



CPSC Notes

COUNCIL FOR PASTORAL AND SPIRITUAL COUNSELLORS

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A message of hope eternal

Dear Affiliates,

Easter is one of the central holidays in Christianity and represents a time of joy and renewed hope as it honours the resurrection of Jesus Christ three days after his crucifixion. In the early years of the church, Easter was not celebrated because of the persecution of the church.

The Jewish Christian continued to celebrate the Passover viewing Christ as the true Paschal lamb, the spotless lamb of God (1 Cor 5:7). The death of the Paschal lamb freed humankind from the bondage of sin. As the persecution of the church diminished, the church began to celebrate Easter.

Easter is a time of commemoration of the complete and powerful sacrifice of Jesus that set us free from sins and heal our brokenness. In Isaiah 53:4-7 we read that Jesus *"took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows... He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed."*

Not only did Jesus take the punishment for the world's sin upon himself, but his death and resurrection was a victorious event, victorious over death and hell. His wounds opened a pathway to healing from our brokenness and sorrows, and his resurrection destroyed the sting of death. This victory is shared by all who believe in Jesus.

How does this apply to our everyday life and struggles? Firstly, it gives us hope in a life after death. We are empowered to transcend current circumstances and sorrows by focusing on the resurrection of Jesus and the hope we have in an everlasting life. Paul directed our gaze to a new dimension of existence, that is, eternity.



In 2 Cor 4: 17 he stated: *"For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all."* Even when our troubles do not feel light or brief, we will be encouraged if we focus on the hope we have in the resurrection of Jesus, and we will strive for a better outcome than our circumstances dictate.

Secondly, sharing in the suffering and death of Jesus brings comfort and inner peace. Jesus has been on a journey of rejection, exclusion, unfair treatment, loss,

and suffering before us, and knows how much we need inner strength to make the right choices and bear our cross.

He has unmeasurable compassion and empathy for us and through his Spirit will comfort, guide, and help us. The Holy Spirit is the Comforter, but also our Advocate that pleads for us. We are not crushed or without hope, because the sacrificial system of God that allowed his Son to pay for our sins and heal our wounds, provides immense hope.

This is such a wonderful and hopeful message! **Easter is a joyful time in which Christian communities should focus on their victory over sin.** Christians can celebrate the victory by means of fasting and praying, doing acts of kindness, and showing compassion to others.

I pray that you will celebrate Easter Sunday this month by focusing your hearts and minds on the power of Jesus' death on the cross and his resurrection, and actively apply the meaning of his victory to your life and share it with others.

Have a blessed Easter!

Prof Nicolene Joubert
Chairperson: CPSC ■



Boundaries (Part 25)

By Dr Hanlie Meyer, Counselling Psychologist in private practice and CPSC affiliate

The work of Townsend and Cloud, *Boundaries with Kids* (2002), remains a wonderful resource to give practical guidelines on setting boundaries with our children. These guidelines are founded on Biblical truths and can be adjusted so that they can be applied to all the different developmental stages our children go through.

The authors present ten laws to use as guiding lights for parents. We have already discussed the first three laws: the law of sowing and reaping, the law of responsibility and the law of power.

Today we focus on the fourth law.

The law of respect

At the heart of this law is the notion that I am not the only one that matters. Our children are born self-centred. This is necessary, as they cannot take care of themselves. They need to be persistent in the communication of their needs, otherwise parents will not know that they need something! This seems such a stupid remark to make, but it is so important to remember that they need to **develop** the skill to care about other peoples' needs, choices and feelings.

However, if they do not experience that they are heard, that their needs, feelings, and choices are not heard and respected, they battle to learn a regard for other people.



On the other hand, if they are taught that they are indeed the centre of the universe for their parents, they might grow up making inordinate demands on other peoples' time, attention, love, and money. They learn to project



their dissatisfaction on other peoples' inability or unwillingness to love and support them.

Parents' self-respect is also cardinal in the learning process for children. The way in which parents refer to themselves, take care of their bodies and their own personal needs and deal with their own feelings, serves as model for children.

This principle of modelling is well-known, and we have discussed it numerous times in the previous articles. Yet it cannot be overemphasized. When parents do not have respect for themselves because they are poor, over-weight, not well-educated or unemployed, it conveys the wrong message.

The message conveyed in this way is that respect is linked to earthly attributes, performance, success, public image, and social standing. This means respect is earned and can be lost! It depends on how well I perform, or how well I can hide my shortcomings, faults, and sin.

Our children need to develop the skill to care about other peoples' needs, choices and feelings

The flipside is also true: when parents have respect for themselves because of any external factor, it is not self-respect, but pride. This again will most probably cause pride, shame, fear, anxiety, or performance orientation in their children.

This does not imply that a child should not receive acknowledgment for a job well done, a good performance in sport, art, etc. However, there is a difference between acknowledgement and validation of worthiness as a result of the performance.

According to the Word of God, we need to act like Jesus did and He clearly associated with the lowly, sick, powerless – everybody in need, that is. As name-bearers and image-bearers of God, all people are equal.

Our feelings, thoughts, attitudes and resulting behaviour towards all people thus need to reflect Jesus. This means that I always respect everybody, as it reflects who I am in Christ. For the Christian there is no room to say "I will not greet person A again until she greets me..."

The principles of respect

A very valid point that Cloud and Townsend (2002, p75) make, is that **in order for children to learn to respect the**

boundaries of others – which will make it easier for them to get on with other people – **they need to learn a few basic principles:**

- To not be hurtful to others.
- To respect the “no” of others without punishing them or resenting them.
- To respect limits in general.
- To relish others’ separateness.
- To feel sad instead of mad when others’ boundaries prevent them from getting what they want.

True humility – not inferiority – will make it possible to view someone else with empathy, forgive the person for setting an uncomfortable boundary and overcome the discomfort and disrespect caused by the other.

How will a child learn this? Parents who can listen with empathy to a child’s response to others’ behaviour or attitude towards them which caused temporary disrespect, provides the starting point. To feel heard and validated even when the child might have a wrong perspective, opens the way for more communication and a chance to change the perspective and to forgive.

Only when someone feels understood and heard, will they become open to correction. If the child was in the wrong, she will now be open to see things in a different way. Empathy helps to calm the fight-flight response and restore the ability to think and argue properly.

However, if the child is not willing to respond appropriately in terms of apology, repentance, corrected attitude and behaviour, consequences must be implemented.

Children can be very opinionated and often feel that they know more than their parents and subsequently act disrespectful towards the parents. They also do not like to have limits and boundaries placed on them – all of us are

To feel heard and validated opens the way for more communication and a chance to change the perspective and to forgive.

familiar with the typical “You don’t care”, “You do not understand” or worse – a child abusing a parent verbally or even physically. Children will protest boundaries or limits especially when it affects their devices, their freedom to go out and do what they want – the examples are endless.

Parents cannot win the argument. To be caught up in an argument is to cause endless frustration and conflict. There is no point in defending the limit or punishing the protest. The limit is a reality. The child may not like it, or even accept it. That is when parents must be consistent and not fragile themselves.

So many parents fear conflict because of their own childhood hurts or experiences of disrespect by parents and other people. They tend to doubt their own judgment. Wise counsel can be very helpful in these situations.

