18:40] as humans, like yeah, we're Christians, but I don't think ... well, personally I know, but I think it's safe to assume that as Christians we go through different seasons and we are not always trusting in God and hoping and it's not always on the [inaudible 00:19:07] matter what circumstances. Obviously that's what we strive for and that's what we want to do, but that's not always what happens because as humans we doubt and lose focus in the midst of things. I think ... and healing is a process in itself, it's not like, "Oh, healed, done." It's a continual process, so I think trusting in God is the same as that, it's ... sometimes you might struggle less with that than other times, so.

Johnny: Yeah. So there's this process that unfolded in your counseling and it, like you said, it comes in seasons and sometimes we're trusting more and sometimes we're trusting less. Within that, it involved healing, it involved trusting God more or having more hope.

Participant: Yep. But I think that trusting in God needs to go hand in hand with the healing experience because otherwise, like I can say from my experience, going through counseling beforehand that was not with a Christian counselor and didn't incorporate faith into it, like, I don't feel like I got far in the healing process because that component was not present. So for myself, I could see a difference, like the positive

difference between incorporating that into my counseling and not. Like, I went to two different counselors who were secular counselors and did worse, honestly, or prolonged it, like the cutting and the depression and anxiety. I wouldn't say that it was healed, so ... And even with the Christian counseling, when I was in it, when I ended it, I wouldn't say I was healed. I think I was further in the healing process and a lot of that had to do with bringing God as an active hand in that [inaudible 00:21:48].

Memo: 1/8/2018

She is describing this same thing that I have seen elsewhere- God/Faith/Spirituality being active in the process and providing direction or movement. And healing communicates a similar thing.

Johnny: Yeah. So actively involving ... like you said, actively involving trusting God is for you, directly related with having your counseling be a healing process.

Participant: Yes.

Johnny: That might be a good segue into my third question, which ... we'll see, I don't know how challenging this one will be for you. It would be challenging for me. But can you give me a picture or a metaphor that will help me understand how your faith ... how it operates in your counseling process?

Participant: I don't know, I have to think about that one for a second.

Johnny: Okay, take your time.

Participant: I guess I would say like, if you're doing art, you can make a painting using basic materials, like a brush or a certain type of paint and a canvas or something. But I think ... and that would be counseling. With the right tools, you can make a product, you can come out with something different than you went in with. But I think for that image, and how God plays into that, I would see Him as the right tools for the thing that you're hoping to accomplish. So if you're hoping to accomplish an oil painting, but you only have acrylic paint, or you have the \$1.00 bin paintbrushes. Like yeah, you still get a product, you still have a painting, but when you use the right tools, the right brushes with the right paint on the right surface, then you will have an even better product than you would have if you had just used the basic material. So I guess that's how [inaudible 00:24:26] would kind of ... picture that.

So, involving S/R changes the process and direction that is unfolding and therefore changes the outcome?

Johnny: Yeah. And in that instance, you said God is those artistic tools and instruments.

Participant: Yes.

Johnny: Who is using them?

Participant: I think God is the artist. We're the product, so yeah, we can come out ... Well, I don't know, I guess. I don't know, that's tough, because the artist in the ... wouldn't necessarily be God. I guess it would be like ... Okay, so the artist is us, like me, and if I'm using the basic tools, I can do fine on my own, but it's not that great. But I guess I would say that God is like the guiding force, in how I use the tools, or His spirit, in how I utilize the tools I have or the strokes I have or the inspiration for the painting, I guess. If that makes sense, I don't know.

Being directed in the counseling process

Johnny: It does.

Participant: It makes sense to me.

Johnny: It does, yeah, and I hear you kind of digging into your metaphor and if I'm tracking with you right, I hear you kind of going, "Okay, where is this stuff originating from?" Because we know the role that God plays in originating this stuff versus how is it actually happening. It kind of reminded me of the ... the book title that popped to mind was the book *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hand*. Some metaphor in there where it's like, there's some very tangible, active role that God has that really begins to change the painting. And it involves you, it involves God working not just with you, but through you. Give me your thoughts, what would you change?

Participant: Yeah, no, I'd say that's it. [inaudible 00:27:12]

Johnny: Just to squeeze a little bit more juice out of your metaphor, when you say that involving God, it ... depending on the kind of picture or the kind of art you're wanting to produce, that if you use certain tools, you'll get a certain result, but if you use other tools, you'll get, like you were saying, an oil painting versus an acrylic painting. Can you say anything about what kind of a painting you were wanting to create in counseling?

Participant: I think I was wanting to come out better than when I was coming in. Better than I had come out of other periods of counseling. More secure, more stable. Yeah.

Johnny: Okay. So it's like ... I remember some of our first conversation, it's like if you go in and what you want to come out of your counseling with is like a coping tool that you can use when you're wanting to cut. That would be one thing, but if you're wanting to come out fundamentally more secure as a person, then that's a very different thing.

Participant: Yeah. Because I guess like the first couple times that I had done different counseling, my goal was just to manage the symptoms and just be okay. After going through that a couple times, being like, "Well, obviously that's not working, so something's got to be different."

Johnny: Yep. And it sounds like your counseling that was Christian, that involved God ... let me try putting my video back on so you're not alone. Now that it seems like we're not moving anymore. For the counseling that you had that was Christian, that involved God, you've said some things, but what else would you say that you gained by having God as part of your counseling process?

Participant: I think it helped me rely more on Him than people. Because that was a big struggle. Before I ever did counseling, I would use cutting as like, my method of dealing with things. I wouldn't go to people, I'd just internalize it. So then after my first couple counselors or whatever, I would go to people, because that was one of the things, like, "Find someone you trust that you can talk to when you're having these thoughts." So I did do that, and it was helpful, except that it often turned into like, I would just rely on them and it would just turn into a codependent thing, which was a whole nother issue in itself. Rather than ... so it was just shifting.

So rather than internalizing, I was getting it out, and communicating, but in an unhealthy way. Because I was using them as ... to make me better, when that wasn't right. So then when I had Christian counseling, my counselor was the one that really pointed out to me, "That is good, to go to people and stuff, but that's also another issue that's developing. Because you're not really helping yourself or letting God intervene by just going to people all the time. Which is not building healthy relationships with them, either." So that challenged me to not internalize, but to go to God, and still reach out to people when I needed to, but not as heavily as I had been before.

Johnny: Yeah. So involving God allowed you to rely more on Him. What's different about relying on God versus relying on people?

Participant: Because God is constant and always there, where people can disappoint, which ... I mean, and that can be ... I don't know, two different things. One, I guess that's giving them too much power. If I tried calling so-and-so and they didn't answer, so I'm just going to cut because at least I tried to reach out to them and they let me down. That's not good. That's not healthy. But then also, if I did approach it in a healthy way and got a bad response or something, letting that influence how I handle it, like sometimes I would go to someone I trusted and ... like in a healthy way, and I would just react poorly based on their reaction.

So like, they didn't say what I needed to hear, or whatever. Whereas with God, it's ... He's always there and I always have access to Him, He's always with me, so I don't have to like ... Hey, I'm having a hard time and no one's answering their phone call, I guess I'm just going to cut. Like, it's harder because you don't have that physical instant communication, conversation back and forth, but it's ... I don't know, it's just different. I don't know how to describe.

Johnny: That leads to the next question, which is what is challenging or hard about having your faith, having God involved in your counseling process?

Participant: Because it's not an immediate change, which a lot of the coping techniques or things they teach you in counseling aren't either, but you can see the results faster than you can if you incorporate God into it, oftentimes. Which isn't to say that He can't make instant change, but a lot of the process is Him growing you and challenging you, and deepening your relationship, which takes time, a lot of the times. You don't get that instant gratification or release, I guess, that you can always, or most times, with other techniques.

There is a direction but it is not an immediate arrival.

Johnny: Yeah. Is that hard? In the midst of your counseling sessions, to not ... to have it be not as instant?

Participant: It's hard, but I think the effects are longer lasting. In the moment, it's difficult because like anything else, you want instant gratification, you want instant relief. You don't have that, but you have to focus on knowing that this is going to benefit you longer, in the long run, and in more ways than just immediate, like physical or mental relief.

- Johnny: Yeah. What kind of ways does it benefit you?
- Participant: Spiritually, because it deepens my relationship with God, and grows me in ... like trusting in His plan, but also emotionally, because ... not relying so heavily on the emotion. Like, "I'm feeling angry, I need to do this," or "I'm feeling guilty," or ... so I want to cut. Not acting out of emotions, I think. Then physically, too, because everything's kind of interconnected, so ... like with breathing techniques, obviously you get a physical [inaudible 00:37:10] but spiritually, it can impact you physically as well, even though that may not be the primary focus.
- Johnny: Right.
- Participant: But it can just relieve stress or tension, anxiety. Just in a different way.
- Johnny: Yep. Yeah, and so it has effects emotionally, has effects physically, has effects on your actions. But from a starting point of focusing on how you are spiritually in your relationship, your connection with God, and then kind of the impact moving from that.
- Participant: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Johnny: Yeah. What else, this can be anything, anything that's come to mind, anything you've thought of to day, anything you want to clarify.
- Participant: No, I don't think so.
- Johnny: Okay. Then in that case, this has been wonderful, and [inaudible 00:38:29] move toward wrapping us up. So I can tell you what the next steps are. The next steps for me are to take this information I'm getting from my participants like yourself and go-

Appendix T

Audit Trail of Analysis Following Second Interview

1/15/2018- Journal Entry

Met with Debbie this past Friday and presented some of my thoughts to her on the contributions of the second round of interviews. I can tell that they have tightened the focus on the center of the target and some important pieces emerged quickly. However, this journal entry is to engage reflectively and comparatively with the concepts in order to see what emerges.

Debbie asked me to reflect on refining the center of the target for my research direction.

What is something that changes your experience of an experience? Or alters your perspective of an experience?

A catalyst

A lens

A vantage point (this one is important because it connects to some of the language that participants used)

An ingredient?

A lens filter that makes different parts of the spectrum visible

This may be a metaphor that will emerge as the grounded theory process continues to unfold.

In the interviews, clients spoke a lot about *all* things being spiritual. So, in therapy, it was not about making something spiritual or inviting spirituality into therapy- it was about seeing it/becoming aware of it.

Many of the participants spoke about direction/intention and acceptance. Several participants also spoke about S/R impacting their past or perspective on their past or experience of the things they carried from their past.

There are a lot of positive implications of S/R in the therapy process. However, there also seems to be a "tipping point" of sorts. Too much reliance on faith/spirituality w/o seeing change or movement can lead to exasperation and hard questions from the client. i.e. Why hasn't God changed this situation in my life?

So, clients speak about awareness of S/R....

Becoming aware of S/R in therapy process impacts how the S/R client

Relates to their counselor (decentralizes them)

Relates to their therapy process

Relates to the present moment

Relates to themselves

Relates to their pain

Not sure if relates is the right word here but I like this framework. Some of these things see intrinsic to spirituality. OR they might be intrinsic to the experience of spirituality in therapy for the S/R client. Meaning.... It might be contextualized to this population.

Framing the impact in this manner allows for some room for variability within these categories. For example:

Relates to their counselor- some clients may expect more from their clients in terms of commonality of S/R experience. Whereas, others expected less from their counselor because of their reliance on their S/R.

Relates to their therapy process- Can help them to see that something intentional is unfolding. OR it can frustrate them that they do not see God changing their situation sooner.

Debbie also speculated about the role of client spiritual maturity in this process. Or, how a client's spiritual maturity could impact the presentation of some of these categories in therapy.

For example, some of my clients seemed to have much more comfort asking complex questions. Whereas others seemed to articulate a more simplistic (not bad) experience of their faith. Debbie and I discussed Rohr's two halves of life as a frame work for this.

I am hesitant though at the moment because I am not convinced this is central to the grounded theory work in question or if it may just be sending me off on an interesting but not helpful side trail.

One main entry point for this idea is related to the participant description of similarity between them and their counselor. Some participants placed a very high priority on having a substantial amount of shared experience with their counselor. Whereas others, seemed much less phased by perceived differences and sometimes saw those differences as a benefit to their own process.

1/15/2018- Journal Entry

Instead of impact...

Changes their expectations of the counselor

Broadens their perspective of the process

these are examples... Perhaps each dimension needs a more specific verb

Could each dimension have a result that has opposing ends? Such as hope and despair?

1/17/2018- Journal Entry

Thinking about my CRQ- How does S/R impact the therapeutic process for Christian clients?

What are other ways of thinking about impact?
 How does it change things?
 What does it influence?
 What does S/R interact with in the therapy process?

Another way of thinking about the question.... As a statement.... Because I am a spiritual/religious person and because I place an importance on this aspect of my life, my spirituality influences _____ about my therapy process.

However, some of the things that are being connected to S/R are not exclusive to S/R. There are other things a client could carry into therapy that would influence these same things (like perspective on the process or role of the counselor). But, for an S/R client, the influence on those things gets attributed to their S/R beliefs and practices.

So, it certainly is not the case that the things influenced by S/R in the therapy process are *exclusively* influenced by S/R. But for the S/R client, the impact is attributed to S/R beliefs and practices.

I am trying to reflect on if this is just something to observe about the emerging theory or if it is something to refine and see if I can extract something that is more exclusively attributed to S/R in the therapy process. I think it is the former. Just because something could be influenced by multiple factors doesn't take away from the fact that it is indeed influenced by S/R.

Metaphor- The image of a torx screwdriver or an allen wrench is coming to mind- 5 or 6 sided, all contact points to influence what is happening.

This image would imply that each piece is being impacted equally. Which may not be the case for each client. Some clients may see more impact on the perspective of counseling process whereas others may feel more impact on how they view themselves.

So, a different image might be more like gears- different sized gears.

Or it might be completely different parts coming together.

OR something mechanical is not the most accurate imagery to be considering. Perhaps it needs to be visualized as a more dynamic flow chart.

Returning to my note from yesterday:
 Changes their expectations of the counselor
 Broadens their perspective of the process
 these are examples... Perhaps each dimension needs a more specific verb

Could each dimension have a result that has opposing ends? Such as hope and despair?

So, I would need to boil down the main influence spheres. And then each of those categories might start to get some dimensionality to them.

And the influence comes from the essence of what spirituality is.... And enters counseling through the client being made aware or focusing their attention on the spiritual layer of their experience.

Presently, the main areas of influence include:

1. ~~Aiming~~ Directing the Counseling Process (future) ---> Hope/Despair (this could also be conceptualized as perspective, or a path, or a plan)
2. Reconciling Past experiences (Past)---> Healing/Forgiveness
3. Accepting the present moment (Present)---> Acceptance/Lightness/Peace
4. Shaping the client's self-image ---> Loved/Self-awareness (known)
5. Influencing the counseling relationship--- decentralizes the counselor, centers the process as a spiritual one, client experiences feeling known

Or perhaps all of these things (or many of them) can be gathered under the heading of Gaining Perspective

I see a lot of potential for dimensionality in these categories.

Reflecting for a moment on these areas that are influenced by S/R- are there any areas that I am missing or neglecting? Makes me reflect on what my participants are saying. Might influence how they view their problem- but I think that is getting absorbed in some of the other categories.

Where (if at all) would client maturity impact this? Does that even fit in this picture? I am wondering if it can have some influence on illuminating the dimensional nature of these categories but will not be a separate piece by itself.

Would client maturity be core to the theory emerging around my CRQ? In the end, the theory should encompass the experience of all the clients- regardless of maturity level. Then, the question becomes whether or not client maturity is something that should be illuminated and where it would be situated in the theory. It could belong in context!

Or it could be situated at divergent point in the theory- like a differential diagnosis tree.

Or it could be embedded within a couple of key categories.

1/22/2018- Dissertation Meeting with Deb

Reflected with Deb on my progress of theory development. She and I both feel like we are close to getting an epiphany on this topic but it hasn't cracked open quite yet.

Deb also said she is uncertain about only doing 2 rounds of interviews. But, for now, we will just keep moving forward and see what emerges.

1/22/2018- Journal Entry

How spirituality impacts the counseling process will appear different from the vantage point of the counselor than it will from the clients perspective.

And my question is really on the role and importance of sr for Christian clients. I naturally play that off of the counseling process in a way that the client wouldn't necessarily.

Impact could be replaced by role.

For the client. Not a tool. Not utilitarian.

Not

Many clients would be willing to describe and apply their meaning making structure. But it would take a particular relationship to invite the counselor to adjust that structure itself.

Am I over thinking or thinking in the wrong manner?

Hindu client

Integral perspective. This is why lens metaphors can work so well. It colors everything. But more like spectrum lenses. Not just vision correction.

In the regard... It is a sense. Like one of the five senses. Says something about the perceiver and the thing being perceived.

Star wars. The force and sensing the force and using the force. Maybe it needs abstract language like this in order to really honor what it is.

Am i doing a phenomenal of how clients experience counseling in relation to their spirituality?

Oxygen. Phenomenology of having oxygen.

What oxygen does for us when we have it. That would be more grounded theory.

It is more like a nutrient than an ingredient?

1/23/2018- Research Journal

Had some really good epiphanies today. Not sure how significant they will prove to be but it felt good to have some traction and to suddenly see something potentially new in the analysis.

1. I have spent all of my bracketing energy on the fact that I have a spiritual/religious background. And hardly any on my experience as a counselor.
2. When I focus more on being a counselor, I realize that there are things a client in my population won't necessarily be thinking about or considering as they enter therapy.
3. It becomes apparent to me that clients in my study see therapy more like a spiritual experience (like church) than they do like seeing a licensed professional (like a lawyer or chiropractor).

1/29/18- Dissertation Meeting

Moving to Context and Process

Reflexivity around being a person with a rich and informed spiritual identity, history etc

VS. Reflexivity around being a counselor

Taking the client's perspective -

Counseling is more like going to church than it is like going to a health professional....

1. How do you view your spirituality and religion - role in your life?
2. How do you view counseling?

Research question: Utilize - shift if you need to but do it "officially"

There are clients who seek counseling outside the context of a spiritual/religious counselor?

How do we theorize this?

BEGIN TO APPLY THEORETICAL LANGUAGE TO PIECES OF STORYLINE THAT YOU SENSE ARE IMPORTANT - CENTRAL TO THE PROCESS/PHENOMENON.

Things to do:

1. Keep looking for the center of the process
2. Look at dividing context from process
3. Begin applying your theory/concepts to bits of significant storyline
4. Think about and identify key variability

1/29/2018- Journal Entry

Central Research Question: How do clients experience their spiritual and religious beliefs and practices during the counseling process? More specifically...

How Private Practice Christian Clients Experience Their Spirituality and Religion During the Counseling Process

This question can work for what I am doing but I think it is worth reflecting on any possible changes to this question. It may illuminate more of what I am looking for.

In my recent conversations with Debbie, we have discussed words that feel right and words that do not.

It does not feel right to describe "using" or "utilize" - it is too mechanical for what we are looking at.

We also discussed the lack of fit for the word, "impact." There is something embedded in these words that does not feel reflective of the process being described.

The current question feels more central- how do clients experience.

A different question that has intrigued me: How Is the counseling process shaped by spiritual and religious beliefs and practices for private practice Christian clients?

I am going to do some further journaling while holding onto this question.

What are the key chunks that need to be integrated into a flowing process?

- Clients experience all of life as a spiritual/religious with certain experiences being more overt while others remain more hidden. But, upon reflection, spirituality can be experienced in anything.
- Counseling becomes a particular setting to experience the spiritual layer of life- much attending a church service.
- Once the client is present in the flow of counseling (either the larger process or the individual sessions), the emphasis is on bringing attention to the spiritual layer. Because it is assumed to always be present, it doesn't have to be created, conjured, or taught.... It is always there for the experience to take place.
- This attention is facilitated and hindered by different things for different clients.
- When it is hindered....
- When it is facilitated, the attention centers on a few key areas of the counseling process. Actually..... could all of these categories work in terms of hindering -> facilitating. OR could they all be organized in terms of attention. Things that distract and things that focus? And, if so- what would the center of the focus be?
 - o The present moment
 - o The direction of the process
 - o Reconciling the past

- I wonder if this belongs in the hindrance section- If the client is experiencing something from their past that is in the way of their counseling process
- The location of the counselor in relation to the process
- The client's self image.

When it is facilitated and attention is drawn toward it, clients experience S/R in their counseling process as an overarching and active force, a topic relevant to their life, an aspect of who they are.... Maybe.

It strikes me that there are a number of elements that are not unique to the experience of spirituality. What seems to be unique is the setting. It happens in a counseling relationship or counseling session, or counseling process. And it has influence over those things that are particular to the setting. Much like in the church example- someone may have an experience of God in a church worship service. That experience is not particularly unique- meaning it couldn't show up in any other context. But the process and expectations take on particular contours because of where the spiritual/religious experience is taking place.

1/29/2018- Memo

I have been chewing on this comparison of the counseling process to an experience of church- for my population. It has brought about several good pieces of reflection. However, I do notice in myself that this is a more *religious* image than I would personally prefer. However, it feels accurate and like it can inform the theory development process.

2/9/2018- Audit Meeting with Chuck DeGroat

Conducted a phone call meeting with Chuck DeGroat to discuss his process of working through my independent audit materials. I discussed his feedback and we collaboratively came to a few more items to add to his evaluation.

I will collect the feedback and create the audit attestation form for him to review and sign.

2/9/2018- Memo

A note on momentum- I am struggling this week to bring myself back to the data. I feel like the previous stretch of analysis yielded some good results but now I am hitting some internal roadblocks. I need to just immerse myself in the data and turn it around to see what reveals itself.

Debbie mentioned to me that I need to make some theory. Start telling some

theoretical narratives. All of these will be based on my identified population coming to my identified experience.

- A client enters counseling with a Christian therapist because the spiritual is as important (or more important) than the professional training. The spiritual sets the context for the professional (not the other way around).
- This client sees therapy as a more spiritual engagement than a healthcare related engagement.
- But, every client has their particular way of inviting and experiencing the spiritual.
 - o Because of that, some clients desire a strong, explicit match in their spirituality with their counselor's spirituality.
 - o Other clients do not need an explicit match (or, lack of a match doesn't inhibit their experience)
 - o All of them seem to want to know that their spiritual experience is welcomed and (preferably) invited into the explicit layer of the therapy process
- The spiritual sets the context for the therapeutic. Because of this it moves from the background and into the foreground. It does this in implicit and explicit ways. This client might talk about implicit and explicit ways that spirituality exists within the context- explicit things like church, spiritual practices, organized beliefs, poignant moments of spiritual experience- and implicit ways like making up the fabric of life, being present in all things, being accessible at all times. The same is true for the foreground within the counseling process and the therapy sessions. Explicit conversations, moments of awareness, connections and feelings.... And implicit- a belief that the entire process is spiritual, the process is being guided or directed, etc...
- But even this implicit versus explicit doesn't tell the entire experience. The client may come to therapy and know that spirituality is present for them but not necessarily perceive it. This is where the experience becomes a function of awareness or attention. The client's attention is brought to the spiritual layer that is believed to always be present. The actual accessibility of the spiritual doesn't necessarily change. But, the client experiences things that can help or hinder awareness and attention.
- Trust definitely seems to be a key piece that increases and decreases. Trust seems to interact with vulnerability (perhaps personal expression/freedom from the metasyntesis). There also seems to be a piece around meaningfulness. As trust increases, vulnerability increases, and then more personalized/meaningful expressions can emerge.
- It is almost like spirituality/religion is a place where meaning gets "anchored."

Part of the stage of counseling. Background and foreground. It's like the rotating stage of Hamilton- where is S/R located.

S/R is central to the worldview of the client. Things are seen and experienced in relation to it.

It isn't even a lens.... It is the EYE itself. The counseling process acts like a lens in order to bring the attention into sharper focus.

And a function of attention. Aware and unaware.

As a source?

Directionally? Providing guidance

Like a compass providing direction. But more like the magnetic field that moves the needle.

2/13/2019- Memo

More theorizing

A client from this population returns back to the language and experience of S/R to make sense of their world. In therapy with a Christian counselor, they can experience the freedom to bring that into the room.

This idea is more of an "active" action of what can happen with S/R in therapy.

BUT, there are also some passive actions- things like decentralizing the counselor.

Nothing is overtly done to accomplish this, it just seems to happen as a natural step from the spiritual/religious worldview and how counseling is seen in relation to that.

The overt actions seem to be able to build trust, increase a sense of feeling known, and extract? Or anchor? Meaning in the person's life.

At the same time, there may be tipping points where trust is hurt because of a lack of understanding or perceived similarity between counselor and client.

A person can also become exasperated when an issue feels like it has persisted beyond what feels reasonable, they have relied on their S/R to understand and navigate the situation, and no resolution seems to be coming.

Clients also experience their S/R as a kind of source or contributing (some or all) to particular feelings in therapy.... Feeling peace, feeling loved, feeling understood, feeling acceptance (of a situation), feeling a sense of direction.

S/R "sets the stage" for counseling- even moreso than just being part of the context. It positions the key players in the scenes of counseling. This setting the stage locates the counselor uniquely, locates faith within the process, and sets the overall tone- is this a "health professional" or a spiritual guide?

From there, S/R is experienced as moving from the background to the foreground as mentioned above. S/R in therapy takes on the characteristics of a spiritual experience more than a licensed professional.

(Free flowing thoughts here)...

S/R is seen as having things that the client needs

S/R is seen as the source of things vital to the process

S/R is seen as being always available

Fear, freedom, and personal expression really situate themselves in the piece of the theory centered on overt addressing of S/R in therapy.

So, clients experience S/R as setting the stage for the counseling process (not the other way around)

They experience S/R in relation to their therapist

In relation to themselves

In relation to the focus of their therapy

There is an overt and covert presentation or a background and foreground presentation.

In these areas, the experience of S/R interacts with location of the therapist, trust, the direction of therapy, receiving things associated with growth/healing
It is largely positive but can take on negative or exasperating tones.

2/26/2018- Memo

Met with Debbie on Thursday. She felt good about the analysis progress I am making and wants me to stick with it and see what continues to emerge. Both of us feel like something is about to emerge that will paint a cohesive picture.

Need to continue to pay attention to variance.

Need to pull this together into a cohesive theory for this experience of this population.

I need to review my most recent notes and continue to let them marinate.

I also want to spend time with the imagery of a play acting out- with S/R as the director. I like the idea of God as the director. I think it captures the fundamental structure of the engagement for S/R clients (in this case Christian clients).

Keep theorizing. What is happening here? How does this stuff work together?

The center of the theory? Corbin and Strauss talk about the central theme or phenomenon.

- What is experienced with a Christian client makes counseling part of their growth process?
- How is therapy experienced when a Christian client makes counseling part of their process?

Where does the "stuff" of the process come from?

A person goes to a health professional because that professional has something the client needs.

A person goes to some professionals because they (the client) has something they need help accessing.

In this iteration, the client believes that their S/R has something they need.

This experience is really captured by how it orients and sets the stage for things. It decentralizes the counselor. It relocates the source of change. It prioritizes the spiritual process- counseling is a part of the S/R process, not the other way around.

The client comes to counseling asking- can you join me in attending to and understanding my experience.... Which is fundamentally a spiritual one.

It really changes the playing field. And this may be true for any client that values spirituality/religion in their life but is put on display in the context of this study- Christian client with Christian counselor.

This experience can be conceptualized as changing the center of the experience. Once that center changes, the other pieces orient around it.

3/2/2018- Journal Entry

I am growing satisfied with some of the key pieces that I have about the experience of S/R in the therapy process. But, I want to keep pushing toward the essence of the theory. The center and unifying elements.

S/R seems to be an environment, and a source, and a influence. It seems to have several key elements in order to capture the full role that it plays.

It is an "environment" in the same sense that it is the stage from my previous metaphor. It is in and around the counseling experience much like it is in and around the experience of the person in general.

It is also a "source" in the sense that there are things that originate or emanate from it to the client.

It is also a force or influence in that it has the capacity to do more than just act as an environment but it can actually influence the environment.

Spirituality is like a noun and a verb. It is a thing and it is an action. Maybe it is also an adjective? In that the essence of spirituality begins to describe the process, or the results, or the person.

Spirituality and religion is experienced in therapy as a noun, a verb, and an adjective. In that it is a static thing, an active thing and a descriptive thing.

This feels like accurate descriptions but I still really like the idea of S/R setting the stage for therapy and arranging the key players.

I like the idea of the action of S/R being a matter of attention. It is always present and available but attention must be drawn toward. EXCEPT in the instances when

the client experiences S/R as being so present that it captures their attention. It is, undeniable in a sense.

Attention goes toward the source, the client wants to receive. Exasperation can set in when these two conditions feel met but the result is not present.

Direction/Intention still resonates strongly and is grounded in the data.

Setting the stage still resonates and is grounded in the data.

Things coming from S/R is grounded in the data.

What else??

3/5/2018- Dissertation Meeting

(How does a Christian client experience their spirituality and religion during the therapy process (with a Christian counselor)?

What do you want this to be about? What is the most important thing for this to be about?

I haven't picked what this theory is about. So, part of the next step might be- what do I say it is?

This is informed by exploring the variation.

Where is a goal? I have a sense of what this could be about for my participants. Play metaphor- so what is the play about? Or, what kinds of things are these plays about Tipping points of exasperation. Does the counselor's role change? Witness, guide, creating space

Counselor did things that were concrete and not *necessarily* a spiritual thing. But, it was experienced by the client as being spiritual.

What is the "no" versus the "yes" Is it in the orientation?

It can be in the context and vary and still be very influential.)

Interesting for me to do: Work through your theory?

Maybe the center is- what does it do to the counseling process?

Maybe think of my own cases that would fit with my participants. Find an ideal case and then would maybe fit the participant criteria. Maybe someone more distressed- Client X. How does she fit into the framework?

Client Y. Playing with variation.

A matter of identity- This isn't something that I do. It is something that I am. And it also happens to be something that I do.

Debbie suggested that I use a client of mine to reflect on. She suggested that I need to just pick what I see it being and then test the theory out.

I realized that I am toggling between being too analytic and too artistic. I need to bring it to the middle.

Important Something can be part of the context and still be very relevant and influential.

3/12/2018- Journal Entry

Dissertation- I feel like I am looking at the center of this thing but haven't actually "seen it" just yet. I want to. But I am struggling to pull the narrative together. Deb is encouraging me to pay attention to variability.

She is also encouraging me to name what I think it is and then test out my theory.

What is the most important thing for this to be about?

CRQ: (How does a Christian client experience their spirituality and religion during the therapy process (with a Christian counselor)?

This could be a theory about how clients make meaning out of things. That it is a key piece of the puzzle that must be located in order to understand their experience.

This could be a theory about the therapeutic alliance with Christian clients.

This could be a theory about a therapy process that can hold the client's spiritual experience.

This could be a theory about a storyline with a hidden plotline.

This could be a theory about the pillars of how a client identifies themselves.

This could be a theory about identity, belief, and practice.

This could be a theory about what centers an experience. Not just what the center of an experience is but what force or forces center an experience. It is such a strong reference point that it is what orients the direction, places the characters, determines the meaning. It is like a benchmark, a compass, a rosetta stone. It creates the central reference for these clients. Everything else exists in relation to it. This is true of their life and it exists in the context of their life and in the context of this research. And then this same context and its influence enters the therapeutic space in a manner that creates some fundamental realignments. AND... the essence of spirituality/religion has particular relevance to what takes place in therapy. As opposed to something else (like a dentist). The conversations of therapy and the conversations of spirituality run parallel and so close to one another. It can be easy to miss one for the other and to miss the centering, aligning influence of the spirituality.

Alignment, support, movement.

The counselor can be out of alignment with the client's spiritual experience.

The client can be out of alignment with the client's spiritual experience.
 The therapeutic process can be out of alignment with the spiritual experience.

Memo: For this population, life is seen as being *all* spiritual. All things have a spiritual layer to them. At the same time, while everything has a spiritual layer and everything can contain spiritual wisdom.... Not everything is expected to be the same. A client would expect a *more* spiritual experience from their counselor than they would from their dentist. Something being spiritual is not unique to counseling (for this pop). Rather, that is part of the context, a fundamental view of life. What needs to be filled in then is how that worldview changes the engagement with the counseling process. Spirituality is such an internal, emotional, relational experience that it intersects significantly with the substance of the counseling process.

In many ways, this reverses the research question- how do they experience the therapy process in their spirituality and religion? It emphasizes that one supersedes the other.

Memo: There have been many moments in the course of my interviews when a participant would talk about a counselor who missed them in their spirituality. I think of these as the "no" moments which can help to inform the "yes" moments. Sometimes, these counselors would talk about spirituality but not in a way that felt resonant for the client.

"The counselor would add it on at the end"

"The counselor asked about it but it seemed like they saw just as a coping strategy and not something that was much more to me."

"The counselor seemed to question whether my experiences were spiritual or mental illness."

With this population, it seems they are seeking out a counselor who can create a space that can hold their spiritual experience. Many of the participants spoke of the positive impact of the counseling on a mental health level. But would distinguish that from the spiritual experience they were wanting to have.

A client's spirituality locates therapy as a spiritual experience, locates the therapist in a less prominent position, locates growth and direction within their spirituality. This entire process could be seen as a matter of locating. But that doesn't seem to quite do it justice.

That is why gravity does feel like a good picture. Because gravity does more than just locate- it is a force in and of itself. And that gravity (the spirituality) acts upon the therapy process. It is experienced as a force. A locating force. A directional force. A provisional force. Gravity is a good picture because a force constitutes movement and action (good for grounded theory, good for capturing spirituality).

3/19/2018- Journal Entry

How does a client experience their S/R during their therapy process?

I feel like I need to center myself and clear my mind and ask myself what this thing is.

I keep circling the same themes- it is centering, it is a reference point, it is how they make sense of their world and in turn how they make sense of therapy. It is a deep part of themselves, it is part of who they are and not just something that they do/believe/or engage in.

The idea of an axis popped into my head the other day. An idea similar to gravity. It is something that other things are oriented around.

Locates, directs, provides

Debbie told me to look at the variability- by thinking about a client or two of mine who would be dealing with struggles in their spirituality.

Client Y comes to mind as a client who had a lot of changes going on in her faith. Yet, she maintained that she was a spiritual person and even considered herself a religious person. Some of her questions were big- deep questions about Christianity. And yet, she described a lot of disruption in having those questions. It was unsettling to her to imagine life without her spirituality. All the while, still engaging with her spirituality. In this sense, it remained a reference point for her even while questioning it. But, the fact that her questions had to do with this area of her life was unsettling/disorienting for her.

—
It is a key reference point that the client carries. They can either do that with the counselor or without. Overtly or covertly. And, there are times when it is the reference point itself that is being questioned.

—
For Client Y, there was a need to be able to ask her questions about God. It helped her to be able to do that with some specificity that came with seeing a Christian counselor.

It was also helpful for her to be able to question her spiritual experience. This questioning of her spirituality was facilitated by being with a Christian counselor- although I am not certain it was necessary. And, that dimension is probably best suited for another study since mine focuses on Christian clients with Christian counselors. Although, there may have been some fear expressed about what it might do to our relationship if she were to be asking these hard questions. And there was some relief in feeling like she was able to do that. She also had an interest in knowing what I have done with questions that made me feel from God.

In fact, now that I think about it, far from and close to God seem to be areas where clients ask me about my own practices. How do I draw closer to God? What do you do when you feel far from God?

I think about Client X and how the persistence of her pain really left her feeling far from God. She felt like there were no answers for why God wouldn't respond to her

in her pain and relieve it. She felt exasperated and it made it hard for her to feel like she was receiving anything from God. It also may have caused her to rely more on me than other clients. Wanting to know if I saw hope in her situation, if I felt her pain would relieve, if I felt there were things missing from her connection to God, she also described how important it was to her that I have hope for her situation and that I provide her with support. Although she was cognizant of this reality. I think about the orienting, the providing, and the direction.

Client X felt disoriented because of the lack of responsiveness from God. While also still relying on her spirituality to orient her and *longing* to rely on it more. This seems to be true of Client X and Client Y now that I think about it.

She felt like there were things God would provide to her but that those things were getting increasingly overshadowed by the lack of provision she felt. This gave way to more angst and frustration.

Direction wise, Client X still felt like God was directing but again, there was frustration because that directing was not visible. And, she did not understand why God wouldn't want those things visible to her. In particular because it had been such a long process.

Both Client X and Client Y appear on the spectrum of experience but both had more fear, angst, exasperation.

I like the idea of being tethered to their spirituality. And, when that tether gets too long (too much distance from God), then exasperation, angst, anger can set in. It can become very disorienting.

I really want to stick to how they experience it in counseling. (secondarily, it will impact how they see the counselor, or what counselor they choose). The way clients experience their S/R in therapy is not altogether different from how they experience it in the rest of their life. It is an orienting thing. And so, it can shape their experience of any number of situations. With therapy, it shapes it in particular ways. It locates certain things that are sometimes looked for in the counselor OR looked for in the client and centers them on the spirituality.

In general S/R changes the shape/view of experiences. And that is true of counseling as well. But in particular ways.

It is not only how they orient themselves to a situation but it is also how they WANT to orient themselves to situations. It is what they want things to be tethered to. Clients like this can feel at ease because they don't feel they have to justify what they want to have these things tethered to and therefore, how it orients them, directs them, and what it connects them to.

It is their preferred reference point even in the midst of distress. They want to find God because they believe that when they find God, they will find these other things in abundance (meaning, direction, provision).

They want to find God. And they want to be with a counselor who will help them find God. Or who can hold that experience. Or (even better) who can facilitate that experience. Therapy becomes a spiritual/religious experience because, on a deep level, it becomes about seeking God. Which, to a “secular” counselor might sound like something other than what they do, but for this client, the two things are inseparable.

So, this becomes a theory about how therapy is ends up being engaged in order to seek God.

This feels true. In different ways, all of these clients would say that God is what they orient their life around. It is the reference point for finding meaning. And so, therapy falls into that paradigm. Even though other things may be discussed that are of value, they are all in service of a larger goal/desire.

It is about experiencing God? It is about being closer to God?

It is about attention though. That is big. The experience is about directing attention toward the central force in their life.

Sometimes this is done directly by attending to the “Actual” spirituality.

There is a belief that attention should be given to God/spirituality and that when it is, it centers, directs, provides. There is concern when those things aren't

happening- am I not giving enough attention? Is there something else in the way?

Sometimes it is done indirectly by talking about any number of things that may be emotional or behavioral or habitual but underlying this, they are believed to be tethered to the spiritual experience.

3/28/2018- Journal Entry

I had an epiphany the other day that what makes it hard to see the center of this experience is that the experience is about centering. So, you can be looking right at it and miss it. But, when I think about the experience of S/R clients in therapy, the S/R 'being central' in some form (variance) is important to them. It is, in many ways, the heart of the experience. This is true whether it is overtly talked about or not from session to session or over time.

This places the importance of the spirituality within the context of the GT. But then that piece of the context enters in to the counseling process and adjusts things. Because it is central, other things are not (the role of the therapist for example).

I am not settled on what the most fitting language is- centering on God/S/R? Alignment? Seeking? Knowing? Experiencing God/S/R?

3/20/2018- Journal Entry

Had a very productive dissertation meeting with Deb the other day. I went over my current iteration of analysis with her and we made a plan for going forward.

She recommended that I:

- Start writing with results a bit in mind. As if I was going to organize for that section. This should include picking a piece that I want to focus on, identifying 3-4 key categories and solidifying my definitions of those things.
- She recommended that I be thinking theory development and diagram to depict the process.
- She also recommended that I organize my thoughts and document the pieces we have identified and what could be done with them going forward (that could become part of the future research considerations section).

How do clients experience their spirituality and religion during their counseling process?"		
Context		
- Specific population	Christian clients with Christian counselors who consider S/R to be an important part of their life and growth process.	
Centrality of Spirituality	This is true of the person's life as well as being true of their counseling process.	What makes this process challenging to see is that the center of the process is a process of centering.
- S/R as part of personal identity	"I am a spiritual/religious person" versus "This is something I do/believe"	
Key Pieces of how this impacts their process		
- S/R sets the stage for the counseling process and relationship (Counseling becomes more of a spiritual experience than a health/professional experience)		- S/R is a source of meaning (This section is not going to be focused on as directly but could be a good source of study on how meaning in counseling interacts with meaning from S/R)
- S/R provides direction (there is an underlying sense of intentionality to life that shows up in the counseling process- "God is up to something in my life.")		- S/R provides key pieces for growth (peace, love, contentment, etc... There are key things clients receive during their counseling process that they see as originating within their S/R)

Going forward with the dissertation, I want to focus on the centrality piece and how it interacts with changing the rules of engagement that underly the counseling process. I am uncertain whether this will also include the directing piece of S/R.

Code list for 2nd round interviews

Context

- Experiencing S/R as central
- Identifying as an S/R person

- Directing the process

- Providing elements of growth

- Meaning making

- Setting the stage

- Organizing the relationship

Each of these large pieces could be focused on in their own right and they would yield some interesting results. The piece that is most interest of me is the way that S/R organizes the relationship- how it sets the stage for the engagement. I think this is rich enough to be focused on by itself and that it will be relevant to a wide spectrum of the audience- in particular, counselors who are not spiritual/religious. I think it has implications for understanding S/R clients, understanding where ruptures in the Goal/Task/Bond may occur and how the client views the relationship and the counselor.

This is particularly relevant to my own process of bracketing so much about my S/R background at the exclusion of bracketing my counseling experience- this realization opened up new connections within the data.

3/30/2018- Theorizing

Focus on the Experience of Centering on this aspect of identity and how it then influences the structure of the counseling relationship.

[Context: Highly specific population with a high value on this layer of their identity and experience]

In general in life, this leads to a desire to center themselves on this key aspect of their identity.