One aspect where children often feel disrespected is when parents do not respect the children’s privacy and space. This is also linked to the aspect of separateness.

Often especially mothers, find it difficult to be separate from their children. It is as if their whole worthiness is linked to being merged with their children’s lives. This is one of the most common complaints from young married couples in my practice – that one parent or set of parents cannot allow the couple a life of their own and management of their home the way they want to.

One of the most difficult things for parents when children challenge them, is to stay in control of themselves. Emotions flare up and parents need to learn to distance themselves from the child’s emotions and retain their equilibrium through the power of the Holy Spirit and lots of practice! The parent may express hurt and being upset, but not act out. The child must learn that her attitudes, words, and behaviour hurt others.

We need to heed Jesus’ instruction that we need to do unto others as we want them to do unto us.

To show respect even to those who are the most disrespecting, is not a sign of weakness, but of Christlikeness. Part of this is also not to associate with those who do not respect people and who remain disrespecting.

The most respectful behaviour sometimes is not to allow someone entry into our lives as that might actually cause us to act untrue to who Jesus in us is. ■



Being too nice, too agreeable

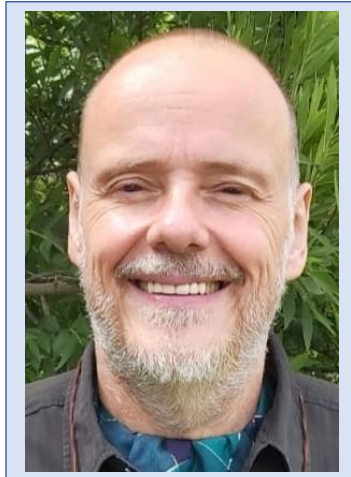
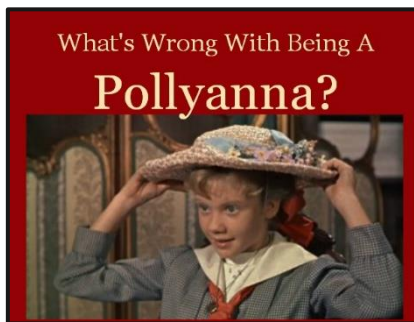
By Dr Heinrich Lottering

A very strong cultural undercurrent in Christian communities in the post-modern age is that the benchmark of a true Christian lifestyle has drastically changed. It shifted from a moral, God-honouring and Bible-based world view in the pursuit of a holy daily lifestyle, to being an agreeable and nice person who sees no sin, hears no wrong and never speaks in correction or admonishment.

Being an accommodating and go-with-the-flow Christian is not only contrary to the New Testament dogma, but also slowly eats away at a believer's bastion of faith and dedication, not to mention at one's emotional wellbeing.

Firstly, we must acknowledge that being agreeable to a healthy extent is a positive trait. Agreeable individuals are often empathetic, patient, and caring – which are some of the most beautiful building blocks of a Christian personality. Sadly, underlying to these seemingly gentle qualities when they are present in excess, is often a lack of self-worth, social anxiety, fear of rejection and indecision in one's daily life.

Researchers have found that in general, very accommodating individuals are often more judgemental in their thought patterns than those who exhibit less social compliance – this notion that agreeableness and unconditional acceptance often is a social façade, is called the **Pollyanna Myth**. Furthermore, it was found that very amiable people often feel regret and bitterness to the individuals or groups they are a part of, where acceptance is dependent on their subservient demeanour.



Counteracting

Effective strategies to push back excessive agreeableness, without becoming outright confrontational and rude, include the following:

1. Distinguish the position from the person. It is so important to comprehend that saying no to someone or disagreeing with someone is not an attack or disapproval of them as an individual, or their character.
2. Back up your opinion with facts. To reduce social anxiety and fear of being labelled disagreeable, arm yourself with facts regarding social or community topics.

3. Think analytically instead of purely emotionally. Resist the desire to comment on topics on which you have emotional opinions devoid of facts.

4. Carefully select your company. It is vital for individuals with gentle and accommodating personalities to carefully choose their company. Make sure that you avoid overly dominating or abusive characters.

5. Find decisive or alternative words for NO. The word NO is often associated with disregard for another's request for help, being perceived as selfish or unkind.

Hence to reduce social anxiety of offence, replace it with simple statements like "I have already planned my schedule for tomorrow and am not free."

6. Say less in the company of dominating or selfish people. If you lack the social skills to kindly turn down another person, simply move to the back and withdraw from the conversation.

In order to succeed in being a kind and well-adjusted individual in society, start with accepting the risk that one may displease others by the candid expression of one's true self. Successful charm depends on the secure sense that you can survive social failure... you must reconcile yourself with the risk of not making friends to be able to make a true friend.

Finally, it is very important for Christians to remember that having a social voice is so essential in living up to our calling of teaching and admonishing one another in the pursuit of a holy and fruit-bearing lifestyle.

"But exhort one another every day, while it is called 'Today,' that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin" - Hebrews 3:13.

"...that we may be no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error; but speaking truth in love, may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, even Christ" - Ephesians 4:14-15

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Pastoral narrative therapy practices and grief counselling, part 2

By Natasha Bonow

Whether you work in a church or in private practice, pastoral counsellors are no strangers to grief counselling.

I believe a pastoral narrative therapy approach to grief counselling in particular, could be a helpful way of being with people as they work through their experiences, trying to find meaning and a hope-filled way forward.



For an understanding of why narrative therapy could be helpful in a pastoral context, you are welcome to refer to Part 1 of this series.

In this section, I would like to continue with exploring how a narrative therapy approach allows for 'thickened healing spaces', where there is no rush or specific time frame needed to work through a person's loss.

Thin healing spaces

Traditionally, counsellors were taught to think of a "rigid trajectory" of grief, relying on a phase or stage model to conceptualize the grieving process (e.g. Kubler-Ross' theory) (Hedtke, 2002) (Doughty, Wissel, & Glorfield, 2011).

While working this way may have been helpful for some, a stage-approach to grief and bereavement has the potential to establish stories of brokenness, perhaps causing people to think that certain emotions must be present for a certain period of time, in prescribed ways, and if those feelings linger or do not exist, they may feel they might not have grieved 'properly' (Hedtke, 2002).

I have come to understand these results could create a 'thin healing space'. Who can say what a grieving process should look like? If narrative therapy has taught me anything, it is not to make assumptions of any kind - we can't assume everyone will deal with grief and bereavement in the same way (Louw, 2021)(i4cc, 2019).

To its discredit, society is programmed to use "dismembering language" toward those grieving with phrases like "How are you accepting the reality of your loss?", or "Time will heal". While appearing compassionate, these words may prescribe to the bereaved how they should be feeling, or they project emotions that the comforter may be experiencing that are not necessarily true for the person grieving (Hedtke, 2002). This language is in contrast to "remembering language" that promotes and builds a person's legacy (2002).

Generally, society struggles to know how to talk with a person who experienced loss. We are left wondering, for example, whether we should talk about the deceased,

and if so, how. If we had to mention the recent trauma, would that make the person feel uncomfortable? In some cases, even remembering and talking about the person who passed away, or recalling the particular incident years later, is almost a taboo subject.