Centering the Therapy Process on Spirituality/Religion (then, need 3-4 categories around this followed by properties/dimensions.)

That context enters into the counseling relationship and changes the structure. The client fundamentally sees the presence of spirituality/religion in all things. It is part of who they are and how they see the world. All things have a spiritual layer. Some of these things are experienced more or less overtly. This fundamental perspective changes things in the counseling process and relationship.

The engagement itself is *more* spiritual/religious than it is a professional healthcare provider. Certainly, the professionalism of the counselor is valued (as all of the counselors in this population were licensed). But, it is more like church or meditation or a spiritual retreat than it is like a dentist, lawyer, or health professional.

The result of this is that it changes the client's view of the counselor.

It relocates the "center" of the counseling relationship/experience.

Spirituality/religion sets the stage for the counseling relationship. There is already a process of growth going on (a spiritual/religious one) that the counseling is *joining into* and becoming a part of.

An experience of centering

- Things that bring the center (spirituality/religion) can have significant impact on the counseling process and relationship.
 - o If the client is questioning fundamental things *about* the center. (something overtly spiritual, covertly spiritual, or about the spiritual center of their life)
 - o If the counselor engages with the center in a way that reduces or dismisses it.
 - o If there is an exasperation for the client of feeling disconnected from this central aspect of themselves.
- This centrality of S/R *decentralizes* the counselor- in a sense, S/R is what organizes the counseling relationship whether the counselor directly recognizes it or not.
 - o Through this decentralization, the expectations of the client shift
 - Changes the burden on the counseling relationship
 - There are things that come from God- direction, reassurance, hope, peace, etc...
 - o The counselor can take on moments of being a guide or witness to the S/R process
 - o The client thinks about the counselor in a different way
 - Human
 - In need of care and direction
- Alignment about the center leads to trust (context, fear, freedom, personal expression)

Are there some dimensions or interaction points here with feeling known? Feeling trust? Does the metasyntesis overlap here at all? Fear, Freedom, Personal Expression?

As I am writing out these categories, I am finding myself reflecting on what really needs to be included in the Organizing Therapy stream of the Centrality of Spirituality/Religion. I want to stick to how it organizes the therapy- where does it position the therapist and client and spirituality/religion? How does the client view the therapist? How do they view the S/R in therapy? What role does it play in selecting a therapist? Where does S/R show up in the therapy session? Or in the therapy process?

I am going to stay away from further results of that- things like building trust with the therapist, feeling known, having spiritual experiences in therapy. And try to stick to how therapy gets organized around a central spiritual/religious identity.

Ordered list of categories and properties

Category- Context

Identifying as a spiritual/religious person (aspect of self)
Experiencing spirituality/religion in all things

Centering the therapy process on spirituality/religious identity

Category- *Organizing the therapy process in relation to spirituality/religion*

Property- Feeling comfortable with a therapist
Dimension- Choosing a therapist that is perceived as being similar enough to the client?

Property- Experiencing therapy as part of a larger s/r process
Dimension- Knowing therapy is connected to S/R

Property- Experiencing all of therapy as spiritual/religious
Dimension- ranges from visible/obvious to hidden/subtle

Category- *Relating to the therapist*

Property- Decentralizing the therapist

Property- Seeing the therapist as limited

Property- Receiving from the therapist in relation to S/R
Dimension- Creating space to Offering guidance/perspective

Category- *Centering the therapy process on S/R identity--- What becomes important because S/R is so central?*

Organizing what is addressed in therapy

Sometimes there is a counseling topic that covertly involves S/R
Sometimes there is a counseling topic that overtly involves S/R

Sometimes the topic of counseling is the actual S/R- the center. Questions of faith or doubts or confusion about this aspect of their lives. In general, these times do not mean that the center is no longer the center.

4/2/2018- Memo

As I engage back with transcripts, I am wondering if attention needs to be separated out and put aside. I LOVE the significance of this piece of the experience but I don't know that it is core to the organization piece that I am focusing on. I think it is more connected to receiving from S/R in the therapy process. Or even experiencing S/R in the therapy process. But not as much about how S/R being the center organizes therapy.

I want to get dialed in tighter on the organization of counseling that is created by the centrality of S/R in the client's life.

Potential Implications

- Confirms S/R as an aspect of identity and should be engaged as an aspect of culture.
- Implications on ruptures in the therapeutic alliance.

Potential Future Research Directions

- Other S/R populations
- How does this apply to non-Christian counselors with Christian counselors?
- The other aspects of this research- What is received from S/R during the therapy process.

I need to have a tight organization of this direction.

I could go with the director picture

- The director sets the stage
 - The director arranges the actors in relation to one another
 - The director influences the content and direction of what is unfolding
- I could go with gravity
- Things are organized around gravity
 - Things move in relation to gravity
 - Gravity is a directional force

4/4/2018- Dissertation Meeting

Today, Deb and I reviewed my current conceptualization about focusing on how the centering aspect of S/R organizes the therapy process for them.

We talked about the resonance with gravity- a directional force to conceptualize the role of S/R for the person.

Deb likened it to a solar system where things are orbiting around.

Need to continue to focus on the variance that is present and what it produces

Possible points of variance:

We talked about conceptualizing this as an S/R process that is already unfolding and the therapist is being invited into it. Therefore, there is variance around what therapists get invited in and how far in they are invited and what happens when they are invited all the way in.

I reflected to her that we have been using the term “decentralizing” the counselor- but this indicates a reference frame. The implicit reference frame is the therapeutic relationship that is conventionally understood within counseling circles. The presence and significance of S/R shifts that relationship.

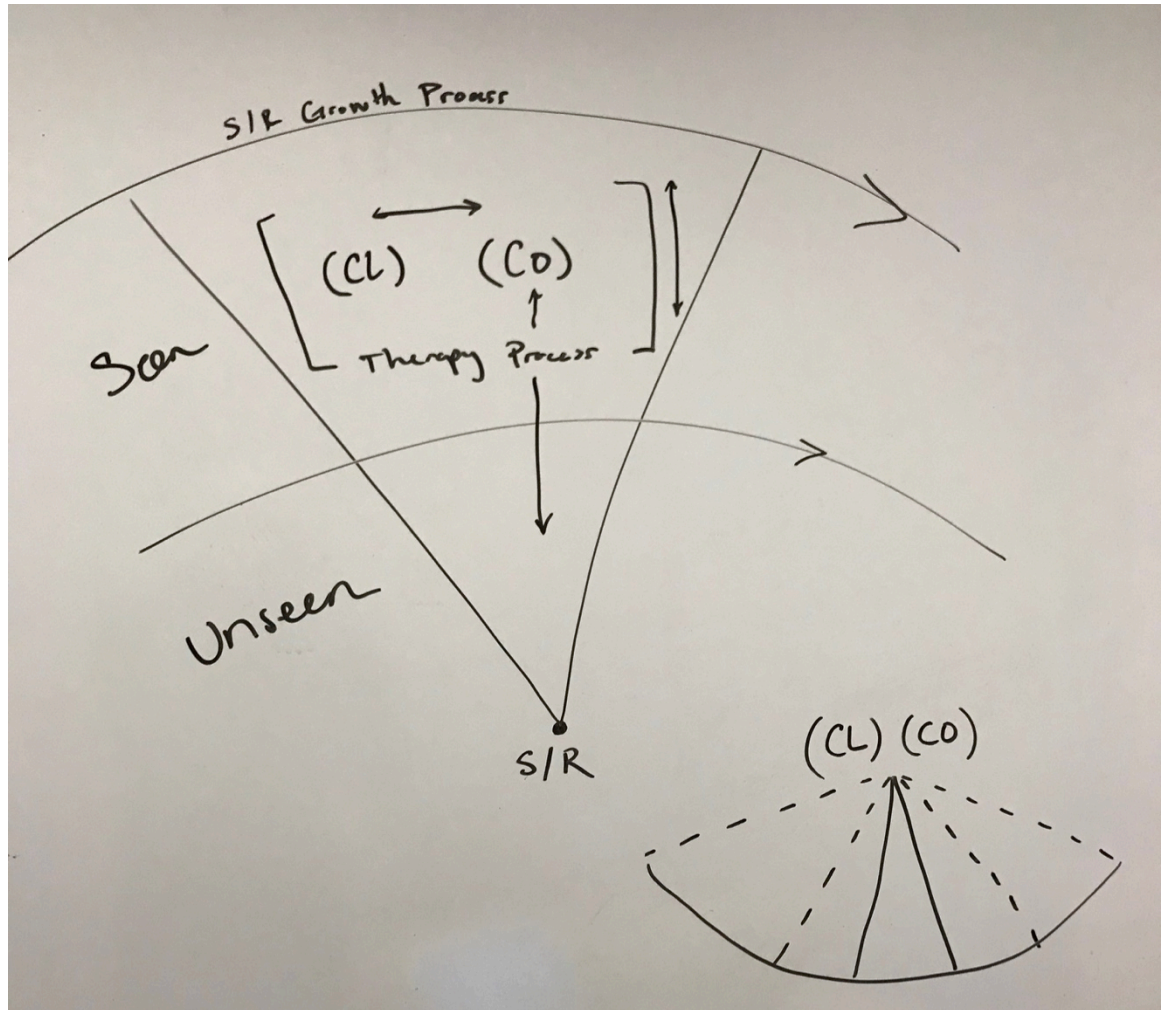
I am going to continue to build out this picture in the hope that more will crystallize and in the hope that this will help to bound this particular research article.

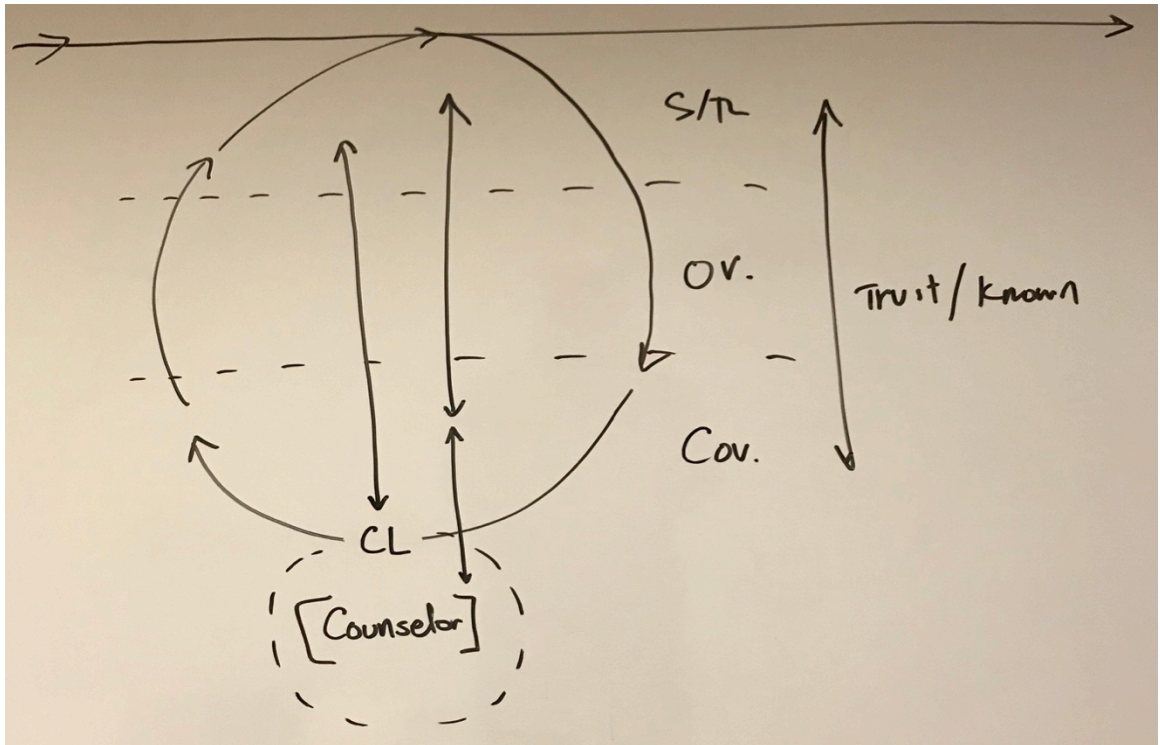
Deb wants me to:

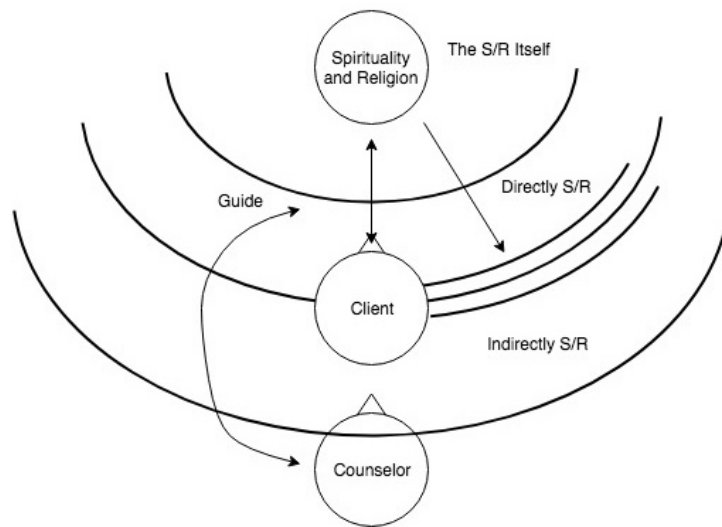
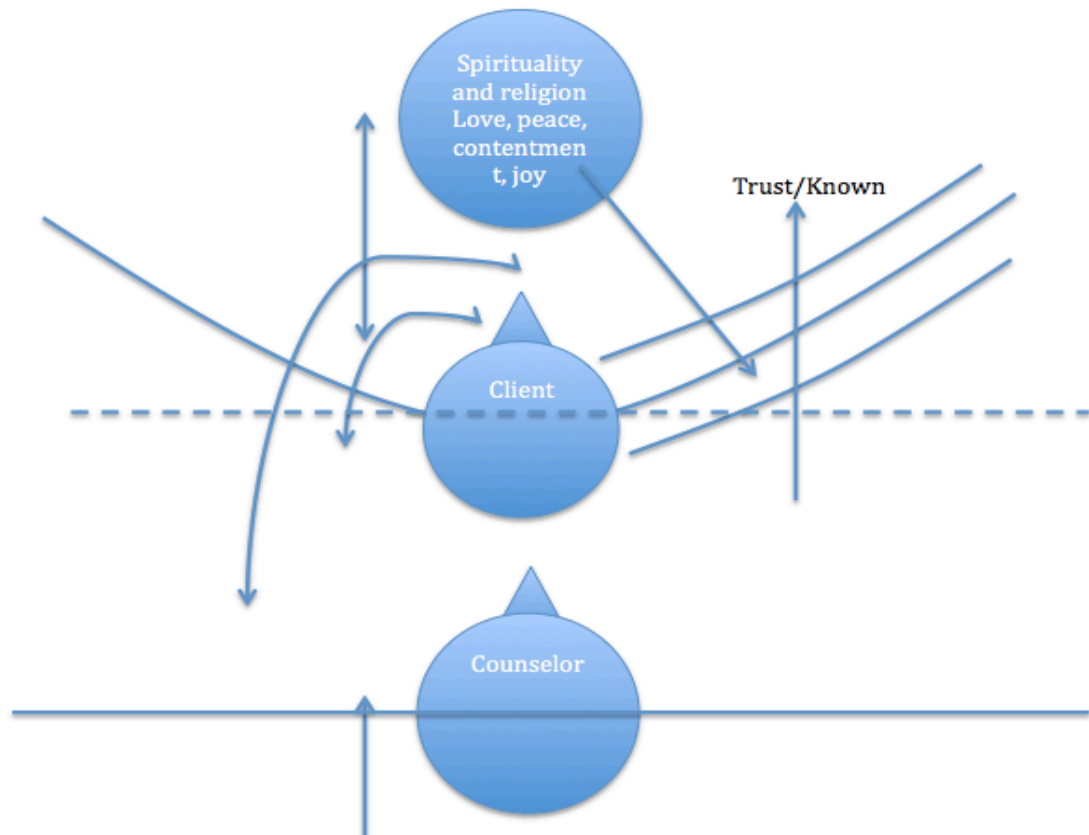
Review my categories in light of this new conceptualization

Create a diagram that is meaningful and concise

4/10/2018- Dissertation Meeting







Focusing in on the center of the experience that I have selected. Spirituality is a central thing to the life and identity of the client. Therefore, the desire to be centered on S/R organizes the therapeutic process around this central element. I wonder if I could diagram around the imagery of a compass- the client being centered on their S/R. Counselor toggling between being centered on the norms of the therapy profession

	Experiencing S/R with the therapist	Exploring and utilizing spiritual experiences	The spiritual growth process
Engaging the role of guide	Roles the therapist is invited to play	Determines what is meaningful	Utilizing meaning in therapy process
			Utilizing spiritual things in the growth process?
Building Trust Dual relationships	Relating to the therapist	Centering on Spirituality in the therapy process Seeing counseling as fitting into their process of growth as a spiritual person	What is discussed/addressed in therapy The S/R Itself Overt S/R Covert S/R
The spiritual experience of the therapist	The location of the counselor/Locating the key players		Changes the essence of the experience (from health professional to spiritual experience)
	Orients therapy in reference to spirituality	Selecting a therapist/Pursuing counseling	Directing the counseling experience
			Needing counseling/spiritual direction
Context: Seeing all of life as spiritual/religious Identifying as spiritual or religious- part of personal identity Valuing the training of licensed therapists			

4/10/2018- Notes from Debbie

Context - Primary orientation to improving and building a relationship with God/a life centered on spiritual/religious identity. Life as a change process oriented towards becoming better. Becoming better or growth?

ORGANIZING THE THERAPY PROCESS

The spiritual religious identity/value becomes the central organizing feature of the therapeutic process.

Decentralizing the therapist is relative to the change process - in traditional it is central in s/r it is to the side

Process component - Relationship to counselor depends on acceptance at some level understanding at some level (BOND)

Process component - Relationship to S/R is variable within a narrower range and affects focus of therapy and action of therapist. (TASK)

What is the position of traditional therapeutic technique in relationship to S/R in therapy and the therapist's action and the problem.

Process component - Relationship to S/R is the primary action of therapy - not just a resource but the source of all positive growth.

(GOAL)

Process Therapy as a process of placing the problem within the spiritual framework - in the hands of God and connecting the client to spirituality - the therapist can be resources, witness, guide, co-traveler that is peripheral most of the time - more central if there is spiritual doubt or frustration? (GOAL)

Process component - The problem - can range from peripheral to central to spirituality - and affects how the counselor may be involved if they are accepting knowledgeable and understanding. (TASK- ATTENTION)

Right word for 'attending' 're-orientaton' 'turning attention back to S/R'.

Participant 1- I believe that it's always there and that I walk away from it, because I get distracted and clouded by things that are going on around me

4/16/2018- Dissertation Meeting

Being attentive to spirituality

Explicitly name spirituality into the category titles.

Category that is about their organizing schema

How do they interpret their S/R?

Level of confidence?

Context is a category- it can be a category.

Can show some variance.

Best examples are a combination of concrete theory with story so that they are interesting and rich.

Parse the organization and the structure of the relationship.

Make sure they are separate and defined.

Category that serves as a context

Nail the context- be stronger there. The context is what makes it unique.

Resolve the structuring the relationship category.

Highlight the variability- the properties. Talk about and define the pieces throughout. Then a final section on process.

Winnowing them down to their essential structure and interactions.

We are getting the bones and how the bones work together. Then, add in some meat around those bones.

Witness to guide?

Don't need ALL properties. Need the ones that really illuminate the theory and the significance that I am trying to demonstrate.

4/23/2018- Dissertation Meeting

Centering on spirituality and religion- is the contextual category

The Central category will be something else- it will be the process.

How does attention happen in its different forms?

How does receiving happen in its different forms?

How does the counselor fit in and what affects how they fit and act?

How is the counseling process situated in relationship to spirituality and religion?

Diagram and memo about the answers to these questions.

Do multiple diagrams.

3 or 4 diagrams.

How is the counseling process situated in relation to S/R?

The existence of SR as something Central, to give attention to and to receive from. The centrality flows from the centrality in their life. And organizes therapy around it.

Because all of life, and all of growth is seen as spiritual/religious.... Therapy becomes a spiritual experience for this client. It is more of an S/R experience than a health professional experience.

S/R is always present in the counseling process. Sometimes it is obvious, sometimes subtle. And occasionally, the S/R itself becomes the focus of therapy.

How does attention happen in its different forms?

Through client. Through counselor. It begins with the client bringing their spiritual self into therapy. Different clients need different types of attention on their S/R (explicit/implicit; counselor initiated, client initiated, jointly agreed upon) Some topics demand it, some topics are about the spirituality itself.

I know this topic has S/R in it but we can just implicitly acknowledge that
I know this topic has S/R in it and we need to explicitly acknowledge that
I know this topic is about my S/R itself and needs particular attention

Attention happens through introducing S/R, addressing S/R, exploring S/R with the therapist/in the therapy process.

This includes: Through belief. Questions. Dialog. Silence. Quieting other things that distract. Addressing other things that distract. Sharing S/R experiences. Prayer. Scripture. Theology.

How does receiving happen?

Receiving comes from the spirituality/religion itself. The substance of growth and change is seen as being a gift from S/R. The process of attending to S/R brings the focus to the needs of the growth process.

What is received- the substance of growth. Love, patience, acceptance, peace, comfort, etc...

How is it received? It enters into therapy through the therapist or through the S/R, or from the client themselves. Much like spirituality itself, these things are seen as always present but not always within reach at the moment.

There is some interaction between the attention and the receiving. They are not one in the same but some of the receiving happens through the process of attention. Part of that is by reconnecting to what is already in the client's possession internally. Some of it comes through the process of bringing attention to the central aspect of spirituality and what is contained there.

4/27/2018- Memo

For the receiving, there is a bit of a mystical process that takes place and I feel myself getting lost in it. I want to stay centered around the idea that S/R organizes the counseling relationship and process. So, how does it organize the receiving that takes place?

S/R is the source of the things that need to be received.

S/R attention is a key piece of the receiving. For the most part, receiving doesn't happen without attention. There are some dramatic moments where something can be given to the person apart from their attention.

The counselor can be utilized as a conduit.

Life circumstances can be utilized as a conduit.

The client can be utilized as a conduit.

Does the client need to have receptivity? Or to simply pick up the things that are brought in front of their attention?

Because S/R is seen as so present in the life of the client, drawing closer is largely a function of attention.

All of these can take on a few dimensions

Dramatic- things that would readily be viewed as conducive to spiritual experiences

Subtle- Things that would generally not be seen as highly conducive.

In the therapy session(s)

Outside the therapy session(s)

The organization piece feels solid

The attention piece feels solid with the only question being what outcomes I may want to include (closeness with counselor, deeper sense of feeling known, etc...)

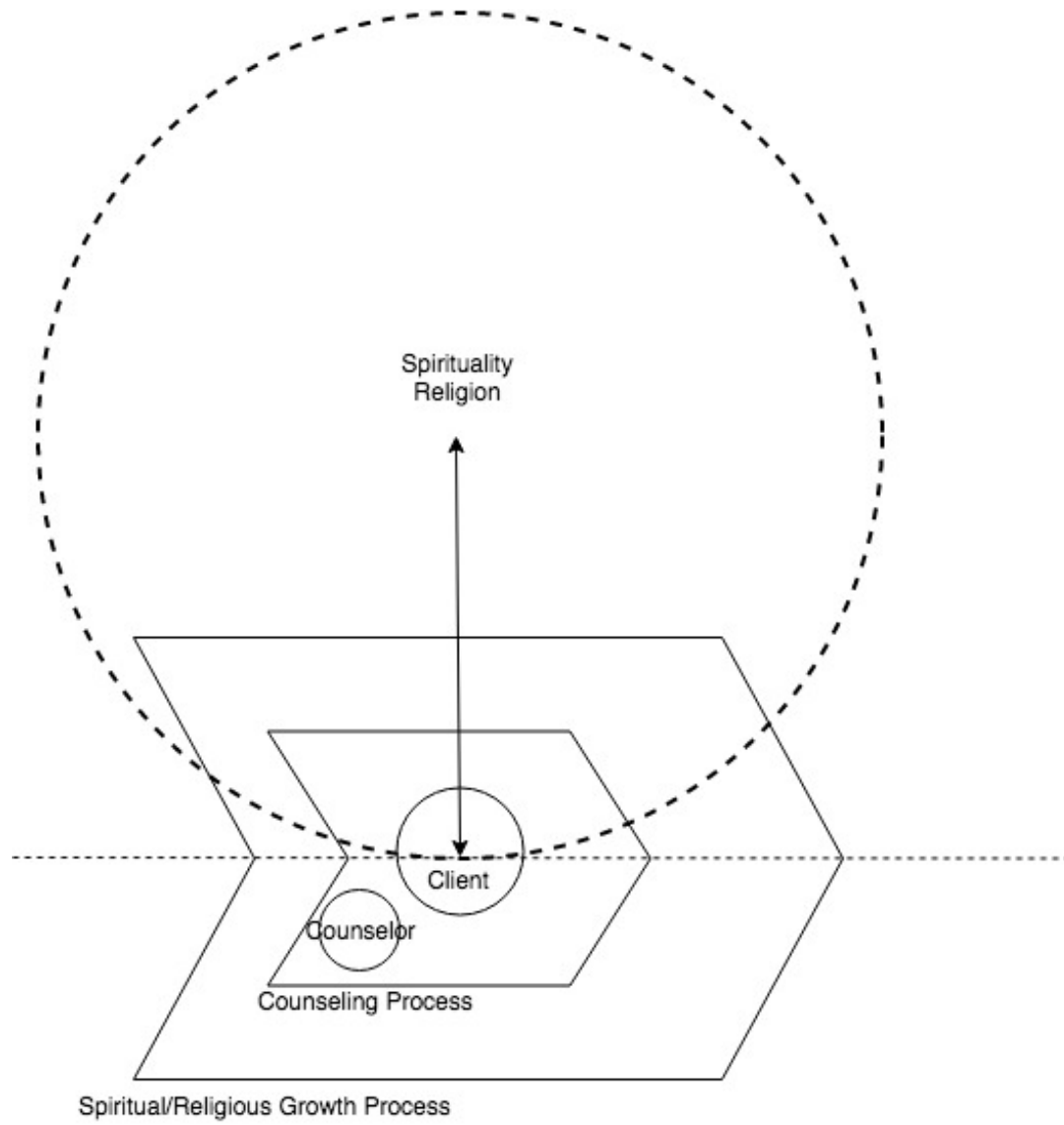
The receiving piece feels like it is close but needs a bit more pruning and shaping to get it to a nice concise form

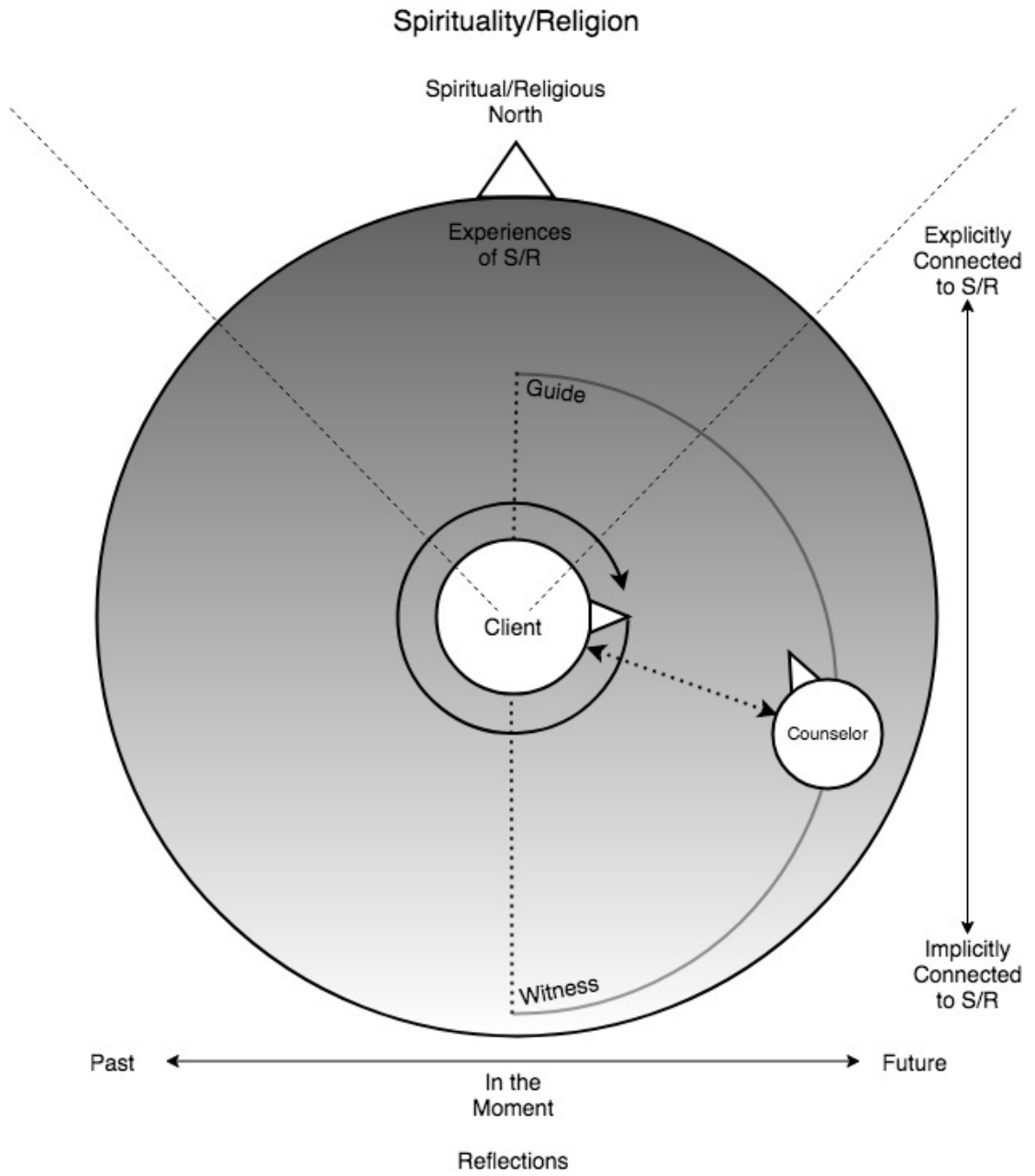
The counselor fits within all of these things.

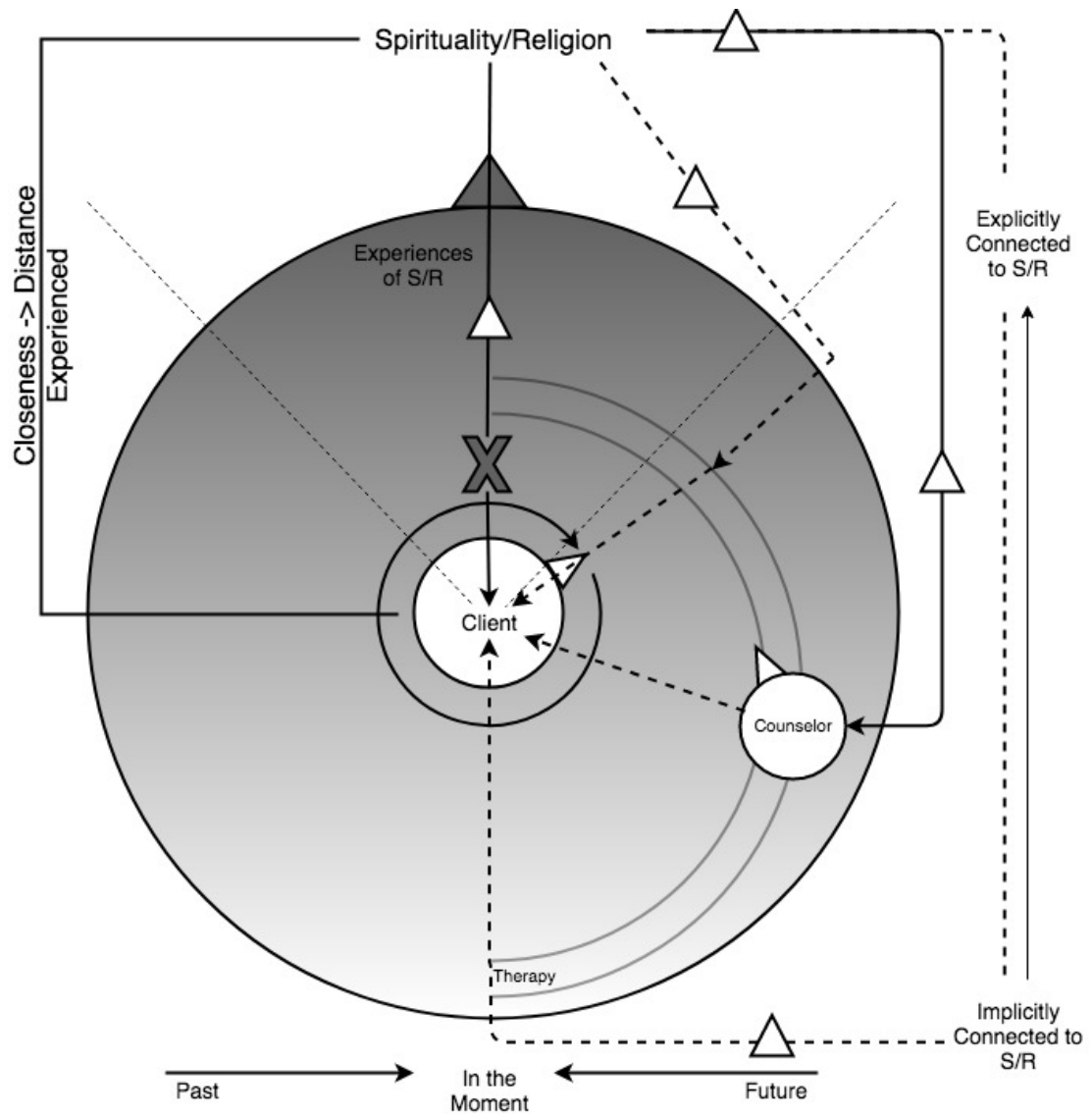
The process section will be used to highlight key points of variability and their outcome.

5/14/2018- Journal Entry

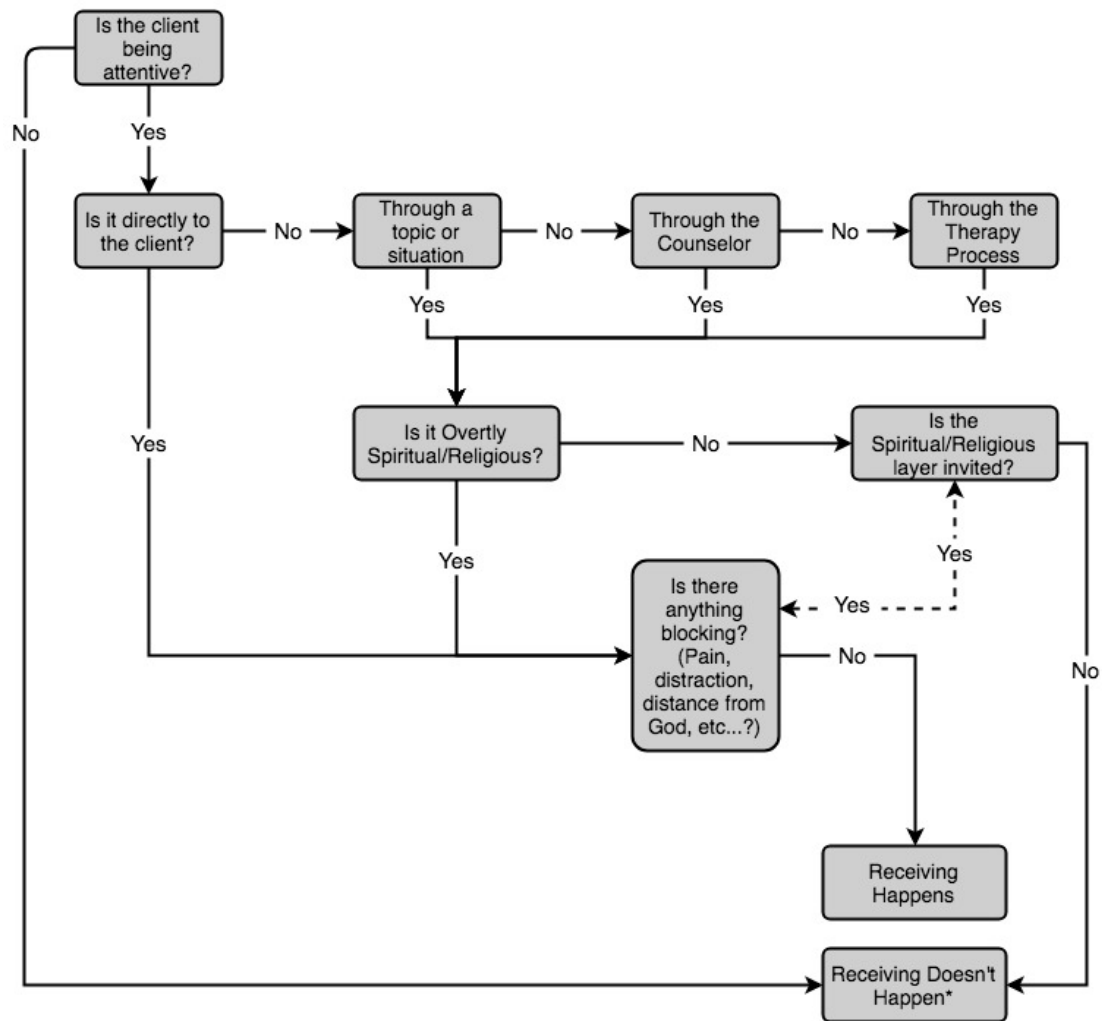
Current diagrams







How does receiving happen in the counseling process?



**Most participants would describe an exception that should be noted. In the participants' experiences with spirituality/religion, it is always possible that these typical channels could be circumvented by a powerful enough spiritual/religious experience. This is, however, the exception and not the norm of the experience.*

5/14/2018- Journal Entry

Noticing as I continue to work on the results that certain categories are feeling very tight and others still have some loose edges. A few things have shifted into the context category- for example, the explicit-implicit nature of experiences with S/R. This cuts across everything and is therefore better suited for the context category. The receiving from spirituality category needs the most amount of work. In particular, it is challenging to bound this correctly and get it distilled down. Because S/R is experienced so pervasively in the life of the client, it is important to keep this centered tightly on the CRQ.

5/15/2018- Dissertation Meeting

Feedback on Results

Organization needs some work- putting things where they need to be.

Spirituality and religion- central but talked about the therapy process.

First part needs to go in the second part (organizing the therapeutic process)

Be clear about where things go.

Preceding the decentralizing the therapist.

Could make a case for attending and receiving as a process that is central.

Maybe a good question for member checking?

There is a passive element to the receiving.

Receiving

- Pleased with how its sounding
- Some work in organizing them.

Participants described receiving everything from their spirituality/religion. But, several key aspects emerged.

Three categories. Subproperties.

Therapy- putting words to what they are experiencing.

5/18/2018- Memo

I am continuing to edit my results and I am feeling better about them. I noticed that they are larger than my metasynthesis results. There are more pieces and more moving parts (largely because it is a grounded theory). Because of this, it is taking me longer to get my head around feeling comfortable with how they are constructed. Nonetheless, as I work through them time and again, I feel a sense of cohesiveness.

I was going to separate out some of the process descriptions but now as I edit, I am embedding them within the categories a bit more. I like this. Will see what Deb feels is necessary.

I think the draft is at a place that I feel ready to send it off to Deb and ready for her to chop away at it.

I have also noticed that as I find places that need to be supported by being grounded in the data, it is not challenging at all to find supporting comments from participants. This feels validating to the results and how grounded this is as a theory.

5/21/2018- Dissertation Meeting

Sent results revision to Deb on Friday.

A couple things right away

- Not using real conceptual language.
- If you are talking about a category or a dimension, call it a property, give it a name.

This may help to conceptualize the relationships between items.

Attending to spirituality

There is some describing of how things are connected but mostly reads like a list.

Give it a hierarchy.

Think- outlines within outlines.

Less list and more hierarchy.

Being attentive is a category that describes...

What is being attentive? Is how the client is relating to their spirituality in the therapy process.

What is the actual action of being attentive

Why are they attentive

What constitutes attention

Who is actually attending?

Who is involved in the attention

- The client and the counselor

Is there an aspect of intensity to the attention

- Yes

Is there inattention

- Distraction

What are necessary components of 'attending'

Internal disposition/desire.

Attending is not the same as connection.

Give everything a concept name- give it a gerund. Give it a definition.

Attending to spirituality/religion in counseling- client experiencing their connection to their desire to...

5/25/2018- Journal Entry

I need to get over my own resistance/difficulty with categorizing some of the spiritual experience itself. I feel very comfortable categorizing the aspects of the therapy process. But, I feel some resistance to categorizing the spiritual process. I think it is my own value to not put spiritual experiences into a box. However, when I step back and reflect on it, there are identifiable “chunks” that can be located within the experience of S/R. And these chunks directly impact the therapy process. However, it should be noted that the theory itself has to accommodate some of that “out-of-the-boxness” of S/R experiences.

5/25/2018- Hierarchy Draft

Experiencing Spirituality/Religion as central to life and personal identity

Participants see spirituality/religion as a central part of themselves and simultaneously a central part of the world. So, there is a connecting to the center of existence as well as a connection to the center of themselves.