Another aspect of grief and bereavement that the pandemic made clearer to me is the timeline we put on the arrangements that follow after losing a loved one.

For example, society puts pressure on the family to organize memorial services or a funeral within a short space of time of the person's passing. In some cases, the bereaved family can't even remember the service a year later, for example, because their brains were actually not able to cope with the trauma at that specific time (Raath, 2022). Narrative therapy would invite us to question these taken-for-granted practices.

There are countless ways our "go-to" counselling methods and societal discourses fall short when it comes to dealing with grief and bereavement. I think narrative therapy offers us an opportunity for "thickened healing spaces".

Thickened healing spaces

God made us all uniquely and, as pastoral counsellors, we need to remember that everyone experiences events and finds meaning in different ways. Death is a biological and natural occurrence, and how we make sense of our experiences is shaped by the discourses and values we hold to (Hedtke, 2002) (Doughty, Wissel, & Glorfield 2011).

Losses are often a result of trauma. A few examples of trauma preceding grief could be losing a job, the breakdown in a relationship, the death of a loved one or being diagnosed with an illness. Trauma can come in many shapes and sizes and narrative therapy helps us recognise that trauma can mean different things to different people. There is much research available on how our brains are affected by trauma – simply put, we may enter a fight, flight, freeze or fawn response (Raath, 2022).

If we fail to give voice to trauma, Michael White explains, we build negative conclusions about ourselves based on our experience (2006). When these conclusions we form about ourselves are escalated, they could lead to a sense of shame, vulnerability, hopelessness, futility, etc. (White, 2006). A person in the grieving process may even disregard certain memories if responses were ridiculed, diminished, or not affirmed (Denbrough, 2014). This is

true for children, just as much as it is for adults (White, 2006).

Bringing it all together

Narrative therapy invites us to listen to people's experiences and take note of what they give value to.



When we listen to how individuals describe their purpose, knowledge, or skills they have, and how social, relational, and cultural responses affected their experience,

we can gain much information (White, 2006).

Narrative practices include listening for the absent but implicit, and taking note of power discourses that enter people's stories - this is known as the practice of double listening (White, 2006) (Denborough, Freedman, & White, 2008; White 2006a). I believe that if we want to help those with whom we have conversations with, we need to support them in giving voice to their experiences in a way that is meaningful to them (White, 2006).

Furthermore, narrative therapy lends itself to being culturally diverse, which is something we need to be aware of, especially in pastoral contexts. By remaining curious and positioning the client as the expert in their story, we merely facilitate the process as we allow them to tell their story, express emotions and respond in ways they feel comfortable with and that are culturally appropriate for them (Morgan 2000) (Freedman & Combs 1996).

Beaudoin, standing on other narrative therapists' shoulders, reminds us that through narrative therapy we want to engage people in a process that distances them from their experience of problems in such a way that they can examine, reflect, and deconstruct the problem's influence over their lives (Beaudoin, 2005). Pastoral counsellors have the privilege of helping those we are in conversation with, to scaffold new perspectives and find an alternative story (Beaudoin, 2005).

Through many methods such as remembering practices, documenting, legacy work, letter writing and poetry, we can guide those we journey with to thicken their story in the midst of their pain (Hedtke, 2002) (Denborough, 2014) (Doughty, Wissel, & Glorfield, 2011) (Sadler-Gerhardt & Hollenbach, 2011) (Morgan 2000).

I will elaborate on these methods in part 3 of this series.

Pastoral counsellors have the privilege of helping those we are in conversation with, to scaffold new perspectives and find an alternative story

Narrative therapy opens up possibilities of hope for the person seeking help. Perhaps you would like to consider using some of these practices to thicken the stories of those you counsel.

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Her training includes a Bachelor of Theology (Honours), training in biblical counselling, advanced certificate in Christian counselling, certificate in introduction and advanced pastoral narrative therapy, training in Play Based Intervention and practical counselling training.

Her scope of practice includes working with the child client, adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse, crisis management, trauma, experiences of loss and grief, as well as addiction and substance abuse. She offers online counselling in all these areas. She has 17 years' experience of working with children, teenagers, and young adults in a variety of settings. ■

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Diverse approaches to counselling

By Past Charlotte Meintjes

Part of my counselling method involves incorporating poetry as a therapeutic tool. I believe that poetry can be a powerful medium for self-expression and healing and that there are different ways in which counselling can be approached. To illustrate this, I would like to share one of my poems with you titled "A Counsellor with scars".

This poem delves into the essence of effective counselling and the importance of a counsellor's personal experiences. It emphasizes that a counsellor who has endured his/her own wounds and battles, and who has overcome the challenges brought on by these experiences, can truly guide and help others to heal.

The poem highlights the significance of a counsellor's scars, representing the struggles they have faced and overcome. These scars serve as a source of wisdom and empathy, enabling the counsellor to understand and relate to the pain and challenges of their clients.

The poem encourages individuals seeking counselling to look for a counsellor who has stories to share, someone who has walked a



similar path, and someone who can provide genuine empathy and understanding. It emphasizes the value of a counsellor's personal experiences in fostering growth, wisdom, and effective support.

Overall, the poem conveys the message that finding a counsellor with scars, someone who has faced their own hardships, can be profoundly beneficial for those in need of guidance and healing.

About the author

Pastor Charlotte Meintjes is the visionary behind two significant initiatives: "The 4th of October International Prayer Day of Hope" and Poems of Hope. In addition to her roles as founder and CEO, she is a Certified Life Coach. Pastor Charlotte's exceptional dedication and talent were recognized in 2022 when she received the prestigious International Best Student award for both individual and group assignments. Furthermore, she is a registered DHA Marriage Officiant.

Charlotte has authored more than twenty-three books, with her latest work, *A World of Hope*: "Embark on a remarkable journey of hope as we delve into the realm of the miraculous and embrace the divine intervention of the Holy Spirit. In this book, we come together to sow seeds of faith, healing, restoration, and hope, through the art of poetry and testimonies for our world is in desperate need of these virtues. Should anyone be interested in this digital copy they are more than welcome to contact me."

Pastor Charlotte's belief in the power of writing goes beyond it being a mere act. For her, it is a means of creating a lasting impact on others.

Her guiding verse, Ephesians 2:8-9, reminds her that salvation is a gift of God's grace through faith, not something earned through works. This verse serves as a reminder that no one should boast, but instead, humbly embrace the gift of salvation.

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A Counsellor with scars

To truly guide and heal
A counsellor must reveal
The wounds they've endured
The battles they've conquered

Through their own scars
They've learned to overcome
The pain that cut deep
Like a sharp and relentless drum

A counsellor with wounds
Understands your strife
They won't judge or accuse
For they've lived a similar life

Seek out a counsellor with stories to share
Someone who's been there
Their empathy will grow
And their wisdom will surely flow

Look for a counsellor with scars to show
This is someone you need to know.

The responsibilities that come with being an autism parent or guardian

By Clarise Nevill

Abstract

People who have children with autism spectrum disorder are more likely to experience frustration, anxiety, fear and societal judgement. Emotional burnout can be expected from such parents or guardians.

However, research have found that people who have stated to be Christians seem to have more hope and resilience when it comes to dealing with autism.

In situations where Pastoral care and Counselling services are provided to such parents, it is important to take into consideration the myths believed about autism, the financial burdens, the parents', or guardians' view of spirituality as well as the African culture response to autism spectrum disorder.

Introduction

Tired is an understatement. When it comes to burnout any person on the planet can experience this type of exhaustion after having dealt with too many activities for too long a period. During the duration of my preliminary research studies for my master's degree proposal, I noticed that parents and caregivers of people who have autism spectrum disorder seem to experience frustration, anxiety, fear, guilt and eventually burnout: Having to raise children who cannot help behaving differently than other children. Having to go the extra mile to prepare meals suitable for their child's preferences. All while those who do not understand autism spectrum disorder and how it affects people accuse the parents for allowing their child to behave socially inappropriately.

Mothers of children with autism spectrum disorder

During a quantitative study conducted by Picardi et al (2018: 143), it became evident that mothers, compared to father figures, had a higher rate of what is referred to as subjective burden.

Mothers living with an autistic child have also been found to be more emphatic towards other mothers in the same



Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a **developmental disability caused by differences in the brain**. People with ASD often have problems with social communication and interaction, and restricted or repetitive behaviors or interests. People with ASD may also have different ways of learning, moving, or paying attention.

situation and also according to Plumb (2011: 2), they have been found to be resilient. This resilience, however, through the family resilient model, is connected to having healthy communication, shared beliefs and organizational support (Plumb, 2011:2).

In addition, Gerschowitz (2019:12) refers to the social vacuum caused by autism spectrum disorder, and also to the initial experienced shame of having a child labelled with autism spectrum disorder. In the book "Saving my sons" a mother and father explain their feelings of fear, shame, and hopelessness.

The father felt like he was being robbed of the opportunity to dream of a future for his son, while the mother, who at the time of hearing the diagnosis was pregnant with their second child, experienced fear of the unknown,

and despair for what they discovered.

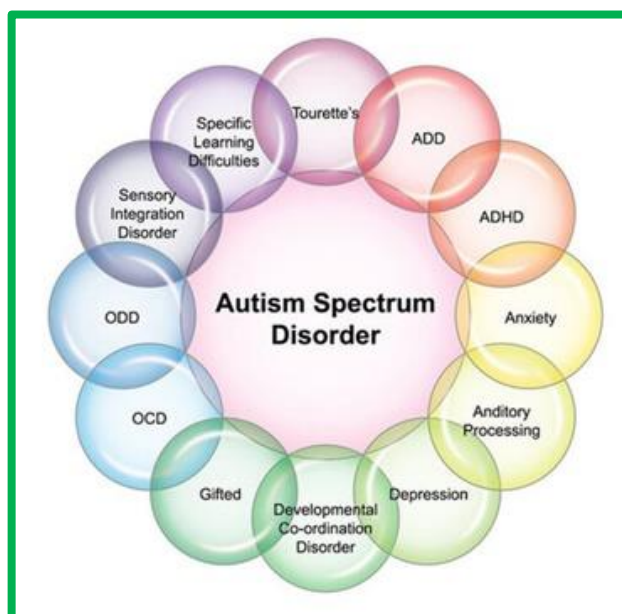
Financial stress

According to Gerschowitz (2018:4), when her first born son got diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, the mother experienced grief. She felt like her son had died. His development moved backwards instead of forwards.

She decided to study and educate herself in the matter when hearing that her baby boy had autism spectrum disorder, only to realize later that she was not able to be both his therapist and his mother.

She was pregnant with her second child and she experienced burnout. Exhausted from trying her very best to heal her firstborn from autism spectrum disorder. Using Cognitive behavioural therapy and a team of specialists whom she selected they worked hours and daily on her son's develop-

ment. She was determined to get him to be normal. As the time went past, she had a third baby who would also be diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. She described having learnt with the first baby to use early intervention techniques.



This enables the learning of social skills and behaviour, to the extent where the children no longer fall on the spectrum. They have all of their milestones and can function optimally. This, however, takes hours and involves a team of specialists in their fields of expertise. Speech therapist, occupational therapist, developmental psychologist, and social psychologist - all specialists working with babies. Although this family had the financial means to support their child, some families do not always have the financial support to provide for the autism needs causing financial burden to fall on the parents' shoulders as well.

According to Mthombeni & Nwoye (2018: 99), during a qualitative study conducted on Black South Africans working with people who have autism spectrum disorder in South Africa, researchers found that within South Africa - and specifically within the black community- the African spiritual belief system combined with the westernized approach to dealing with people who have autism caused Black caregivers to experience frustration.

Using a thematic approach to analysing the data, four themes emerged, namely: Resorting to a supernatural explanation of ASD symptoms, influence of pragmatism in the search for a cure, frustration at both indigenous and Western treatments as they yielded little benefits and only caused a financial burden on professionals using both systems as so-called treatments.

Within South Africa, religious response to autism spectrum disorder is disappointing, with little knowledge and few studies within the field of Theology conducted to treating those people with autism spectrum disorder.

Parental Stress

Simelane (2015:114) concluded a master's degree research study within the field of Psychology focusing on the role of resilience and socio-economic status in the parenting of children with autism spectrum disorder. Within this particular study conducted in South Africa there were found that parents of children with autism spectrum disorder were prone to experience more stress than usual. Although parents with religious beliefs were found to show less intensity when dealing with the daily parental hassles, they still experienced days of feeling overwhelmed.

During a quantitative study conducted by Picardi et al (2018: 143), it also became evident that mothers, when compared to father figures, had a higher rate of what is referred to as subjective burden. However, the objective burden was experienced about the same from both mother and father figures. This also impacts the mental well-being of parents of children with autism as depression has also been noted to follow unhealthy correlation to the overwhelming feelings of responsibility.

Furthermore, according to Bertelli et al (2019: 1996), mothers of children with autism who had maintained

religious or spirituality in their lives, proved to have a psychologically more productive means of coping with stress, and that most of the people interviewed for that particular study said that faith allowed them to accept and understand their disability better.

African culture stigmas

According to Bakare & Munir (2011: 118) it was evident that in Africa there is an excess of non-verbal cases of people with autism in comparison to the recordings of children with verbal autism in Africa. There are also more people diagnosed from the age of 8 years of age in Africa which makes early intervention uncommon in Africa.

African cultures have also been noted to experience autism spectrum disorder as a curse placed on a child due to the sinful deeds of the mother. The qualitative study presented by Cloete (2019:3), revealed that mothers in African cultures were deemed responsible when a child has been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

In addition, according to Burke et al (2019:600), myths also believed in western culture about autism spectrum disorder, include the believe that Autism can only be seen in families of high economic status, which is not the truth. While there are many myths regarding who and what caused autism spectrum disorder. There is no proof that any one thing causes autism, but

rather genetic and environmental variables can in combination result in autism spectrum disorder.

Western culture stigmas

Within the western culture the beliefs by some that vaccinations and the age of a mother when pregnant are reasons for autism are non-proven theories. These beliefs are placing blame on the mother's shoulders.