- Perceiving spirituality in all things
 - o Intangible->Tangible
 - o In the past->within the present moment->In future directions
 - o In themselves->outside themselves
 - o Painful, bad, confusing-> Comforting, good, clear
- Prioritizing connection to spirituality/religion
 - o Experiencing Closeness-> Experiencing Distance
 - o Doubt->Distracted->Passive->Active

Needing something from God->these categories.

Receiving something from God

There are things that the clients need from their spirituality. They are dependent on it for them.

Need help with pain

Need direction

Need answers

Need it to connect to themselves

These are things that commonly turn the attention explicitly to sr.

But, the client or the counselor can turn it.

Also, change the position of counselor and witness.

There are circumstances that elicit the client to seek God. Or things from God. Or about god. That seeking comes from the client and from the counselor. The roles correspond with the desires to connect with God

	Pain Suffering	Confusion Doubt	Wanting Direction	Distance from God	Desiring Growth, Change, or Transformation
Sensing God's presence					
Lacking a sense of God's presence					
	Comforted Healed	Reassured	Clarity	Closeness to God	Experiencing Growth

Ultimately, they receive God/God's presence and receive more of themselves in the context of these different things.

There is also a part of the experience that is rooted in a lack of experience. No pain, no confusion, no direction needed but also not sensing God's presence. "Feeling far from God" but not sure why.

All of the "doorways" listed above lead very quickly to the S/R layer of the experience. However, clients also carry a belief that S/R is a part of all of their experiences. So there are some things that draw attention toward S/R and other things that contain S/R but do not necessarily draw it. Those times would need more active attentiveness.

Organizing the therapy process in relation to spirituality/religion

- Relating to the therapist
 - o Decentralizing the therapist
 - o Seeing the therapist in light of spirituality/religion
 - Limited; human
 - o Experiencing the therapist in differing roles
 - Witness->Counselor->Guide (Guide can vary depending on the training of the counselor, perception of the client, needs of the client)
- Addressing S/R in the therapy process
 - o Involving Spirituality/Religion in the therapy process
 - o Experiencing Spirituality/Religion in the therapy process

Attending to spirituality and religion in the therapy process

- Exploring S/R in the therapy process
 - As an internal desire->external action
 - It begins as this internal desire that is brought into the therapy process by the client. And, with this population, that desire is invited and shared by the counselor. This internal desire is expressed in the selection of a counselor, in naming the desire with the counselor, through inviting the counselor to engage this desire in the therapy process, and in expressing the desire throughout the therapy process.
 - Within therapeutic topics->Within S/R topics
 - This exploration occurs in topics that are therapeutic in nature and contain a more implicit layer of S/R. These topics are engaged with a curiosity for where the S/R layer exists. And some topics are engaged with the S/R layer remaining implicit/intangible.
 - There are topics that contain a more obvious connection to S/R- pain, direction, closeness to God, desire for growth, and questioning. Questioning has a particular dimension to it in that the questions can become about S/R itself. This emerges in the life of the participant in the form of doubts and those doubts can be brought into the therapy process.
 - These different conditions can shift the counselor into different roles- counselor, witness, guide. This occurs through direct asking from the client or from an implicit understanding based on prior experience in the therapy process.
 - Distracted/unclear->focused/clear
 - Attention itself can vary from distracted to focused. The distraction is experienced as something unrelated to the doorway that could lead to S/R substance. When these distractions are removed or addressed, the attention becomes more focused and this opens the doorway to S/R and in turn, receiving from S/R. Some of the distractions can occur within the circumstances themselves. For example, a situation causing pain can operate simultaneously as a doorway to S/R while also, the pain or circumstance itself can cause the client to feel distracted from the S/R layer. That their attention is being diverted away from S/R itself. In these moments, the counselor can operate between the role of counselor and the role of witness- attending to the therapeutic piece while also serving as a witness to the potential spiritual layer.
- How does it happen?
 - Stating it as a desire.
 - Inviting the counselor to address it.
 - Exploring experiences for their spiritual layer- some experiences do look like obvious entry points and need to be explored.
 - Engaging S/R experiences- some experiences more obviously contain a spiritual layer.
- Attention is turned through the same channels.
 - Directly to the client; through the counselor; through the therapy process; through a topic or situation. The topics/situations include pain; direction; questions; distance; desire for growth

Receiving from spirituality and religion in the therapy process

- Experiencing receiving through different entry points.
 - o Directly to the client->through a topic/situation->in the therapy process->through the therapist
- Happens when something of spiritual substance is illuminated within the process of the client. This can be in the moment or upon reflection about another moment, or upon reflection about the process of the client.
 - o Some of the circumstances provoke specific things that are received.
 - Pain->Comfort
 - Lost->Direction
 - Questions->Clarity
 - Distance->Closeness
 - Growth->Evidence of Growth
- Receiving comes internally and externally but both originating from S/R. Because the client sees God as a separate being but also God as being part of who they are, the receiving can come from an internal place of identity/ or from an external S/R source. But both originate from the same place.
- They receive connection to the center of themselves and connection to their spirituality/religion.
- They get more of themselves and more of God. Closer and more centered.
- The attention of the client (and of the therapy process) turns based on these circumstances that can turn attention. But then in the process of attending to those things they may or may not find answers (resolution) to them. What they desire to find is an answer, or a better understanding of themselves, or a deeper understanding/connection to S/R. This last one is the most important and has the potential to impact all of the things that came before it.
- If are given the option between presence and provision, you should always choose presence. (And hope that provision gets thrown in=)

Feel attentive or Distracted

Feel connected or disconnected

Feel close to S/R or distant from S/R

Receive from S/R or Not Receive from S/R

They can receive without being connected or attentive.

They can be attentive without receiving or being connected.

In general, they need attention and connection in or do feel close.

Receiving the presence of s/r in the form of...

There are things I want/need from God but I also just want God.

It is possible that the items- pain, direction, questions- lead to the deeper experience- experiencing God and experiencing my self.
 "God comes to us disguised as our life."

5/29/2018- Dissertation Meeting with Debbie

Apply analytic exploration around attending and receiving.

Attending- what are the key movements that turn the attention?

Key combinations (i.e. pain and distance from God)

Invitation from the counselor to explore

A lack

Pick what is most meaningful to write about. Sensitization->data

Receiving

Analyze deeper into my key categories

Memo about what is what

Pick key topics to highlight into the manuscript

Outline results based on analysis/key topics

Pick a compelling narrative (the interesting case(s))

Write revised results section

Gaps- articulation between categories

5/29/2018- Theorizing Notes

Theorizing on attention

Attention is a significant action for how participants relate to their spirituality/religion. It is a priority for them to give attention to this important aspect of self/understanding of the world. Spirituality/religion organizes the therapy process and serves to prioritize what things are desirable to give attention to.

This attention occurs on an implicit layer and becomes explicit in a variety of ways. The implicit layer is present because of the general priority that these participants place on S/R in their life. This implicit layer is carried into the therapy process with them along with a desire to include S/R explicitly within the therapy process. This desire is expressed by seeking out a therapist who is welcoming of S/R in the therapy process. It is expressed directly by the client requesting attention be given to S/R through questions, conversation, and actions.

Within the therapy process, attention can turn toward S/R. This occurs through a few different means. First, the client can explicitly turn the attention of themselves toward their S/R and express that through the conversation or sessions of therapy. Second, the client invites the therapist to be attentive to this layer and to address it directly when they perceive the potential for something tangibly

spiritual/religious. Third, there are situations that have a tangible s/r layer to them and can draw the attention of the therapy process. Things like pain, doubt, need for direction are examples of items that can “demand” attention on the S/R layer.

Attention itself is reassuring to the client because it is an expression of this priority and value in their life. However, attention sets the stage to position the client to receive from their S/R.

Theorizing on receiving

Receiving is important because S/R is seen as a part of identity as well as being a *source* for important and valuable things to these participants. Positive changes, insights, and progress are viewed as originating from the S/R and coming to the client through the therapy process, counselor, or directly to them as an individual. Like all other things with spirituality, these things can be more or less tangible and more or less direct.

Generally speaking, the client can receive help with the concerns which brought them to therapy. They can also receive things related to key topical themes—receiving comfort, direction, or clarity in the face of pain, feeling lost, or experiencing questions.

Receiving contains a mysterious element to it for these participants . There are aspects of the broader experience that can be generated from the efforts of the client. However, receiving differs in that it is seen as requiring efforts from the client while simultaneously being contingent on the S/R itself.

An important case occurs when clients experiencing doubts about the spirituality/religion itself, while simultaneously feeling distant from S/R and not sensing the presence of S/R. This results in the client feeling very disoriented as it is causing them to lose connection with a deep, organizing feature of their self and their worldview. This is experienced as less of a change in experience with S/R and more as a loss of something that client has deeply relied on. This can prompt the client to rely on their counselor for reassurance relationally and guidance spiritually.

An important case is noted when the client is experiencing pain, feeling lost, questioning but feels close to S/R and senses the presence of S/R. These situations are challenging but not disorienting. Rather, clients experience a sense that there is an order and an intention to what they are encountering and have a sense of hope about the path forward. Clients often rely on the counselor in the role of witness, inviting the counselor to pay attention to the spiritual layer that is unfolding.

An important case is noted when pain or doubt or direction continue to be disruptive experiences for an extended period of time. In these instances, the client eventually feels exasperated with the process and uncertain about the point of it. This can lead to the client relating to the counselor in the role of guide. They rely on their counselor to provide empathy or reassurance or guidance because they are having trouble accessing it for themselves.

An important case is noted when the client experiences receiving connection to God or to self or both. These experiences are the most valuable throughout therapy for clients in this population. These experiences take priority over pain, direction, questions. The connection to S/R is unique from the presence of S/R and closeness to S/R. Moments when the client experiences connection to S/R happen along with sensing the presence of S/R and feeling close to S/R. However, feeling

close and sensing S/R is not enough by itself to experience connection to S/R. Clients experiencing connection often relate to their counselor in the role of witness- wanting to share with them on the significance of the spiritual layer of the experience.

Clients not experiencing connection but experiencing presence and feeling close to S/R will often relate to the counselor in the role of guide.

An important case to note is the lack of connection to God while in the absence of challenging circumstances. In these instances, the client is not experiencing pronounced pain, not lacking direction, and not experiencing questioning. They experience themselves as desiring to connect with their S/R while being unable to do so. Clients are uncertain of what is getting their way of connecting with S/R. This can lead to a questioning of them selves- am I doing something wrong? Is there something I am missing?

Receiving is also experienced as a layer of receiving therapeutic growth. Clients who develop a better understanding of emotion, learn about their family system, or receive other beneficial things in therapy- these items are still seen as ultimately (although less tangibly) originating from their S/R.

Participants desire connection with their spirituality and are able to position themselves to receive this connection. This positioning occurs by giving attention to their spiritual/religious layer, addressing aspects of their life that may be interfering with receiving, and engaging in spiritual practices to invite the connection. The counselor is invited into this process in the role of counselor, witness, and guide. However, all of this preparation leads to a gap between preparing and receiving. This gap is filled in by the S/R itself. The counselor and client are not able to create this on their own. Sometimes this gap is very small and the client is able to have the connected experience they are looking for. At other times, there is a larger gap in which the participant and the counselor find themselves waiting on S/R. In this waiting period, the counselor serves in the role of witness.

Participants receive more connection with their S/R and more connection with themselves. This is seen as a separate but interrelated thing.

6/1/2018- Revised Hierarchy

Experiencing Spirituality/Religion as central to life and personal identity (context)

- Perceiving spirituality in all things
 - o Intangible->Tangible
 - o In the past->within the present moment->In the future
 - o Within themselves->outside themselves (Internally central->Externally central)

Presence, proximity, priority

- Sensing the presence of S/R
 - o Lacking any sense of S/R-> a faint Sense S/R-> a strong sense of S/R

- Experiencing proximity to S/R
 - Feeling close to S/R->Feeling distance from S/R
 - Experiencing Closeness-> Experiencing Distance

- Prioritizing spirituality/religion
 - Focusing on S/R
 - Experiencing connection with S/R

- Accessing Spirituality/Religion
 - Through any experience
 - By seeking the S/R layer of life present in any experience
 - Experiences with S/R potential
 - Suffering
 - This includes pain of all kinds- relational, physical, spiritual. Grief and loss. The pain of growth/shame
 - Questioning
 - Questioning ranges from questions about life to questioning a circumstance/process to questioning S/R itself
 - Feeling Lost
 - Lost in terms of momentary direction, long term direction, or feeling lost because S/R cannot be located.
 - Experiencing distance from S/R
 - This is distinct from sensing the presence of S/R and both are distinct from feeling a connection to S/R
 - Desiring Growth or Change
 - This category is separate from the suffering, questioning, feeling lost. It is more about the individual change of the person and can include interactions with these other categories. But, part from them, the person can still seek accessing S/R in order to grow in areas they are desiring growth.

Organizing the therapy process in relation to spirituality/religion

- Seeing the therapy process within the S/R growth process

- Relating to the therapist
 - Decentralizing the therapist
 - Seeing the S/R working through the therapist
 - As a limited human being->As a trained expert
 - Experiencing the therapist in differing roles
 - Counselor->Witness->Guide

- Inviting S/R into the therapy process
 - In general
 - Seeking a Christian therapist -> Discussing S/R in therapy

- In specific
 - Spiritual practices -> spiritual dialog with therapist
- Prioritizing attending to and receiving from S/R

Attending to spirituality and religion in the therapy process

- Addressing S/R in the therapy process
- Exploring S/R in the therapy process
 - As an internal desire->external action
 - Within therapeutic topics->Within S/R topics
 - From the client -> from the therapist
- Turning attention toward S/R
 - Directly through the client
 - Through the counselor
 - Counselor->Witness->Guide
 - Through the therapy process
 - Through a topic or situation
 - Suffering
 - Questioning
 - Feeling lost
 - Experiencing Distance from S/R
 - Desiring Growth or Change

Receiving from spirituality and religion in the therapy process

- Positioning to receive from S/R
 - Identifying places of need for S/R
 - In moments in the past -> In the present moment -> In future moments
 - By the client -> By the Counselor
 - Waiting to receive from S/R
 - Short -> Long -> Painfully Long
 - Acknowledging the mysterious (therapist as witness)
- Prioritizing the value of what is received
 - Connecting with S/R as part of life
 - Connecting with S/R as part of self
 - Circumstantial
 - General
 - Specific
 - Comforted->Healing
 - Direction
 - Clarity->Understanding

- Holding on to what is received
 - o Connection with S/R -> Connection to Self
 - In therapy -> In their life circumstances

6/2/2018- Analysis Memo

As I continue to work on the analysis for this study, I see a lot of interesting directions that could be followed. For this particular work, I want to stay focused on the thread of how S/R really changes the structure of the therapy process/therapy relationship. It seems there is a lot that could be explored around the different circumstances in which a person seeks S/R or how the counselor participates in these processes or a deeper look into the process of receiving and how that contributes to change/growth/outcomes.

6/4/2018- Dissertation Meeting with Deb

When Deb says that I will write up 25% of my results- does that mean categories? Or showing process/movement examples?

I want to demonstrate how S/R is central to the therapy process and thereby changes the structure of the relationship and the priority of focus.

Review the categories and the outline with Debbie

Categories- Looking for S/R versus Encountering S/R as part of attention

Broad dimensions in the intro that cut across the entire experience of S/R- past, present, future; in the moment, upon reflection; tangible to intangible

Receiving- I really like the positioning piece. I feel the mystery piece is necessary.

Ordering the priority feels right but I am not certain it is in the correct spot. I think it is pretty key to the core category because it changes the focus of what is important to these participants.

Holding onto what is received feelings important as a final piece of the receiving category. But, I am not certain how much to expound on this and I am not certain if "holding on" is the right language for this piece of the process.

Reflect on the writing

Broad vs. narrow

If narrow, what?

If broad- organizing it around the experience being spiritual growth and development

6/4/2018- Memo

Today in my meeting with Debbie, I mentioned a conflict I had about the direction of my results. I find myself wanting to focus on the “large shifts” that occur in the context of the results. This is because I think it illuminates well the structure of the therapeutic process of these participants and why it is not feasible to “not talk about S/R” with this population. However, I don’t know if that is just a hill that I am focused on but doesn’t really need to be an important part of the results.

Thoughts on centering the results:

Now is when I get to was poetic for the results if I want to.

Options for results focus.

1. I could take a very mechanical, broad approach to the write up. A systematic walk through the results with an emphasis on attending and receiving.

2. I could pick a narrow slice to focus on that subsequently includes the other pieces.

A. Counselor as a witness to the growth process.

B. Psycho therapy... Soul healing.

C. Help me find my center.

D. Waiting to connect. Waiting on God.

E. My faith has me seeking my true healer.

F. Can you help me find God?

G. S/R. The most important bond in therapy.

H. Therapy as an act of centering in order to receive.

I. The Source

With s/r setting the stage for the therapy process, the key movements of this theory occur around attending to s/r and receiving from sr. In these movements, the most valuable thing to receive is connection to s/r itself. This can occur as an experience of connecting with the center of the client or with the center of the client’s world. Either way, the aim becomes to experience this connection and the corresponding closeness and sense of presence with sr.

Which pieces demonstrate the most concentrated amount of movement?

1. The client positioning to receive

2. The counselor moving in between roles

3. The turning of attention toward S/R

Which pieces demonstrate the location of the therapy process within the S/R process?

1. The client desiring to receive from S/R

2. The client turning attention toward S/R

3. The counselor as witness and guide

6/4/2018- Revised Hierarchy

Experiencing Spirituality/Religion as central to life and personal identity (context)

Presence, proximity, priority

- Sensing the presence of S/R in all things (I can tell where it is)
 - Central within themselves -> Central to the experience of life
 - General->Specific
 - In the past->within the present moment->In the future
 - Intangible->Tangible
 - Lacking any sense of S/R-> a faint Sense S/R-> a sense of S/R -> a strong sense of S/R

- Experiencing proximity to S/R (I can tell how close I am to it)
 - Feeling close to S/R -> Feeling distance from S/R
 - Desiring closeness to S/R

- Prioritizing spirituality/religion
 - Focusing attention on S/R
 - Experiencing connection with S/R
 - Needing S/R for growth

- Accessing Spirituality/Religion
 - Through general experiences
 - By seeking the S/R layer of life present in any experience
 - Through specific experiences with S/R potential
 - Suffering
 - This includes pain of all kinds- relational, physical, spiritual. Grief and loss. The pain of growth/shame
 - Questioning
 - Questioning ranges from questions about life to questioning a circumstance/process to questioning S/R itself
 - Feeling Lost
 - Lost in terms of momentary direction, long term direction, or feeling lost because S/R cannot be located.
 - Experiencing distance from S/R
 - This is distinct from sensing the presence of S/R and both are distinct from feeling a connection to S/R
 - Desiring Growth or Change
 - This category is separate from the suffering, questioning, feeling lost. It is more about the individual change of the person and can include interactions with these other categories. But, part from them, the person can still seek accessing S/R in order to grow in areas they are desiring growth.

Organizing the therapy process in relation to spirituality/religion

- Experiencing the therapy process as part of a broader S/R process
 - Because S/R is so central to life and identity, it serves as a stronger organizing force than the professional bounds of the therapeutic relationship. These professional bounds are relevant and important but are secondary to S/R as the primary organizing force in the life of the participant.
- Relating to the therapist
 - Decentralizing the therapist
 - Seeing S/R working through the therapist
 - As a limited human being->As a trained expert
 - Experiencing the therapist in differing roles
 - Counselor->Witness->Guide
- Inviting S/R into the therapy process
 - In general
 - Seeking a Christian therapist -> Discussing S/R in therapy
 - In specific
 - Spiritual practices -> spiritual dialog with therapist
- Prioritizing attending to and receiving from S/R in the therapy process

Attending to spirituality and religion in the therapy process (Or Being attentive?)

- Addressing S/R in the therapy process
 - By the client -> by the therapist
- Removing barriers to attention
 - Trust
 - Distraction
- Looking for S/R
 - By the client
 - By the counselor
 - Counselor->Witness->Guide
- Encountering S/R
 - In the therapy process
 - In a topic or situation
 - Suffering
 - Questioning
 - Feeling lost
 - Experiencing Distance from S/R
 - Desiring Growth or Change

Receiving from spirituality and religion in the therapy process

- Ordering the priority of what is received

- Connecting with S/R
- Connecting with S/R as part of self identity
- Circumstantial
 - General
 - Specific
 - Comforted->Healing
 - Direction->Reassurance
 - Clarity->Understanding
- Positioning to receive from S/R
 - Identifying places of need for S/R
 - In moments in the past -> In the present moment -> In future moments
 - By the client -> By the Counselor
 - Waiting to receive from S/R
 - Short -> Long -> Painfully Long
 - Acknowledging the mysterious (therapist as witness)
 - Expectant -> Exasperated
- Holding on to what is received
 - Connection with S/R -> Connection to S/R within Self
 - In therapy -> In their life circumstances

6/6/2018- Memo

All health originates from the center (s/r). The cost and more connected to the center these participants are, the healthier they feel.

As a result, the therapy process can be understood as a pursuit of healing. A pursuit of this healing center.

I like the idea of writing around the centrality of healing and how clients pursue it and counselors support it. My concern is around sensitization and grounding to the data. There is a lot of this that resonates with me and feels very congruent for me. But, I want to be thoughtful about insuring that this is actually tied to participant descriptions and I am not extrapolating too far based on my own experience/preferences.

6/9/2018- Results Draft: Healing

Soul healing: A Grounded Theory Study of Christian Clients in the Process of Psychotherapy

Data was gathered from ten participants through two rounds of interviews and a member check in order to understand how these participants experience their spirituality and/or religion during their therapy process. The analysis of the data resulted in the following categories. The participants of this study described their

spirituality and/or religion as a central feature of their life and identity. The centrality of spirituality and the priority it plays in the life of these participants created an orientation toward this center. In turn, these participants described a therapeutic process that was oriented around an ongoing spiritual/religious process. While the professional training of the therapist and the importance of the therapeutic space remained important, the fundamental structure of the therapeutic process was oriented toward the ongoing spiritual/religious process.

These results will examine the experience described by participants as it relates to the process of *seeking healing*. These results describe *healing* as an integral part of the therapy process for these participants. Healing is understood here to describe all movement toward health in the life of the client. Participants describe spirituality/religion as being the source of all healing in the therapy process and in life. One participant described this healing process by saying, "It's hard for me to think of anything other than healing. I also have this image of like digging. For me, spirituality, since it gets at the core of who people are, what we understand about being human, healing also means you get down to the deepest part of one's soul"

From this context, three key categories emerged for understanding how these participants experience spirituality and religion during their therapy process. These three categories are: (a) ***organizing the therapy process in relation to spirituality/religion***, (b) ***being attentive to spirituality/religion*** (c) ***receiving from spirituality/religion***. These three categories, the associated properties, and the dimensions will be defined and described. These results will be related directly back to the participant's process of *seeking healing* in the therapy process. Throughout these results, the term "S/R" will be utilized in place of spirituality/religion. However, it should be noted that participants used a variety of words to relate to this central aspect of their life. These terms included, spirituality, religious, beliefs, faith, God, and Jesus.

Experiencing Spirituality/Religion as central to life and personal identity

Within the category, *experiencing S/R as central to life and personal identity*, there are three subcategories of this experience as well as key dimensionality that was present across all of these categories of S/R. These subcategories related to *presence*, *proximity*, and *priority*.

Sensing the presence of S/R in all things. It is central within themselves and outside themselves. This presence is sensed in all things. However, there are some experiences that are more conducive and these experiences are relevant to these results. These experiences are a property of sensing presence. They are *suffering*, *questioning*, *feeling lost*, *experiencing distance from spirituality/religion*, and *desiring growth or change*. These final two properties are particularly relevant to seeking healing. All growth or change can be understood for these participants as a process of seeking healing. Furthermore, while all healing is experienced as originating from S/R, the deepest healing is experienced in close proximity to S/R.

Experiencing proximity to S/R. This experience was true in general for their life and was relevant to *seeking healing* within the therapy process. Participants desire to feel close to their S/R because it is seen as central to their identity and the source of things they need. Within the therapy process, S/R is seen as the source of healing. The more closeness that is experienced, the more accessible healing feels.

Prioritizing spirituality/religion. Not only central but valuable to them. Need it for many aspects of life. Need it for healing in therapy. Because of this central, valuable need, they want to prioritize it. Prioritize focusing on it and prioritize cultivating closeness and connection with it.

Key dimensionality. All of the experiences with S/R in the therapy process had the potential for key dimensionality. This included General->Specific. In the past->within the present moment->In the future. Intangible->Tangible. Strong sense->weak sense of S/R. Feeling close to S/R -> Feeling distance from S/R

Seeking Healing. For these participants- the source of health is located within their S/R. For them, the more centered they are, and the closer in proximity to that center, and the more connected to this center- the more access they have to healing. This can be a broad sense of healing as “getting healthier.” It is also present in specific forms. Healing takes the form of comfort within suffering, clarity within questioning, and direction within feeling lost. For these participants, the process of therapy becomes oriented around a process of healing. Movement from any form of unhealthy to more health is the process of healing. The therapist joins into this process and is positioned in relation to this process of healing.

Organizing the therapy process in relation to spirituality/religion

This context sets the stage for a unique organization of the therapy process for these participants. The therapy process is situated as part of a broader S/R process. This unique organization changes key positions within the process and introduces key centering features to the therapy process. One participant described their experience noting the importance “to be able to engage in spirituality and realize that there's validity to it in the counseling experience I think just allows counseling to be much more whole and healing.” Rather than S/R being invited into the therapy process, it is more accurate to conceptualize that the therapist and the corresponding therapeutic process is invited into the S/R process of growth. There are therapeutic things the client wants to address.

Decentralizing the therapist. Because the therapy process is situated within a broader process and the therapist is not seen as the source of healing but is one entry point for healing into the process of the participants. One participant described this aspect of the experience by saying, “because for me it was, ‘God is my healer,’ like God is the central thing... my counselor is awesome, but like, my faith is bigger than that.”

Experiencing the therapist in differing roles. The roles of the therapist are structured in relation to the S/R being central and the source of health. As in all therapy, these participants experienced the therapist in the role of *counselor*. However, the role of therapist was set in relation to S/R and was joined by two other distinct roles. These two roles were *witness* and *guide*.

Counselor- Participants described the role of counselor as the therapist acting to create a therapeutic space and to address topics that are typical of a therapeutic process. Examples of these topics include emotions, relationship patterns, and family of origin dynamics. These results demonstrate the therapist acting as a counselor in relation to *seeking healing*. How will the focal points of counseling and the skills/presence of the counselor support the ongoing S/R healing process.

Witness- Participants described the role of witness when the therapist is being attentive to the S/R process during the therapy process. These results demonstrate the therapist acting as a witness to *seeking healing* by naming instances when healing is occurring during the therapy process.

Guide- Participants described the role of guide when the therapist takes an active, directive role in relation to the S/R of the client. These results demonstrate the therapist acting as a guide to the *seeking healing*. Participant: "My counselor is not healing me. Ha ha...! He is more of a guide or a coach even depending on the session."

Prioritizing attending to and receiving from spirituality and religion. The significance of S/R enters into the therapy process with the client. And, there is a prioritizing of *attending to spirituality and religion in the therapy process* and *receiving from spirituality and religion in the therapy process*. These participants value attending to the S/R process of healing that is taking place in their life and in therapy. They value recognizing the need to receive from S/R. There are parts of healing that can occur through the work of the therapist and the client. There are aspects of healing that are dependent on proximity/connection to S/R. The deepest layers of healing are dependent on receiving them from the S/R itself.

Attending to spirituality and religion in the therapy process

These participants described attending to S/R as a high priority in the therapy process. This process included *addressing S/R in the therapy process* as well as *removing barriers to attention*. Addressing S/R included, stating the desire, asking about it, exploring their experiences for the S/R layer, inviting the therapist to look for it. *Removing barriers to attention* in the therapy process included building trust and addressing distractions. Increased trust with the therapist allows for more expression of the client.

Participants described things that would distract their attention from S/R. This included things like busyness or conflicting priorities. However, distractions could also include some of the experiences that had S/R relevance. For example, pain or suffering was conducive to seeking healing from S/R, it also could become pronounced in a manner that became distracting. One participant described, "I know that in the traumas that I've been working on in my counseling and my therapy, my belief system plays a huge role in my healing, and that I believe that the emotions and shame, and that kind of thing, has really kept me from a deeper union with God." This balance within the experience would prompt changes in the role of the therapist. Instances like this would prompt the therapist to take on the role of witness.

Looking for spirituality and religion. In the pursuit of healing, the counselor is invited alongside the client. This includes looking for healing, as well as looking for places in need of healing. The client and counselor engage this process together in order to turn the attention of the client toward their S/R. One participant described this process of engaging together, "But I do believe that you know that sort of, we kind of have a common goal and that we both you know sort of see you know counseling as a means to sort of achieve that. And so yeah when I sort of say oh that's a given. You know I kind of feel like you know God's kind of like omniscient

you know he knows everything. And in my mind I'm like of course he would be you know using this as a kind of means to...to heal and develop."

The client experiences *looking for spirituality and religion* as a priority that they bring with them into the process. They are active in the process of addressing S/R by focusing on topics related to S/R and by focusing on the S/R layer in all things. Participants describe *looking for S/R* in their process and these results demonstrate *looking for spirituality and religion for healing*.

An example when the client brought a topic, the counselor served in the role of witness, which directed the attention of the client back to their S/R. "There's been a few times when I've had, when maybe she's said something, and I thought "hmm, I'm not so sure about that." So then it causes me to go and ask God, is that true of me?"

The counselor is invited into this process along with the client. They are invited to be proactive about looking for places that need healing and looking for places where healing is taking place. This moves the counselor into the role of witness as well as the role of guide. As a witness, the counselor is attentive to the S/R layer that is present for the client. Then, invites the client to turn their attention toward these places. One participant described a tangible example of their therapist serving as a witness as they attended to S/R in the process. "[My counselor] was like, "Did you see what just happened?" It was literally after I was sharing God's not here, basically. I didn't notice it, and so he brought it to my attention."

Receiving from spirituality and religion in the therapy process

Ordering the priority of what is received. The counseling process is oriented around S/R. Client's enter therapy with a priority on their S/R experience. Even still, there are many benefits to the therapy process. The value of S/R for the client prioritizes what is received during the therapy process. Connecting with S/R is the top priority and is desirable above all other things received in therapy. Second, but close to this, is connecting with S/R within themselves. Clients describe a process of connecting to S/R within themselves working in conjunction with connecting to S/R in life.

Beyond this top priority, participants described other valuable things received during the therapy process. These things still contain an S/R layer to them, however they were more circumstantial or related to therapeutic topics.

Positioning to receive from S/R. The client and the counselor work in conjunction to identify places in need of healing. This process occurs as the client brings their S/R with them into the therapy process and into specific therapy sessions. These topics are engaged with the therapist shifting between the roles of counselor, witness, and guide. The therapist helps to witness places in need of healing and then guiding the client in a manner that is positioning the client to receive from S/R.

Waiting to receive healing from S/R. Because the client and the counselor share a perspective that sees S/R as the source of healing, there is a coinciding dependence on S/R for when and how healing takes place. The client and counselor may work to position the client to receive but then must wait for healing to come from the S/R. This part of the process contains more movement between roles for the therapist. The therapist may serve as counselor to provide internal strategies to

cope while waiting, as a witness to evidence of healing, or a guide to seek S/R in the process. One participant described an example of this experience with her therapist. They described the interaction, "it will definitely be something that she'll ask me or ... Have you asked God about this? Wrestling with something. Well, have you spent time asking him that question? No, I haven't. That's what brings the clarity. Maybe this isn't why it's clicking, is I haven't made room for this issue in my time in the morning."

Acknowledging the mysterious. An important aspect of the experience of receiving comes in *acknowledging the mysterious*. Because of the dependence that comes with relying on S/R for healing, there is a mystery to the how, when, and where healing will take place. Even still, any healing experienced is dependent on S/R. One participant described this mystery, "It is my healing. It is my process. My spiritual growth is my therapy, because I wouldn't have experienced any of the healing that I have without it."

Receiving healing from spirituality/religion. The counselor plays a key role in the process by moving into different roles as the client seeks healing. One participant described this interaction between themselves, their therapist, and their spirituality and religion. Participant: "(my counselor) isn't healing me, that I am using what I'm learning about myself and the process, and who God is to me, to really propel my healing a lot more quickly than I think I would have otherwise." One participant stated poignantly that, "my spirituality has me seeking my true healer, rather than my therapist."

Attending to what is received. As healing takes place, the process of receiving intersects with the process of attending. Attention is given to the healing that is taken place in a way that appreciates it and attempts to hold onto it in memory. Once again, the therapist serves in the role of witness as they attend to the experience of healing. Additionally, the therapist may shift to the role of therapist as they seek to apply this healing to the therapeutic issues presented by the client.

6/18/2018- Memo

There are specific elements of S/R that need to be named. I have named some of the items that are most relevant to what drives people to S/R (suffering, questioning, direction). However, I also need to name what is received from S/R. BUT, I want to limit this to what is particularly relevant to my research question- how S/R is experienced in the therapy process. I am NOT trying to produce a comprehensive analysis of S/R in general for these participants.

I want to make sure I have considered the broad categories enough. This quote from Spiritual Direction and the Care of Souls felt relevant:

While Christian soul care has taken many forms over the course of church history, tory, William A. Clebsch and C. R. Jaekle (1964) note that it has always involved four primary elements-healing, sustaining, reconciling and guiding. Healing involves efforts to help others overcome some impairment and move toward wholeness. ness. These curative efforts can involve physical healing as well as spiritual healing, but the focus is always the total person, whole and holy. Sustaining refers to acts of

caring designed to help a hurting person endure and transcend a circumstance in which restoration or recuperation is either impossible or improbable. Reconciling refers to efforts to reestablish broken relationships; the presence of this component of care demonstrates the communal, not simply individual, nature of Christian soul care. Finally, guiding refers to helping people make wise choices and thereby grow in spiritual maturity

Gary W. Moon; David G. Benner. *Spiritual Direction and the Care of Souls: A Guide to Christian Approaches and Practices* (pp. 11-12). Kindle Edition.

6/29/2018- Dissertation Meeting

Explicit definition of the category. For Receiving.
Receiving is the participants experience of Gaining....

Prioritizing- Make it obvious that it connects to context. This is part of receiving but it is because of the prioritized values that the client brings into the therapy process.

Waiting- lots on therapist action. Give a clear definition to waiting.
Frame this as an interaction between two categories.

Frame the results from the start- this discussion is about how the participant's view the therapist role changing in relation to S/R

Be explicit about the movement in categories.

Writing in general- being a tour guide in a museum.

Use headings, subheadings, italics to illuminate things that need to be emphasized.

Just write about a put it where it feels best- the mysterious.

Call the receiving subheading something different. To distinguish it and emphasize what is happening.

Experiencing connection?

Acknowledge the other items that can be received. The other halves of suffering, questioning, feeling lost

Primary task- You have all the important pieces. Make sure things are in the right room, in the right sequence.

Use paragraphing to separate the definition from the therapist role.

Discussion- items I was reading in my discussion.

Spiritual/religious literature and counseling literature.

What are the key pieces you want to discuss?

Implications. Therapist role.

7/20/2018- Results Revision

Received edits from Deb on my current results section draft. A few key comments that I am now focusing on as I revise my results:

“This is kind of blanket feedback that is exemplified by this statement. You’re definitely in theory mode! Lots of interaction and action. A LOT of it is presented as kind of nuts and bolts – which is how you’ve had to think about it. Also think about breathing some life back into it and how you might trim some of the interactions – out – so you can provide adequate description and richness to what’s there. Also make sure it is presented as the participants’ perceptions and experiences rather than a third person observation of what happened. Example: The participants experienced themselves working with the counselor to”

“At some point probably multiple points you need to mention the context of their experience - in that they are with a counselor who similarly prioritizes S/R”

“Careful in referring to the participants as clients. I think it is okay to assert at some points that they are clients – that is their identity in this study – but they are participants who gave you their story for your research.”

7/24/2018- Email to Debbie

Debbie,

Here is an update on where I am.

I am working through your edits (and appreciating them greatly)

- Have sprinkled in the full "spiritual/religious" term
- Added more quotes in the places you highlighted
- Added a property about therapy being an extension of S/R growth process
- Have been paying attention to speaking about "participants" over "clients"
- Adjusted a bit of the up front framing- including moving the Dimensionality section to the intro and changing the integrated heading to "Connecting to S/R during the therapy process"

I need to:

- Clarify/define bond.
- Edit through to check on:
 - Participant language
 - Active voice
 - Flow of the quotes/content

A couple things for you:

1. I would love to schedule another meeting. Friday? Monday?

2. I am starting to think timeline. If I want to defend before the summer is over... what do I need to have done and when? Would like your thoughts on that.
3. Member check

A couple of areas that feel like they might benefit from a question in the member check are asking about how "connection with S/R" is experienced by my participants in therapy. Or a question about the prioritizing of connection with S/R as more important than relief from presenting issues. I highlight those two areas because they have stood out to me in this edit as needing a bit more meat. Another option would be a couple questions on the bond/connection piece.

Audit is moving forward.

I am steadily working on compiling.

Journal/Memoing is up to date and in the appendix.

Tentative timeline (have no idea if this is right but I am wanting to have a picture in mind):

Finalize results by August 3rd

Finalize discussion, implications, future research for Chapter 3 by August 3rd

Finalize chapter 4 and compile final draft by August 8th

Email committee to schedule defense

Copy edit August 8th-10th

Committee needs final product by August 13-17 (depending on defense date)

Defense scheduled for Last week of August (27-31)

7/30/2018- Email

Email ahead of dissertation meeting:

Debbie,

Ahead of our meeting tomorrow, here is where I am at...

I have done a full revision of the results section.

- It is longer now (22 pages double spaced). I don't care if you don't care =) Perhaps it will shrink a bit more through some more revisions.
- I have not added another diagram as you had suggested. Not sure what it will look like yet but plan to keep thinking about it.
- I dialed in some of the definitions/descriptions a bit more.

I want to talk member check. What is the procedure for doing this? What do I need to document as I compile it? Possible question areas:

- The experience of receiving from S/R.
- The priority of connecting with S/R and the experience of connecting.

I drafted the remainder of my chapter 3. I will have it available for us to look at tomorrow should we need it.

I have sketched my chapter 4.

My biggest hope for tomorrow is to come away with the next steps, the steps between now and the finish line and (hopefully) a timeline. I want to finish this thing out with you!

Johnny

7/31/2018- Dissertation Meeting

Schedule defense

- First week of September
- Email committee

Member Check

- Send them a diagram and a story. And maybe a list of ideas of the categories and the main ideas from the categories.
- Magazine version of the theory that hits the main points.
- I want them to affirm the framework that I have put together.
- Video to talk through the theory (explain it like I am trying to tell a client)

Colloquial discussion (for defense and for)

Targeted Question on thin topic.

Invite to committee- check in with Grad Rep

Editor- not sure it is necessary.

Chapter 4

- The audience is the committee and the general university.
- It is really just summarizing and discussing your chapter 2 and chapter 3.
- In my case, it is interesting- what do these two pieces mean together. It is interesting because I have done this synthetic literature review and have done my own study. Answer: what would a reasonable doctoral level practitioner get from reading these two manuscripts together?
- What are the implications for both of them together.
- Practice, research, counselor educators.
- Are there interesting results that you didn't fit in to this manuscript? A list of some ideas and leads from my study that are not part of the theory right now.

I am editing- and then sending you the whole chapter three. Send it to Deb by Thursday evening.

OSU Dissertation and Thesis Guide

Email times for next meeting.

8/3/2018- Email to Participants

Hello,

I hope this email finds you well. I am writing to update you on the progress of my dissertation. First and foremost, thank you again for the time and personal vulnerability you have given me to make this possible.

I have good news and a final step coming. The good news is that I will not be needing a third interview with all of you.

The final step, as you may recall, is something called a Member Check. Now that I have spent time with your interviews and analyzed the information to the point of creating a theory, I need to run it back by all of you. I am in the process of compiling some documents/presentation for you to view. I will also be providing some questions to direct your feedback.

It is very important that you feel free to give your thoughts and reflections on what I have compiled. And, because we are doing this through email, I want to encourage you to offer some thorough reflections in places that feel right for you.

This email is just to let you know that these documents will be coming your way- I am planning to have them to you by the middle of next week. The sooner your responses can be sent back, the better. But as always, I know your time is valuable and you are giving it to me.

I am very grateful to all of you as I head toward the finish line on this very long project.

Johnny

8/13/2018- Research Journal

I have been reviewing the responses to the member check and have appreciated some of the validation of the theory. The area that seems to get the most critique is the receiving section. As I examine the participant's responses, it seems like it is reflective of the amount of variance that is present in this part of the theory. Depending on how the participant is feeling about the experience of S/R at the time of therapy, receiving can be frustrating, feel far away, not be the overt focus. Any of

the critique seems to speak to participants who found themselves on one end of the variance spectrum. Although all the participants who did offer any critiques were quick to point out that it does still feel descriptive of their experience.