Bennet et al (2016), also refer to teaching children and adults with autism spectrum disorder how their disorder is affecting them. In teaching people how their autism is affecting them it enables them to utilize their strengths and abilities within their state of functioning. Other myths are that 70% of people with autism spectrum disorder have cognitive development impairments and that people with autism spectrum disorder do not have emotions.

Church response

According to Macaskill et al (2019:1), the condition of autism spectrum disorder was not yet known to ancient writers, and therefore finding specific passages written about autism spectrum disorder in the Bible is not possible. Macaskill (2021: 414), elaborates by explaining that when questioning the Christian view of autism, it also questions the Christian view in general. Autism is often

viewed in Christian communities as a disease that needs to be prayed away, while some argue that it is the way God created them, they are simply different by nature.

Bertelli et al (2019: 1996) found that autism spectrum disorder and spirituality is further explained to cause a shift in the way the affected families view spirituality.

This difference in how spiritually is viewed should be taken into consideration when working with them: some view their children to be autistic because God was punishing them for past sins. Church services might be too loud for someone with autism, someone with autism might also disturb services due to not being able to sit still as part of the condition.

Studies conducted and referred to by Bertelli et al (2019: 1996), also proved that mothers of children with autism who had maintained religion or spirituality in their lives proved to have psychologically more productive means of coping with stress, and that most of the people interviewed for that particular study said that faith allowed them to accept and understand the disability better.

According to Macaskill (2019: 1), one in every 100 people out of 76 million people world wide lives with someone with autism spectrum disorder, though many remain undiagnosed. In the summary provided about this book, the author is described as someone who challenges the readers to change their traditional ways of thinking about church and challenges them to follow Christ's example in cherishing those who have autism. He also asks churches to consider the implications of autism in their congregations and to explore how best to accommodate the particular needs of persons with autism in public worship.

According to Clasquin-Johnson (2023:40), within South Africa, religious response to autism spectrum disorder is disappointing. Within the orthodox community there is little knowledge and studies within the field of Theology conducted to treating people with autism spectrum disorder. Swinton & Trevett as cited by Clasquin-Johnson (2023: 40), also stated the horror that someone with autism spectrum disorder might experience when illustrative language is used to describe Jesus.

Hope

According to Wissing et al (2019: 128-130), Snyder's theory of hope suggests that hope is connected to two cognitive components: goals set, and the pathway chosen to reach the set goals. People with hope have been proven to succeed more often than people who have lost hope.

The Bible has many verses regarding hope, where Christians are motivated to not lose heart on the difficult journey of life.

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 16:33 NIV)

Frustration, anxiety, fear, anger, regret, and feelings of hopelessness are all emotions that Christians should not experience yet are not exempt from experiencing.

Conclusion

As a pastoral counsellor it is important to take into consideration the myths and the additional stress that can come from being a parent of someone who has autism spectrum disorder. The way these parents view spiritualism and the meaning of life should be understood from their life stories.

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- Clarise (25), a resident of Pretoria, has immense compassion for individuals who, due to circumstances, cannot function independently. She achieved the MTh (Pastoral Counselling) in 2023.
- Her passion is for children, the elderly – anyone with disabilities and their respective families. She has developed a love for art and her hobbies include painting and decoupage. Clarise is currently au pairing for families.
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Faith like a seahorse

By Mrs Roxanne Bailey, Career Guidance Counsellor, Independent Psychometrist and Pastoral Counsellor

Scripture

"And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus" - Philippians 4:19 (KJV)

"God provides you with food and shelter, Jesus to swim through life with, and the promises of His Word to hold on to. Like the seahorse, you may sometimes have to hold on and wait for God to deliver His promises - but He always will, and at just the perfect time".¹

"For He will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone".
- Psalm 91:11-12 (KJV)

Introduction

A drop of glistening sun,
His loving Hand of kindness
covers us with His daily Grace

as I fall unto my knees in praise to Him,
the Creator,

to thee you give the breath of eternal
life... through unfathomable faith

I saw a light approaching

Leaves falling uncontrollable

For I trust thee and ask for protection
by your exquisiteness and wonder of
your angels

You dear God is immeasurable in your
Love and many blessings you bestow unto us

Timeless You are Who exceeds all difficulties faced

Grateful!

Grateful!

The drops of glistening sun continue to wrap us in His
daily Grace...

A personal encounter during this year was to wait for
God's drops of Grace to fall onto our family, in His time
and way... just like the seahorse; where it may some-
times have to hold on and wait for God to deliver His
promises - yet He always will, and at just the perfect time,
yet not in the way we might want it to happen.

Faith like a seahorse... it means that we as counsellors
face pain and loss just as anyone else... whether it is



physical: divorce or death, mental, emotional, or physical loss; dementia, Alzheimer's, Parkinsonism, Multiple Sclerosis, Bipolar Depression, or anything else such as a learning difficulty; God will provide His perfect miracle or gift in the way He has already written it (Psalm 139:14), *"For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee: for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well"*.

God provided our family with a miracle; where God was our seahorse to swim with; which is more worth than gold. We have been blessed by His Grace, so many times. God is our glistening sun...

Two months ago being told that your parent (my father) might not survive the night, as well as having gone through it on three previous occasions with almost losing one's mother...



An overwhelming emotion of uncertainty of what is happening, yet knowing that God knows best; yet the need here on earth to still give your parent a hug, receive a phone call or just speak about anything...

Giving your whole self to God to acknowledge that all things are a gift only by His time and perfect Will.

Acknowledging God through prayer and supplication, to ask His Will and not be sure of His

Will during that quantum moment.

We all have a unique and different life tapestry or puzzle to complete. Each one of us deals with emotional trauma in our own way. Yet, the tapestry starts by the elegant courtship, the binding of the couple through God's Grace, the husband's role as nurturer, the care in the womb, the written Will by God for each life and the Faith we bestow unto Him.

CONTENT

According to Britannica's relevant facts about the reproductive behaviour of seahorses the following were noticed:

- The male carries the fertilized eggs, after an elegant courtship.

¹ <https://faithgateway.com/blogs/christian-books/see-the-seahorse>

- The female uses an ovi-positor (egg duct) to place her eggs into a brood pouch located at the base of the male's tail where the eggs are later fertilized.
- Depending on the fifty different types of species, the eggs remain in the pouch between 10 days and six weeks.
- During this time the **male nurtures** the developing young by regulating the chemistry of the fluid inside the pouch.
- The young are **miniature versions of their parents that receive no further care.**
- In some species a male and female will maintain a **monogamous pair bond** throughout the breeding season and produce many broods.



It is miraculous how God placed this monogamous bond between a female and male in the fish and animal realm, just as He had created a monogamous pair: Adam and Eve.

It is mentioned that the male nurtures the young brood. This depicts that the fathers in a household would need to be the pillar of strength and the protector of the family. Just like God's commandment to Adam: "multiply and replenish the earth".

The husband should thus love his wife, just as Christ also loved the church (Ephesians 5: 22-33 – KJV). God never said that life would be without discomfort in whichever way: mental/emotional/physical/cognitive; yet He exclaims in Jeremiah 29:11 that *"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future"*.

N.V. Freret-Meurer & M. A. S. Alves (2018) states that seahorses have bold and shy personality types, yet always provide great parental care. God is our seahorse: bold, shy in the sense of a good listener and caretaker without bias. Yes, we need to have faith like a seahorse.

S. Nizhnikov (2019) states that faith is the "realization of the existence from its origin"; "true faith is the act of existence, realizing the transcendence in its reality". To experience this greatness, wholeness, or transcendence in our lives through each stage of difficulty is quite unique for each one of us.

During counselling the crisis or Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) model can be used to assist clients going through any type of crisis.

Crisis counselling

The crisis model originated by the classic study of grief reactions by Lindemann (1944) at the Massachusetts General Hospital during the worst nightclub fire at the Coconut Grove; killing 493 individuals and others were

left grief stricken. The term crisis derives from the Greek word "krisis" which means decision or turning point (P. Poal, 1990).

Caplan was the first to describe the main stages of a crisis reaction, where he describes the four stages as being the following (D. J. Oberholzer, 1983):

- **initial phase** the individual is confronted by a problem that poses a threat to his homeostatic state: the person responds to feelings of increased tension by calling forth the habitual problem-solving measures in an effort to restore his emotional equilibrium.
- **disorganized** - a rise in tension due to the failure of habitual problem-solving measures and the persistence of the threat and problem. The individual senses feelings of upset and ineffectuality.
- Problem may be **redefined**- continued failure of the individual's efforts, a further rise in tension acts as a stimuli for the mobilization of emergency and novel problem-solving measures.
- **Breaking point** - the problem continues, the tension mounts beyond a further threshold. The result may be a major breakdown in the individual's mental and social functioning.

Crisis definition

A crisis is defined by the mental health authorities as "A state of disequilibrium resulting from the interaction of an event with the individual's or family's coping mechanisms, which are inadequate to meet the demands of the situation, combined with the individual's or family's perception of the meaning of the event". (Taylor, 1982)

As mentioned by G.F. Jacobson (1980), some forms of crisis-oriented treatment require a high level of professional training. Others can be carried out by persons of varying qualifications. Some of the techniques of crisis-orientated therapy are:

□ Nonspecific Crisis Treatment

Can be carried out by anyone able to establish a supportive, compassionate relationship with the person in crisis and who can avoid being drawn into the emotional distortions which are characteristic of crisis. This type of intervention is technically easy but emotionally hard.

□ Environmental Crisis Intervention

The intervener is in a position to do something about the hazard, thus changing or ending the crisis. For example, a lawyer can prevent an eviction and a community advocate can speed up a delayed welfare payment. This type of activity is common in poverty areas. It is important to keep in mind, however, that situations which seemingly involve only external problems, such as economic, may have other facets that are not amenable to this approach.

□ Generic Crisis-Oriented Treatment.

The principle is that patterns of adaptive and maladaptive behaviour can be identified, and adaptive response

can be taught. Adaptive mechanisms in dealing with particular life situations have been described in connection with the birth of premature children, entry of a child into kindergarten, and the honeymoon.

Generic intervention does not require specific training in mental health. It does require knowledge in depth of particular types of hazards and ways of coping that are used in dealing with a particular hazard. For example, public health nurses are likely to be familiar with coping patterns in relation to birth and infancy, while clergymen may be familiar with ways of dealing with grief.

□ Individual Crisis-Oriented Treatment

If the other three kinds of crisis treatment are insufficient: the individual crisis treatment was born. It may be used in addition to one or more of the above three methods or by itself. It requires the skills of mental health professionals. It differs from generic crisis treatment in that it does not assume that any particular way of coping is desirable for a given person. Rather, it is concerned with the unique assessment of the hazard(s) within the context of the individual circumstances and with forming a plan for intervention which is derived from that assessment. In most cases a number of visits are required.

Depending on the severity of the life hazard experienced, the interventional approach will be quite different. One of the models used during crisis is that of Robert's seven stages; it is described in the following way by Zulkifli, W.N.B., Ishak, N.A.B. & Kamsani, S.R.B. (2021):

Consider for example the Acute Stress Disorder- biopsychosocial hazard. As a counsellor one would:

- Valid assessment to identify the critical aspects as a guide to determine the intervention.

- Able to think quickly and creatively, to assist with possibilities.
- Open up and always accepting client unconditionally in order to help explore options and to resolve the problem by making the affected client stronger.
- To keep calm and remain empathetic.
- Crisis intervention is a short-term intervention involving specific goals aiming to improve the client's behaviour in the short term.
- A crisis intervention is not process-oriented rather it is action-oriented, and it is focused on the situation. It

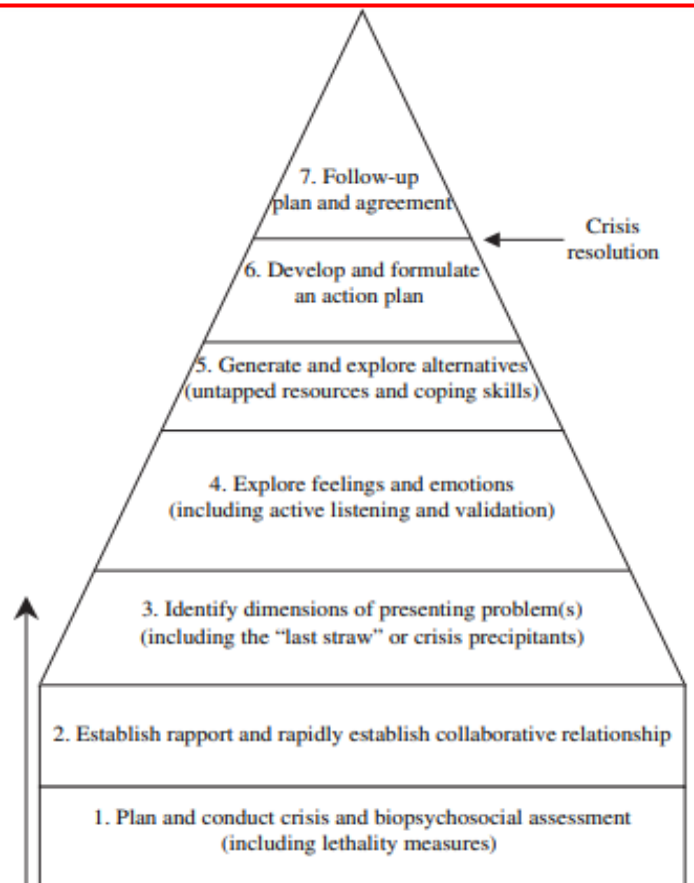
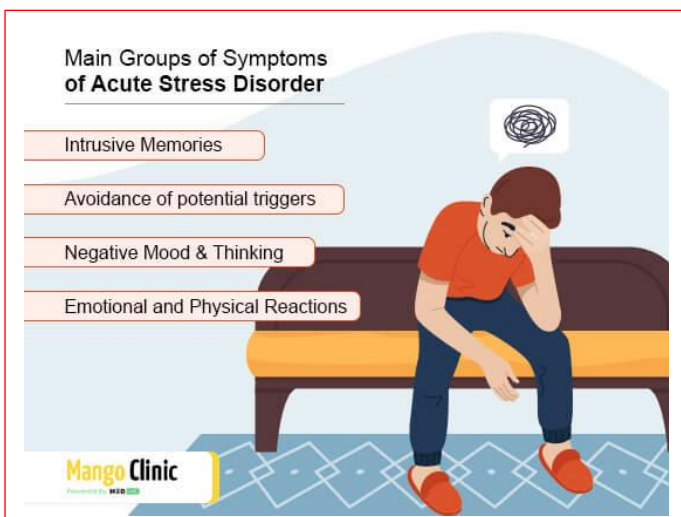


FIGURE 1

Roberts' Seven Stage Crisis Intervention Model

Source: Copyright © Albert R. Roberts, 1991. Reprinted by permission of the author.



helps the client to understand the impact and expectations that affect their emotions and behaviour.