Appendix U

Independent Audit Checklist

1.	Read 1. Audit Checklist first to give overview of audit process. Create a central word document to catalog any reflections or feedback that you have for me.	
2.	View 2. Video Overview which will describe the organization of the audit	
3.	Review the 3. Attestation Form to understand the final outcome of this process	
4.	Review 4. Article- Establishing Dependability and Confirmability in Naturalistic Inquiry Through an Audit and pay particular attention to highlighted sections	
5.	Read 5. Article- Peer Review Checklist	
6.	Video which will walk you through my 6. Metasynthesis to Proposal Video	
7.	Review 7. LaLonde Dissertation Proposal PowerPoint	
8.	Video which will walk you through my 8. Grounded Theory Research Process to date	
9.	Review 9. 7606_Rubel_Consent_Apprvd_09272017	
10.	Review 10. 7606_Rubel_Protocol_Apprvd_09272017 and Read Pages 4-6, Appendix H, and Appendix J	
11.	Review 11. Participant Demographic Data	
12.	Read 12. Research Timeline	
13.	Review 13. Audit Trail- for this document, I need you to do a pretty intentional review. I do not need you to read every word but this is the main document where I show my work throughout this process. It includes memos, reflections, journal entries, diagrams, etc... Pay particular attention to Pages 16-20 and Pages 31-48	
14.	Video 14. Transcript Comparison which will highlight samples of interviews compared to the interview protocol.	
15.	Read the dissertation in its present form: 15. LaLonde Proposal 5.25	
16.	Finally, all other documents relevant to this audit are included in one folder labeled 16. Review at Your Discretion. You are welcome to open things at will and take a look around. This is entirely at your discretion but I wanted these items available to you.	
17.	Email me to schedule a time to debrief the audit	
18.	Finalize the 3. Attestation Form	

Appendix V

External Audit Attestation by Chuck DeGroat, Ph.D.

Johnny LaLonde requested that I complete an educational audit of his qualitative dissertation titled: A Qualitative Metasynthesis of Client Experience of Addressing Spirituality and Religion in Counseling and A Grounded Theory Study of How Private Practice Christian Clients Experience Their Spirituality and Religion During the Counseling Process With Similar Faith Counselors by Johnny LaLonde. The audit was conducted between 1/15/2018 and 2/9/2018 with a final video meeting conducted on 8/7/2018. The purpose of the audit was to contribute toward the trustworthiness of this research.

In their book *Naturalistic Inquiry*, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that the audit "may be the single most important trustworthiness technique available to the naturalist" (p.283). The educational audit is "based metaphorically on the fiscal audit" (p.317). The role of the auditor is to carefully examine both the process and product of the inquiry. In order to accomplish an audit, it is imperative that the researcher maintain careful, detailed records throughout the inquiry.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) delineate two tasks in the audit process: 1. examination of the process of the inquiry to ensure that informants are represented fairly in recorded accounts, and 2. examination of the final product to ensure accuracy; in particular that the findings are supported by the data.

To meet the outlined purpose of this audit, research materials were reviewed. The researcher compiled a shared electronic folder containing research data and documentation of the research process. He also submitted audio/video recordings designed to orient and guide the auditing process. I examined and documented the contents of each folder. The following materials were submitted for the audit:

1. Audit Checklist
2. Audio/Video: Organization of the Audit Documentation
3. Attestation Form
4. Article- Establishing Dependability and Confirmability in Naturalistic Inquiry Through an Audit
5. Article- Peer Review Checklist
6. Audio/Video overview of metasynthesis research process
7. Audio/Video presentation of Dissertation Proposal PowerPoint
8. Audio/Video overview of grounded theory research process overview
9. IRB Consent Document
10. IRB Protocol Document
11. Participant Demography Data Summary
12. Research Timeline
13. Audit Trail
14. Audio/Video presentation of interview protocol compared with actual interview sample
15. Dissertation Proposal
16. A Folder Containing the Following Documents:
 - a. Metasynthesis Article Analysis Procedure

- b. Metasynthesis Article Assessments
- c. Metasynthesis Article Coding Sample
- d. Metasynthesis Categorized Map of Key Concepts and Participant Data
- e. Metasynthesis Inclusion/Exclusion Spreadsheet
- f. Original Research Interview One Transcripts
- g. Original Research Interview Two Transcripts
- h. Original Research Results Draft with Diagrams

The audit consisted of the following steps:

1. I read the dissertation dated 1/15/2018. Particular attention was paid to sections addressing the purpose of the study, research questions, grounded theory design, data collection and analysis methods, verification strategies, the researcher's role in the study, and the interview protocols.
2. I cataloged and reviewed all materials submitted for the audit.
3. I read all methodological/procedure sections of the dissertation and the sections presenting the data, discussing themes, providing synthesis, conclusions, and recommendations. I compared the original dissertation proposal (focusing on the purpose of the study, research questions, proposed methods) to the dissertation.
4. I reviewed research methods, analysis, and verification procedures and compared the researcher's stated procedures with the audit trail he established through the documentation submitted for the audit.
5. I read several pages of transcribed interview data. I then compared the interview protocols against verbatim transcripts to determine whether the researcher had followed his proposed protocols during the interviews.
6. I wrote and provided the attestation form.
7. I read the results draft in conjunction with the analysis audit trail.

Following the completion of the preceding steps, noted the following observations:

1. I am impressed with Johnny's organization, notably his detailed audit trail. One of the more impressive aspects of this document is how it reveals Johnny's attention to his own biases and assumptions. He continually interrogates himself, the process, and research question, and other important aspects of his work.
2. Closely related to #1 is Johnny's attention to the language of his research question. His careful attention to language while at the same time anchoring his research in a grounded theory approach which attends to process allowed him to focus his research well.
3. The rationale for this particular study is understandable and the study is clearly needed given Johnny's thorough literature review which highlighted the need for more data/research on his topic.
4. Johnny's understanding of qualitative research, and grounded theory in particular, is impressive, and his sources for this methodology are highly credible.

5. Johnny's metasynthesis of other studies provided a much appreciated backdrop to his study, both highlighting important findings from previous studies and massive gaps where more research is needed. It seems as if his collection and analysis of any and all articles from a qualitative approach related to spirituality and the counseling process was exhaustive. On this, the chart providing a clear analysis of authors, methods, locations and purpose was helpful and appreciated.
6. Johnny was well-attuned to ethical questions related to his research and participants.
7. Johnny's audit trail and proposal reveals limitations of his study with great honesty, and provides pathways for future research.
8. Johnny's research process, data collection, interview protocols were clear and consistent.
9. The parameters of participant inclusion were clear and specific and well-articulated.
10. Johnny attends well to questions of dependability and reliability, and his comprehensive process of attending to previous research, metasynthesizing that research, and tracking his process through an audit trail buttresses the dependability and reliability of this study.
11. The definitions provided in the proposal are very helpful given varying understandings of spirituality and religion.
12. Categories of fear, freedom, and personal expression are helpful articulations of the experiences he observed.

Following the final video call, this auditor noted the following observations:

1. Research process seems thoroughly engaged from start to finish. No reservations about the rigor applied to the research and analysis process.
2. Primary feedback for this audit applies to applications of the research and not to the quality of the research process.
3. Raised questions with Johnny about how the parameters of the sample may have impacted the research process.
4. Discussed representation of negative case variance and how this was handled during the research process and how it is represented in the final results.
5. Discussed how generalizability of this research was engaged throughout the process. The results represent a theory which encompasses the commonly held process for these participants. Raised critical questions- would this same process be represented by participants of different religious backgrounds? How would the spiritual development of the individuals impact the variance of the experience within this theory.
6. Engaging these questions with Johnny helped to illuminate the thoughtfulness of the research and analysis process that he underwent.

Finally, this auditor submits the following conclusions:

1. It is this auditor's opinion that the focus of the study remained consistent with the proposed focus. It is this auditor's opinion that the limitation of the population to a Christian group presents a tight scope of research. This is appropriate given the experience being researched. IT should also be noted that this does open up reasonable critique for the lack of a broader scope.
2. Data collection procedures followed those proposed in the methods section of the proposal. The researcher proposed a series of three, sixty minute interviews, focusing on the participant's utilization of spiritual beliefs and practices during their therapy process. The researcher was consistent in his use of the constructed interview protocols during the interviews.
3. Data analysis procedures followed those proposed in the methods section of the proposal. In particular, the researcher demonstrated the importance of prolonged engagement during the data analysis. Data analysis procedures are clearly documented in the dissertation.
4. It appears that the trustworthiness of the study can be established in that the findings seem to be clearly grounded in the data. The researcher carefully designed his project and employed a number of verification strategies (including member checks, triangulation, and external audit) to ensure the accuracy of the data. The data were presented in detail using extensive quotes and descriptive language. Having reviewed excerpts of the transcripts, interview and observation protocols and field notes and compared them to the dissertation, it appears that the data accurately represents the participant's perspectives and experiences.
5. Although the issue of "reliability" is problematic for qualitative researchers and generalizability from specific cases may be limited, the results of this audit demonstrate that the researcher maintained an excellent audit trail. It was apparent in reviewing the materials that LaLonde was rigorous and systematic in his data collection and record keeping. The extensive materials presented for the purpose of the audit were detailed, complete and well organized. Other researchers could follow this researcher's clear audit trail. In addition, the findings of the study are presented with "rich, thick description" to enable readers to determine the applicability of this study to their settings.

Attested to by Chuck DeGroat on 8/7/2018.

Chuck DeGroat
Professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling at Western Theological Seminary
Senior Fellow at Newbigin House of Studies
B.A. Philosophy, M.Div, M.A. Counseling, Ph.D. Educational Psychology
LPC (Michigan), LMHC (Florida)

Western Theological Seminary
101 E 13th Street
Holland, MI 49423

Appendix W

Member Check Documentation

Email to Participants:

As I mentioned in my email last week, I am at the point in my research process where I am ready to solicit feedback from you all through a process known as the Member Check. This email contains information about what this process will require from you, what I will need back from you, and how long it should take. As always, please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Time: At a minimum, this member check will take 20 minutes. Maximum time expected would be an hour and that is only if you were to engage with all of the optional material.

Steps:

1. Open the document Member Check Questions Form. Review the questions and notice that you will be entering your responses into the document. Let me know if you have any trouble opening or saving this document and I will offer you an alternate option.
2. Utilize the Member Check Questions Form as you engage the content to document any thoughts you would like to share.
3. Follow the link to the Narrated Member Check Presentation. This will require audio and video.
4. (Recommended) Review the Final Hierarchy document to see the “official terms” that will be utilized in the dissertation results section.
5. (Optional) Review the KeyNote Presentation, Compact Theory Notes, or Full Draft Results. These are entirely at your discretion and you are welcome to engage them as much or as little as you like.
6. When you have completed entering your responses into the Member Check Questions Form, save the document with your last name in the file name and email it back to me.

Let me know if you have any questions or if you happen to have some longer thoughts you feel compelled to share. As always, thank you for your time and reflections. This would not be possible without you and I am very grateful.

Johnny
407.921.6465, lalonde.johnny@gmail.com

Attachments

- 1. Member Check Questions Form (Required)
- 2. Final Hierarchy (Recommended)
- 3. KeyNote Presentation (Optional)
- 4. Compact Theory Notes (Optional)

- 5. Full Draft Results Section (Optional)

Member Check Questions Form

Your thoughts and reflections are greatly appreciated, will be read and utilized to form the final draft of the theory. You are free to include as much or as little as you would like. However, thorough descriptions are appreciated.

Does this theory accurately capture your experience of S/R during your therapy process?

In what ways does it capture your experience (please feel free to offer descriptive thoughts)?

How do you know when you are experiencing connection with your S/R? And, what does this connection mean to you?

What other feedback or thoughts would you like to offer?

Is there anything new that stood out to you that you would like to share?

Member Check KeyNote Presentation

Member Check Presentation

A grounded theory of how private practice Christian clients experience their spirituality and religion during their therapy process

Keep in Mind

- This research aimed to understand how spirituality/religion is experienced by clients in their therapy process.
- The term “S/R” may be utilized in place of spiritual/religious. However, it should be noted that participants used a variety of words to relate to this central aspect of their life. These terms included, spirituality, religious, beliefs, faith, God, and Jesus.
- in the past, in the future, and within the present moment.
intangible to tangible
weak to strong
feeling close to S/R to feeling distance from S/R
- Qualitative terminology

“my spirituality has me seeking my true healer, rather than my therapist.”

Central

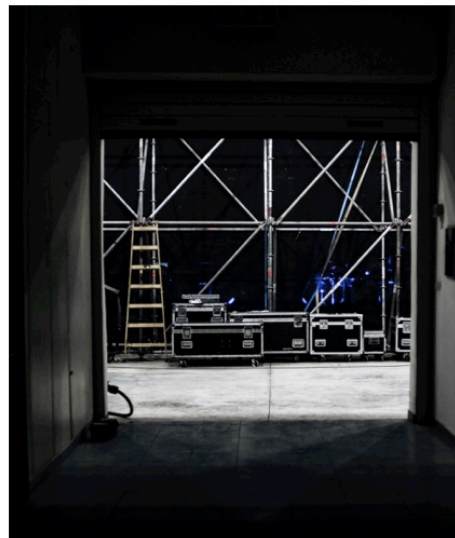
- Spirituality/religion sets the stage
- “The world is spiritual/religious”
- “I am a spiritual/religious person.”
 - Presence, Proximity, Priority
 - Connection



- Presence- Where is it?
 - S/R is present in all of life. There is not a distinction between experiences that 'do' or 'do not' contain elements of S/R.
 - Some experiences are more "conducive" than others. (feeling pain, being lost, questioning, desiring growth, desiring S/R)
- Proximity- How close is it?
 - Closer is better because my S/R center has things I need.
- Priority
 - S/R is a priority and in particular- connection with S/R.

S/R Sets the Stage

- Spiritual Process>Therapy Process
- Pay attention
- Center stage- Receiving



S/R Organizes Therapy

- The therapy process is part of an ongoing, S/R Process
- The therapist is important but not central
- The therapist has three distinct roles

Organization



- The therapist is invited into the ongoing spiritual/religious process of growth.
- The therapist is good and their training important. But, they are understood as limited and are not seen as the source of healing.

Roles

- Counselor
 - The way most therapists are with most clients. Not too different.
- Witness
 - When the therapist is attentive to the S/R layer of things
- Guide
 - When the therapist takes an active role in order to help the client locate, move toward, and/or connect with their S/R.



Pay Attention



An important practice of the spiritual life becomes an important action of the therapy process—paying attention.

Paying Attention

- Address it (together)
- Address things that detract from it (together)
- Look for it (together)
- Find it (together)



Receive

(the center of the theory)

- I need things that only S/R can give me. But I need S/R most of all
- Where do I need it?
- Waiting to receive
- Mystery
- Connection



Receiving

- Finding the places that the client needs growth/healing/change/transformation
- It is any number of things but it is all dependent on connection with S/R
- Find those places and wait
- Why wait? Because there are things that come from S/R (and only S/R) and it is up to S/R to provide them to us



Mystery

- When will I receive? How long will it take? How will I know? Why hasn't it happened yet?
- There is a shared understanding between the client and counselor that spiritual/religious experiences can be pursued and facilitated but not controlled.



Connecting with S/R

- Connection with S/R is the *top* priority.
- Everything that is received is valuable but experiencing connection with S/R itself is the most valuable
- All the growth that happens in therapy ultimately comes from S/R and is dependent on this connection with S/R



Member Check Questions

- Does this theory accurately capture your experience of S/R during your therapy process?
- In what ways does it capture your experience (please feel free to offer descriptive thoughts)?
- How do you know when you are experiencing connection with your S/R? And, what does this connection mean to you?
- What other feedback or thoughts would you like to offer?
- Is there anything new that stood out to you that you would like to share?

Final Hierarchy

Experiencing Spirituality/Religion as central to life and personal identity

(context)

Presence, proximity, priority

- Sensing the presence of S/R in all things (I can tell where it is)
 - Central within themselves -> Central to the experience of life
 - General->Specific
 - In the past->within the present moment->In the future
 - Intangible->Tangible
 - Lacking any sense of S/R-> a faint Sense S/R-> a sense of S/R -> a strong sense of S/R
 - Experiencing conducive circumstances
 - Suffering
 - Questioning
 - Feeling Lost
 - Desiring Personal Growth/Transformation
 - Desiring Connection with S/R

- Experiencing proximity to S/R
 - Feeling close to S/R -> Feeling distance from S/R
 - Desiring closeness to S/R

- Prioritizing connection with S/R
 - Needing S/R for growth
 - Focusing attention on S/R
 - Experiencing connection with S/R

Organizing the therapy process in relation to spirituality/religion

- Experiencing the therapy process as an extension of the spiritual growth process
- Relating to the therapist
 - Decentralizing the therapist
 - Seeing S/R working through the therapist
 - As a limited human being->As a trained expert
 - Experiencing the therapist in differing roles
 - Counselor->Witness->Guide
- Inviting S/R into the therapy process
 - In general
 - Seeking a Christian therapist -> Discussing S/R in therapy
 - In specific

- Spiritual practices -> spiritual dialog with therapist

Attending to spirituality and religion in the therapy process

- Addressing S/R in the therapy process
 - By the client -> by the therapist
- Addressing barriers to attention
 - Building trust with the therapist
 - Addressing distractions
 - Addressing conflicting priorities
- Looking for S/R
 - By the client -> by the therapist
- Encountering S/R

Receiving from spirituality and religion in the therapy process

- Prioritizing what is received
 - Connecting with S/R
 - Connecting with S/R as part of self identity
 - Circumstantial
 - General
 - Specific
 - Suffering->Comforted
 - Feeling lost->Direction
 - Questioning->Clarity
- Positioning to receive from S/R
 - Identifying places of need for S/R
- Waiting to receive from S/R
 - Short -> Long -> Painfully Long
- Acknowledging the mysterious (therapist as witness)
 - Expectant -> Exasperated
- Holding on to what is received
 - Connection with S/R -> Connection to S/R within Self

Member Check Notes

A grounded theory of how private practice Christian clients experience their spirituality and religion during their therapy process

One participant stated poignantly that, “my spirituality has me seeking my true healer, rather than my therapist.”

The spirituality and/or religion as a central feature of their life and identity. The centrality of S/R in the life and identity of the client sets important context for this theory. These participants described a therapeutic process that joined into an ongoing spiritual/religious growth process. While the professional training of the therapist and the therapeutic relationship remained important, the fundamental structure of the therapeutic process was oriented in relation to the ongoing spiritual/religious process.

These three categories are: S/R is the center of life and therefore, central to therapy as well (a) ***organizing the therapy process in relation to spirituality/religion***, Turn attention toward S/R (b) ***attending to spirituality/religion in the therapy process*** and the central category, (c) ***receiving from spirituality/religion in the therapy process***.

Furthermore, *experiencing connection with S/R* (a property of *receiving from S/R in the therapy process*) is a focal point

These results focus on the process that leads to *connection with S/R*.

The term “S/R” may be utilized in place of spiritual/religious. However, it should be noted that participants used a variety of words to relate to this central aspect of their life. These terms included, spirituality, religious, beliefs, faith, God, and Jesus.

Key descriptors of S/R experiences.

in the past, in the future, and within the present moment.

intangible to tangible.

weak to strong.

feeling close to S/R to feeling distance from S/R.

Experiencing Spirituality/Religion as Central to Life and Personal Identity

Experiencing S/R as central to life and personal identity is a contextual category that describes the surrounding conditions of participants’ experiences of S/R as a part of their therapeutic process.

“The world is spiritual/religious” and “I am a spiritual/religious person.”

Three subcategories of this contextual category describe the *presence*, *proximity*, and *priority* of S/R in the lives of these participants.

Sensing the presence of S/R in all things.

This subcategory describes spirituality/religion being present in all things. For these participants, there is not a distinction between experiences that 'do' or 'do not' contain elements of S/R.

Participants described conditions that were more conducive to sensing the presence of S/R. In turn, these conditions are more conducive for having an experience of S/R. These conducive experiences are properties of this subcategory and are *suffering*, *questioning*, *feeling lost*, *desiring personal growth/transformation*, and *desiring connection with spirituality/religion*.

Experiencing proximity to S/R.

While *presence* refers to experiencing a sense of where this central feature of their life is located, *experiencing proximity to S/R* refers to amount of distance a participant feels in relation to their S/R center. Participants all desired to feel close to their spirituality/religion because it is seen as the source of vital things they need.

Connection with S/R is the conduit for receiving the vital things that S/R provides to participants. In addition, participants describe S/R as being a central part of their own identity. Because of this, close proximity to S/R interacts closely with connecting deeper with one's self.

Prioritizing connection with S/R.

While connection is facilitated by *sensing presence* and *experiencing closeness*, it is a distinct aspect of their experience with S/R. Connection is defined as the participant having an internal experience of trust in their spiritual/religious center. This trust includes the ability to rely on their S/R for things vital to their growth process.

Prioritizing connection with S/R first enters the therapy process by participants seeking a counselor who shares this priority.

Prioritizing connection continues in the therapy process through focusing on S/R within their experiences.

Participants described an interactive process with the internal and external connection to S/R. Out there and in here.

Organizing the Therapy Process in Relation to Spirituality/Religion

Experiencing S/R as central to life and personal identity sets the stage for participants' experience of *organizing the therapy process in relation to spirituality/religion*. The therapy process is located within the context of a broader, ongoing S/R growth process. This category contains three properties which are *experiencing the therapy process as an extension of the spiritual/religious growth process*, *decentralizing the therapist*, and *experiencing the therapist in differing roles*.