- The crisis characteristics include losing control and security. The loss may lead to the need in focusing on the internal control versus the external control.
- The objective is not about asking explorative questions, but it should be focusing on the current situation.
- To deal with the crisis immediately hence providing support and restore the pre-crisis functionality.
- Ensuring that the next of kin or family members are always by the client's side.

- Willing to work and adapt to the situation, place, and local communities so that the interventions can be carried out effectively. Respect to the cultural of the local communities will help helper to deliver the crisis intervention.
- Viewing the client needs in a holistic way rather than separating individuals' emotional and cognitive functions.

CONCLUSION

Each crisis or hazard or difficulty on a biopsychosocial continuum is experienced differently. Making use of the crisis interventions or one of the crisis models used; the therapist and/or counsellor need to acknowledge that each of us might be a shy or bold seahorse. Everyone experiences a trauma in either a resilient way or in a very life threatening despondent or disheartened way.

If it is possible to address the trauma at the impact phase or during the first two to four weeks, an empathetic action plan can begin to unfold. A crisis intervention is never a full proof plan, yet a starting point to some sort of better resolve to the holistic nature of the crisis experienced.

God is our patient listener and care-taker, just like the watchful nurturing by the seahorse of its brood. Hebrews

13: 5-6, exclaims *"let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee"*.

If we wait on God's Will to deliver His promises to us at just the perfect time, we will experience His true glistening sun at that hazardous- or crisis moment.

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<https://www.britannica.com/animal/sea-horse>

Using your opportunities to grow and serve

By Laura Everett, CPSC Affiliate

We were approaching Easter during the 2020 lockdown at the children's village in KwaZulu Natal (KZN)...

Some of the teenage girls had requested that we prepare a song to perform during the Sunday service. Every one of these girls had a unique set of special needs and various giftings, though none of them were particularly musically inclined. Regardless, they chose a song, "My Redeemer Lives" by Nicole C. Mullen, and together we began to practice the song and to adapt movements to accompany the lyrics. Day in and day out the girls diligently rehearsed their piece, and I would find them around the village singing the beautiful and worshipful lyrics of the song.

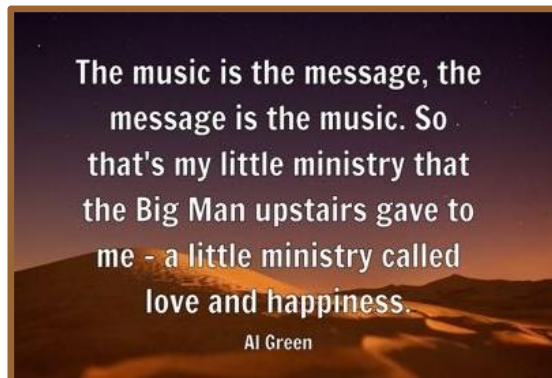
Easter Sunday arrived and despite being very nervous during the Easter service, they overcame their anxieties and performed with confidence and danced with passion. There was a sense of catharsis that they experienced throughout the entire experience.

This Easter performance is but one instance out of many where I realized the therapeutic element of musical expression. This article will explore the connection between my university studies in music ministry and lay counselling/discipleship experiences in youth ministry.

In 2013, I completed my Bachelor of Arts in Music Ministry at Whitworth University in the USA, with classical and jazz piano as my focus of performance study. The program included a comprehensive music degree, with an emphasis on the history and theology of worship and practical theology (youth ministry, evangelism/discipleship, worship leading, etc.).

Throughout my secondary and tertiary education, I also worked with the youth in various roles - as piano teacher, youth worship leader, and music specialist at a camp for children with special needs. Music, to me, was never the end goal, but always a vehicle for connection, for collaboration, for empowerment.

Several years after having completed my degree, I moved to South Africa with the organization, SIM, to serve full-time in a children's village in KZN. Seeing music as a beautiful ministry tool for expression, I began to teach piano and assist with leading the youth worship team on-site.



For those who have undergone trauma, the frontal lobe of the brain where executive thinking occurs cannot process the events, and therefore, multi-sensory or non-talk therapy, such as music therapy, is necessary for healing and growth.

One of the teenage boys I worked with often struggled with interpersonal communication and impulse control. During his piano lessons, I learned that I needed to share control with him, giving him time to improvise and choose certain songs to practice, while also creating structure and assisting him with following directions.

Often, in between practicing a song, he would pause and tell me something that happened during his day, or something that frustrated him. I quickly came to realize that music has a disarming quality, and the relationship that a music instructor builds with his/her client in the studio has therapeutic value to it.

In another case at the children's village, I worked with a teenage girl who had joined the worship team. She had grown up in the village and was known as one who could not speak for herself, relying always on her peers to speak for her. She loved to draw and was found to have a stunning singing voice. Over several years of encouragement and discipleship, she grew in her confidence to lead worship songs, which led to an overall uptick in confidence in her interpersonal relationships. She also continued to express herself in drawing, often portraying scenes of hope and faith.

In 2023, I completed the Higher Certificate in Christian Counselling with SATS, and I am beginning to comprehend the phrase, "hindsight is 20/20" in the sense that many concepts that we learned in the course, I saw in practice over my years at the children's village.

Dr Gary R. Collins describes that, for those who have undergone trauma, the frontal lobe of the brain where executive thinking occurs, cannot process the events, and therefore, multi-sensory or non-talk therapy is necessary for healing and growth (Collins 2007, 774).

Music therapy can involve composition, listening, re-creating, and improvising, and adapts to the developmental and musical level of the client (Bruscia 2012, 7-8).

As the young person recreates a song, for instance, he learns to recognize the emotions of others, improve sensorimotor skills, and experience pleasure in musical expression (2012). In the case of working with adolescents,

the pairing of connecting the youth, and encouraging active creativity, spurs the therapist on to work with the client through both pre-conscious and conscious processing (Erkkila 2011, 43-46).

As I reflect on the music ministry and Christian counseling training I have received, in conjunction with my service in youth ministry, I am both grateful for the opportunities that have availed themselves and am challenged to learn more as I minister in yet another children's home – this time in Pretoria.



The Apostle Peter reminds us well that because of God's power and promises, we should "make every effort to add to [our] faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love" (2 Peter 1:5-7).

every effort to add to [our] faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love" (2 Peter 1:5-7).