Rather than spirituality/religion being added in to a therapeutic process, for these participants it is more accurate to conceptualize that the therapist is invited into the ongoing spiritual/religious process of growth.

Experiencing the therapy process as an extension of the spiritual growth process.

Decentralizing the therapist.

This property refers to the participants experiencing their therapist playing an important but limited role in their spiritual and religious growth process. The therapist is not seen as the source of growth but is experienced as one important access point for S/R into the ongoing growth and healing process of the participant.

By entering into this ongoing process, the therapist initiates a therapeutic process that works toward the priorities of the client. These priorities are formed by spirituality/religion in the life of the participant.

Experiencing the therapist in differing roles.

These roles operated in relation to S/R as central and *connection with S/R* as a high priority. As in all therapy, these participants experienced the therapist in the role of *counselor*.

However, the role of *counselor* was unique in that it was set in relation to S/R and was joined by two other distinct roles. These two roles were *witness* and *guide*.

Counselor. Participants described the role of counselor as the therapist acting to create a therapeutic relationship and to address topics that are typical of a therapeutic process. Examples of topics mentioned by participants were addressing emotions, relationship patterns, and family of origin dynamics.

Witness. Participants described the role of *witness* when the therapist is being attentive to the S/R layer of experiences during the therapy process. The therapist, through the role of *witness*, is invited to join the participant's process by witnessing the presence of S/R in the participant's experiences.

Guide. Participants describe the role of *guide* when the therapist takes an active, directive role in relation to the spiritual/religious experience of the participant. This role particularly occurs in instances when the participant is experiencing distance from S/R or is lacking a sense of the presence of S/R. In these instances, the therapist assumed the role of *guide* in order to help the client locate, move toward, and/or connect with their S/R.

Attending to Spirituality and Religion in the Therapy Process

An important practice of the spiritual life becomes an important action of the therapy process- paying attention.

Attending to S/R in the therapy process is defined as the internal and external actions that focus the client on the spiritual/religious layer of their experience.

Attending to S/R in the therapy process includes the properties *addressing S/R in the therapy process*, *addressing barriers to attention*, *looking for S/R*, and *encountering S/R*.

Addressing S/R is defined as actions by the client and/or therapist to involve spirituality/religion within the participant's process. *Addressing S/R* occurs by the participant stating their desire to prioritize S/R, asking questions related to S/R, and inviting the therapist to address S/R in the therapy process.

Addressing barriers to attention is defined as addressing elements of the client's experience that inhibit connection with S/R in the therapy process. Barriers which need to be addressed included *building trust with the therapist*, *addressing distractions*, and *addressing conflicting priorities*. For these participants, there is a priority to remove barriers that can inhibit experiencing connection with their S/R.

Looking for S/R. This property is defined as actions of the participant and/or counselor aimed at locating the spiritual/religious layer of the participant's experiences. The counselor is invited alongside the client in this process. This invitation includes supporting the client in *looking for S/R*.

Encountering spirituality/religion. This property is defined as experiences when the spiritual/religious layer of an experience becomes evident to the client. Encountering included the key dimensionality already noted. Therefore, experiences of *encountering spirituality/religion* ranged from tangible to intangible as well as experiences of encountering that ranged from feeling close to S/R or feeling far from S/R.

Receiving from Spirituality and Religion in the Therapy Process

Receiving from S/R is the central category of this theory and is based on S/R being experienced as the source of valuable and necessary elements of the client's ongoing growth process. Receiving from S/R is therefore defined as the client being able to access valuable and necessary elements for their growth process during therapy. The properties of *receiving from S/R* included *prioritizing what is received*, *positioning to receive from S/R*, *waiting to receive from S/R*, *acknowledging the mysterious*, and *connecting with S/R*.

Prioritizing what is received. Participants experienced prioritizing what is received from S/R during therapy. These participants receive a variety of things from their S/R during their therapy process. All of these things are valuable to the participant. However, the most valuable thing to receive is experiencing connection with S/R. Because connection with S/R is experienced as the highest priority for these participants, receiving connection in therapy is prioritized more than

receiving other things. For these participants, receiving from spirituality/religion in the midst of these experiences is good, but receiving spirituality/religion itself is better.

For these participants, a higher priority is connecting with S/R within themselves.

Positioning to receive from S/R. This property refers to participants orienting themselves toward their spirituality/religion in order to experience the aspects of their process which originate in their spirituality/religion.

By *looking for S/R* together, the client and therapist locate places in the process in need of *receiving from S/R*.

It is also important to note that *receiving from S/R* can happen at any time for these participants. However, in general, receiving from S/R takes place when the participant is *sensing the presence of S/R* and is feeling close in proximity to S/R. However, instances in which the participant experiences *receiving from S/R* apart from these conditions will often lead to the creation of these conditions. Meaning that *receiving from S/R* will increase the sense of presence of S/R and draw the participant closer to spirituality/religion.

Waiting to receive from S/R. Vital things that these participants seek in their personal growth process are seen as originating from spirituality/religion. In addition, these participants do not experience themselves as being in control of when and how receiving these things takes place. This property describes the participant's experience of reliance on their S/R for vital things they need in their therapy process.

Acknowledging the mysterious. An important aspect of the experience of receiving is *acknowledging the mysterious*. This property is defined as the shared understanding between the client and counselor that spiritual/religious experiences can be pursued and facilitated but not controlled. Because of the dependence that comes with relying on spirituality/religion, there is mystery in how, when, and where connection will be experienced and receiving will take place.

Connecting with S/R. This property is defined as the participant having an experience of trust in their spiritual/religious center. This trust includes the ability to rely on their S/R for things vital to their growth process. This property directly follows the property, *acknowledging the mysterious*. This placement is intentional because clients describe the actual experience of *connecting with S/R* as being mysterious and, at times, difficult to describe.

Connecting with S/R is a key aspect of how participants experience *receiving from S/R*. Connecting is valuable in and of itself because it a demonstration of this

valuable and important aspect of life for these participants. However, connection also serves as a conduit for *receiving from S/R during the therapy process*.

Member Check Responses

Participant 7606001

Does this theory accurately capture your experience of S/R during your therapy process?

From my perspective, your theory seems quite accurate. I appreciate the way you organized the data to break down the role of S/R and the role of the therapist. It actually helps me to better understand the process I have experienced. Since my therapy has been largely around PTSD from abuse from multiple abusers throughout my life, the role of therapist as counselor was quite significant at first, but changed to be more of guide and witness as I was able to get back into my body to be able to trust both my therapist and God in the healing process. From this grounded place, I was able to identify what I most needed and receive from the Spirit through what was offered by my therapist as witness and guide.

In what ways does it capture your experience (please feel free to offer descriptive thoughts)?

As I explained above, your theory captures the different elements of my experience with therapy as an integrated one with S/R. For me, what I find significant is the transformation of my needs in the journey with my therapist and his changing roles...from primarily counselor to witness and guide as I was able to more clearly define and experience my spiritual center. With my counselor being a man, and my trauma being inflicted by men, building trust with him was necessary for me to receive anything he may have had to offer later as witness and guide.

How do you know when you are experiencing connection with your S/R? And, what does this connection mean to you?

My healing journey has been one of spiritual formation. Trauma and brokenness are all part of living in a sinful world and are inescapable. Learning to experience God meant that I had to surrender to the pain and grief and stop trying to be my own God. I wasn't very good at it. :) My "go to" was to think through every possible outcome to make-believe scenarios so that I wouldn't be wounded or surprised again and that I would somehow be prepared to handle any possible future scenario. This left me disconnected from my body where the Spirit dwells. In this state of disintegration, I was unable to experience connection with S/R. Through therapy and other intentional work, I know I am experiencing connection

when I am present to what I am sensing in my body: emotions, gut feelings, tangible sensations, etc. When I am able to surrender to fear and anxiety, acknowledge it, and offer kindness to the parts of me that are afraid, I am embodying the comfort that the Spirit is offering me all the time. It sounds like my own voice in a way, but it is a new voice that is being filtered through my spiritual center.

When I am able to see beauty and rest in it and be grateful for it in the midst of great pain, I am experiencing connection with S/R.

When I feel that my body is within my soul rather than my soul being within my body, I know I am experiencing connection.

What other feedback or thoughts would you like to offer?

Thank you for choosing me to participate in this study! It has been a learning experience for me in being able to articulate my journey. It seems this research could become a good book!

Is there anything new that stood out to you that you would like to share?

Perhaps this is a question for another study, but I wonder what the balance of counselor, guide, and witness would be over time and what that looks like for individuals in therapy for different things.

Participant 7606005

Does this theory accurately capture your experience of S/R during your therapy process?

Overall I would say this theory captures many elements of my experience of S/R during my therapy process. I'll list out the similarities and differences in more detail in the following section.

In what ways does it capture your experience (please feel free to offer descriptive thoughts)?

The ideas presented in the "context", "organization", and "attention" sections are very similar to my experience. Both my therapist and I also agree with all the major points of the "receive" section, such as

acknowledging that there are certain things I need which only S/R can provide, understanding that I will have to wait for some of these things and that the process is mysterious, etc. I think the reason that I hesitate to say that this fully captures my experience is that the bulk of my therapy discussed my problems from a psychological and emotional perspective and S/R was rarely brought into this. S/R was usually talked about when I would specifically bring it up by saying something like “I feel like I haven’t been prioritizing God in my life lately”. In these moments I felt like my therapist would play the role of “witness” and “guide”. Rarely would we be talking about a non-S/R issue like struggles in interpersonal relationships, struggles with confidence, low self-esteem, etc. and then transition into discussing how S/R might be able to assist in the healing process. From the presentation it sounds like some clients experienced S/R as explicitly central to their healing process. I found S/R to be central in the sense that both my therapist and I are believers and because of that, we ultimately believe that God is central to everything, but we primarily discussed psychological solutions to my problems rather than spiritual ones and most of my hopes for recovery were grounded in psychology. Anyway, I know in the beginning of the video you mentioned that the aim of the research was to understand how S/R is experienced in therapy and it has less to do with the exact topics discussed by the therapist and client so I hope my above comments aren’t going down a needless rabbit hole, but I thought they might help clarify my experiences..

How do you know when you are experiencing connection with your S/R? And, what does this connection mean to you?

For me it’s difficult to identify connection with my S/R. My connection is usually experienced over longer periods of time like days and weeks rather than being an intense moment of connection that lasts a few minutes or an hour. During periods where I feel more connected to my S/R my resting mind tends to think about God and spiritual things more frequently and I start to experience the world through a more spiritual lense. During these times I’m more willing to bring God into my everyday experiences - thanking Him for things I’m grateful for throughout the day, and asking Him for help with problems and things I’m struggling with. On the flip side, when I’m feeling disconnected from my S/R I’ll go days or weeks without even thinking about God and life feels very secular.

What other feedback or thoughts would you like to offer?

The above sections cover the majority of my thoughts and feedback.

Is there anything new that stood out to you that you would like to share?

The above sections cover the majority of my thoughts and feedback.

Participant 7606007

Does this theory accurately capture your experience of S/R during your therapy process?

Mostly yes. I would say, for me, that your first underlying statement: “my spirituality has me seeking my true healer, rather than my therapist” seemed at first to be too extreme and understated the importance of my therapist. In my case, I felt very dead spiritually, dead to God. I thought this was wrong and scary and so I actually sought out a therapist (first) to help work through that. So I guess, ultimately the statement is correct – it just struck me as incomplete and not nuanced enough.

30 minutes later – after reading the presentation and results section, I get better what you are saying and it is true. Just the quote was a little too blunt and not nuanced for me, personally. IMHO – leave it as it is. It probably gets the point across.

Otherwise, I liked your description of things.

In what ways does it capture your experience (please feel free to offer descriptive thoughts)?

How do you know when you are experiencing connection with your S/R? And, what does this connection mean to you?

In a lot of ways, I am still dead to God, less than before, and I understand it better and realize the reasons why and that this is not radically unusual. I still don't sing in church, and haven't since my daughter's death.

Ps 34

I am benumbed and badly crushed;

I groan because of the agitation of my heart.

My heart throbs, my strength fails me;

And the light of my eyes, even that has gone from me.

But I, like a deaf man, do not hear;

And I am like a mute man who does not open his mouth.

Yes, I am like a man who does not hear,

And in whose mouth are no arguments.

In your section on “Receive”. Some parts of this resonated with me. Its not

that we are looking for a fix or solution in grief (my case), but that we want to sit in the mystery and pain with someone, and just understand it better.

What other feedback or thoughts would you like to offer?

Thanks for doing this.
I would be interested in reading a copy of the dissertation. I am an academic and do qualitative methods research and would be interested in how you put this together finally.

Is there anything new that stood out to you that you would like to share?

Just read the "Final Hierarchy". I think I read better than I listen to the video. This is excellent. It really captures my experience.

Participant 7606008

Does this theory accurately capture your experience of S/R during your therapy process?

Yes. I think that the three categories that are used to describe the therapy process adequately capture my experience. I think the last category, receiving from spirituality/religion in the therapy process is most accurately captures my therapy process as a whole.

In what ways does it capture your experience (please feel free to offer descriptive thoughts)?

I resonate with the last category because I think that therapy has provided me with an intentional space to experience spirituality and religion with someone who often acts as a guide and is able to see it when I am unable to.

How do you know when you are experiencing connection with your S/R?
And, what does this connection mean to you?

I'm often able to notice the presence of S/R after my therapist points out a situation where God's presence may have been evident and invites me to consider whether or not that was the case. I don't normally become aware of a connection I may have had until after the fact when I process it with them. But I'm able to know that I was having a connection, or even consider that I may have been, because often a connection with S/R for me can look like being able to see something clearer or having a moment when I experience a truth that challenges something I've struggled with and allows me to see it in a different light that otherwise was impossible for me to see.

What other feedback or thoughts would you like to offer?

Overall, I think the presence of S/R is an important element to the therapy process. I think it allows me to get closer to God in deeper ways, with the guidance of someone else, that otherwise might not be possible.

Is there anything new that stood out to you that you would like to share?

Participant 7606009

Does this theory accurately capture your experience of S/R during your therapy process?

I agreed with everything that you said, and it was an accurate description of my experience of S/R in therapy. I found it interesting that the S/R was already a central part, setting the stage for being open to the attention of the therapist and receiving from God.

In what ways does it capture your experience (please feel free to offer descriptive thoughts)?

*Can the therapist hold my experience of how I see the world and how I see myself as a person
 *Therapist as a guide...this concept resonated with my experience
 * Yes!! "need to receive"..."waiting to receive"so much of therapy for me was waiting. I came in for a quick fix, but in reality it was an almost three year journey. God is not on my time schedule, rather He is in the waiting.

How do you know when you are experiencing connection with your S/R? And, what does this connection mean to you?

Little affirmations: A song, a moment of an unexpected memory/reminder of how He has been faithful in the past, a sudden calmness of spirit rather than anxiety, a small sign or reminder of His presence (sunset, unexpected kindness, a found penny, etc)
 Big affirmations: Peace in my heart, answered prayers, nearness through a trying circumstance, a verse
 This connection means He loves me, He sees me, He knows me....I'm not in this alone. He is big enough, powerful enough, and righteous enough. He is enough, so I am free to just be the "me" He created.

These connections often require me to pay attention (just as the therapist

role played paying attention) in order to receive....does this make sense???

What other feedback or thoughts would you like to offer?

I tried to follow the components of the theory, but a diagram of the theory might be helpful??? I looked at the hierarchy paper...maybe it's too complex or doesn't lend itself to a diagram??

As I understood it S/R is a central part of the persons (in the focus group) coming into therapy. Once in therapy organization leads to attention and receiving? Seems there is some overlap in attention and receivingor is it that once we pay attention, then we can receive and connect?

Outline I gathered from the video (then holy cow I opened the hierarchy):
S/R Central- Sets the stage for view of world and self- Presence, proximity, priority

Organization-Training of therapist not primary, rather can they hold my experience

- Counselor
- Witness- Looking for S/R
- Guide- Invites client to move toward S/R

↓

Paying Attention to S/R

- Talking
- Looking
- Encountering S/R

Center of the theory: Receive S/R (involving the attention)

- connection with God
- mystery and waiting involved
- some parts may be one way
- Priority

Is there anything new that stood out to you that you would like to share?

I found the information gathered about receiving fascinating. Yes, sometimes the receiving will just be one way; God giving to us. The truth is, He will always out give us. I think this is validated in the scriptures. Or how about when you talked about the mystery of the receiving; more than once the mystery of the Gospel is described. God is intentional about not

revealing His whole self to us, we will not fully understand Him on this side of glory. Jesus positioned Himself quite often to receive from God. He would quiet Himself away to pray, rest and receive. Lastly, the waiting in receiving makes me think of Mary and Martha having to wait to receive Lazarus' healing. His timing is not our timing.

Your "receiving" findings have the fingerprints of God's truth found in His Word. This may help to further validate that your findings are consistent with God's character as presented in the scriptures??

Participant 7606010

Does this theory accurately capture your experience of S/R during your therapy process?

I think this theory was an accurate representation of what my experience was during therapy. I feel you captured the essence of what S/R in therapy should be, and that is how I truly experienced it myself.

In what ways does it capture your experience (please feel free to offer descriptive thoughts)?

I feel it captured the essence of my experience in describing how the therapist served as a vessel for drawing me closer to God. I particularly appreciated the figures that represented the image of the therapist serving on the outer edge of the connection between the individual and God, yet still a participant in that process.

How do you know when you are experiencing connection with your S/R? And, what does this connection mean to you?

I know when I'm experiencing connection with my S/R when I have thoughts or feelings that are not my normal reactions or perspectives of certain situations. This is important to me because it grounds me in the Holy Spirit, recognizing that it isn't me making those sound judgments or decisions, or thinking clearly. But rather, it is God, through His Spirit, directing me. Otherwise, my reaction or perspective would be very human: reacting out of anger, out of revenge, lack of self-control, sarcasm.

What other feedback or thoughts would you like to offer?

I think this study really serves not only as an accurate depiction of how I encountered S/R in my therapy and experience and growth, but also in providing a helpful model of how therapists can incorporate S/R in a

healthy way and within appropriate boundaries/what their role(s) should be in that process.

Is there anything new that stood out to you that you would like to share?

No

Appendix X

Article Evaluation for Chapter 3

Focus of Research		
	*Contact between any coder and participants (yes or no)	Yes- Stated
	*Nature of contact (none, telephone, or face-to-face)	Yes
	*Proportion of coders who have such contact with at least one participant	Yes- 100%
	*Data available to all coders (transcripts or other written, audiotape, videotape, direct observation or interaction)	Yes- Do I need to state this?
	*Average time spent with each participant	50-60 minutes
Setting		
	*Interactions with or observation of participants took place in a naturalistic setting, defined as a real world setting in which the behaviors of interest might normally be expected to occur.	No.
Researcher Role		
	*Use of auditors as a check on the findings of the main coders	Yes.
	*Written reflections on the authors' biases in the published article	Yes.
	*Explicit discussion of the desirability of minimizing or eliminating the effects of researcher bias	Yes.
Reporting Findings		
	*Presentation of free-standing quotations (at least one sentence in length) from participants	Yes.
	*Presentation of extended quotations (at least five lines in length)	Yes.
	*Inclusion of identifiers with the quotations	No- participants are de-identified. Including the identification of the participant and the identification of the counselor by name.

Presentational Rigor		
Introductory Section		
	^Statement of the problem	Yes. "Because of the underrepresentation..."
	^Statement that establishes the significance of the problem	Yes. Links to culturally competent practice
Presentation of the Purpose, Central Research Question, and Rationale for a Qualitative Approach		
	^Purpose Presented	Yes- Explicit
	^Presentation of Central Research Questions	Yes- Explicit
	^Argument for applicability of qualitative research	Yes- Explicit
Description of Analysis Approach and Methods		
	^Researchers' knowledge of the methods and analytic process used with the selected approach	Researcher was a doctoral student working under the advisement of an experienced qualitative researcher particularly familiar with grounded theory methodology.
	^Includes essential technical terminology	Yes. Grounded theory, saturation, central research question, categories, properties, dimensions, etc...
	^Authoritative authors cited?	Yes- Corbin & Strauss, Patton, Creswell
	^Discussion of Sampling Methods	Yes.
	^Description of how data collection and analysis interact	Yes.
	^Data Collection Methods and Procedures are Presented	Yes.
	^Inclusion of Interview Questions	Yes- 1 st and 2 nd round questions
	^Rationale for Inclusion of Questions	Yes.
	^Questions are consistent with approach?	Yes.
Presentation of Findings		
	^Consistent with Employed Approach?	Yes.
	^Includes quotations from Participants?	Yes. Several including at least one long (5 lines or longer)
The Discussion Section		
	^Findings are compared and contrasted with current theoretical	Yes

	and research literature	
	^Limitations are in qualitative terms?	Yes
	^Need to discuss implications for targeted field.	Yes- Counselor educators

**Hoyt and Bhati*

^Kline