May we never discredit the training we have received or misuse the opportunities that the Lord puts in our path to grow and serve; for me, the Holy Spirit continues to include music ministry and youth.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Laura Goge (Everett) moved to South Africa from her home country in the USA in 2015 to serve in full-time missions with the international organization SIM (sim.org). She has served in youth ministry in various capacities, at Lily of the Valley Children's Village in KwaZulu-Natal, Grace Baptist Church of New Germany, and, currently, she and her husband work at Christ Church Christian Care Centre in Pretoria. ■

Who taught the sun where to stand in the morning?
And who told the ocean you can only come this far?
And who showed the moon where to hide till evening?

Whose words alone can catch a falling star?

Well, I know my Redeemer lives
I know my Redeemer lives
All of creation testifies
This life within me cries
I know my Redeemer lives, yeah

The very same God that spins things in orbit
Runs to the weary, the worn and the weak
And the same gentle hands that hold me when I'm broken
They conquered death to bring me victory

Now I know my Redeemer lives
I know my Redeemer lives
Let all creation testify
Let this life within me cry
I know my Redeemer, He lives

To take away my shame
And He lives forever, I'll proclaim
That the payment for my sin
Was the precious life He gave
But now He's alive and there's an empty grave

And I know my Redeemer lives
I know my Redeemer lives
Let all creation testify
Let this life within me cry
I know my Redeemer

I know my Redeemer
I know my Redeemer lives (x2)
I know that I know, that I know
That I know, that I know my Redeemer lives

Because He lives, I can face tomorrow
I know, I know, He lives, He lives, yeah, yeah
I spoke with Him this morning
He lives e lives, the tomb is empty
He lives, I gotta tell everybody
I know my Redeemer, He lives

Counselling in an African-traditional religion

By Philip Coetzee

Introduction

When the subject of belief and worship in the African context is up for discussion, we need to view it in monotheism and polytheism to understand better the spiritual schema of African Traditional Religion (ATR). Therefore, I will establish the significance of spirits, divinities, and ancestors in terms of their powers in the broader sense of human relations.

From a counselling perspective, the importance of understanding African ancestors and spirituality is an uncompromising aspect of counselling; I will describe, demonstrate, outline, and evaluate the relevance of counselling in the light of Christianity and counselling in an African Traditional Religion spiritual environment as an integrative approach. Thus, a bio-psycho-social-spiritual approach.

Furthermore, I will relate to the central tenets of spirituality in the African Traditional Religion, referred to as **ATR**, describe the spiritual schema under the categories of monotheism and polytheism, the spiritual conflict and Christianity in the light of the non-submissive spiritual encounter, and demonization as a continuum of influence; and finally, a counselling approach relating to people as members of the Kingdom of God and a Parakletos strategy. I hereby acknowledge the South African Theology Seminary for the inspirational course I could attend on the subject of counselling in an African-Traditional Religion.

1. The central tenets of spirituality in the African Traditional Religion

The spirit world of the African Traditional Religion (ATR) requires that man harmoniously restore any excellent or bad praxis between them and the spirit world. For instance, evil spirits who manifested themselves in a specific dead person because of some or other personal or communal wrongdoing after being deceased, must be respected and feared (Steyne in Turaki 2008 Chap. 15). Furthermore, evil spirits in ATR can be identified with the fallen biblical angels; thus, traditional Africans believe that these spirits possess self-acquired powers to benefit them.

Thus, the concept of demon possession is a reality, and so will spiritual warfare be part of a universal belief system in the ATR culture. On the contrary, Christians believe that through Christ, God restored order as part of His redemption plan; therefore, God, through Christ and the Holy Spirit, will be their only source from which they



can benefit (Jn 3:5-6, 14-15; 2Co 5:18-19) (Turaki 2008, Chap. 15; Van Der Spuy, 2021a, 3-1).

Then, how significant is the power attributed by man to spirits, divinities, and ancestors by ATR?

2. Monotheism vs. Polytheism as Spiritual Conflict

According to the theological view, monotheism is the belief in only one God or a Supreme Being, thus in his own space.

Therefore, his Spirit builds up the person as a whole and not for personal gratification by individuals or cultures (Stanley, 2014, 146). In contrast to a monotheistic God, polytheism will cause undifferentiated worship, placing God in the same category and space as all other divinities, self-established gods, and the manifestation of idolatry where the Holy Spirit shares the platforms and rank of other spirits.

Polytheism	Monotheism
☞ The belief in multiple gods	☞ The belief in only one god
☞ gods have limited power (air, sun, sea, etc.)	☞ The one god is all powerful
☞ Historically, the oldest forms of belief	☞ A more modern type of religion
☞ Examples:	☞ Examples:
☞ Ancient Egypt	☞ Judaism
☞ Greece and Rome	☞ Christianity
☞ Hinduism	☞ Islam

In other words, ignorance towards the only true Spirit, thus in a conflict set by traditional other spirit beings. Consequently, ATR exposes and lends itself to general revelation and creative theology where everyone will be on equal footing, uniquely separated from special biblical revelation (Ex 20:2-5a) (Turaki 2008, Chap. 15).

3. Spiritual conflict and Christianity

3.1 A non-submissive spiritual encounter

The counsellor will face many obstacles when approached by a person relating to the ATR for counselling. Because of the person's insecurity and lack of power within them through a specific spirit who would have introduced him to the source of power he needs, he only regards the ethical correctness set by the ancestor (Mbiti in Light 2010, Chap. 3). Therefore, the counsellor will need the intervention by the Holy Spirit during counsel-

ling because of the manifested ancestral spirit belief system. Thus, a typical example of religion giving way to spirituality and acceptance of superstition, and through their traditional beliefs, Africans are well aware that the beings they are dealing with are not the same as the Supreme Being; therefore, their belief in their spirit allows them to ignore the role of a Supreme Being to acquire whatever they need (Van Der Spuy, 2021b, 3-2).

3.2 Demonization as a Continuum of Influence

The counsellor must be aware of the possibility that the power or help this person seeks or will receive will not meet with the approval of their ancestors or spirit, so is morality or ethics relevant? (Turaki 2008 Chap. 15). In other words, if morality and ethics are irrelevant, the counselee must not abide by particular ethics or moral codes not recognized by their cultural beliefs. Instead, they will have their specific divinities to protect and bless them and provide them with spiritual powers and life forces to live by. These spirits have the power to be destructive or a blessing, depending on the circumstances, and the person will be vulnerable to demonic influences (Steine in Turaki 2008, Chap. 13; Van Der Spuy, 2021b, 3-2).

Therefore, the counsellor will face a conflict of interest on a negative note. First, the counsellor must be wary of the mental game of transference and countertransference, thus being manipulated by an unnatural demonic or ancestral spirit, thus creating an environment of fear or uneasiness, consciously or subconsciously (Van Der Spuy, 2021b, 3-2). This phenomenon can lead to Dissociative Disorder or Multiple Personality Disorder, where the person's identity is disrupted due to cultural traditions and pressure (Van der Spuy, 2021d, 3-4).

On a positive note, with the help of the Holy Spirit, the counselee can slowly but surely succumb to the Spirit of truth.

Furthermore, the counsellor must remember ancestral beliefs are closely linked to "demonization as a continuum of influence" through human choices, agency, and responsibilities (Van Der Spuy, 2021c, 3-3, 3-4). We need to assess counselling approaches in light of the ancestral spiritual involvement.

4. A Counselling Approach

4.1 Members of the Kingdom of God

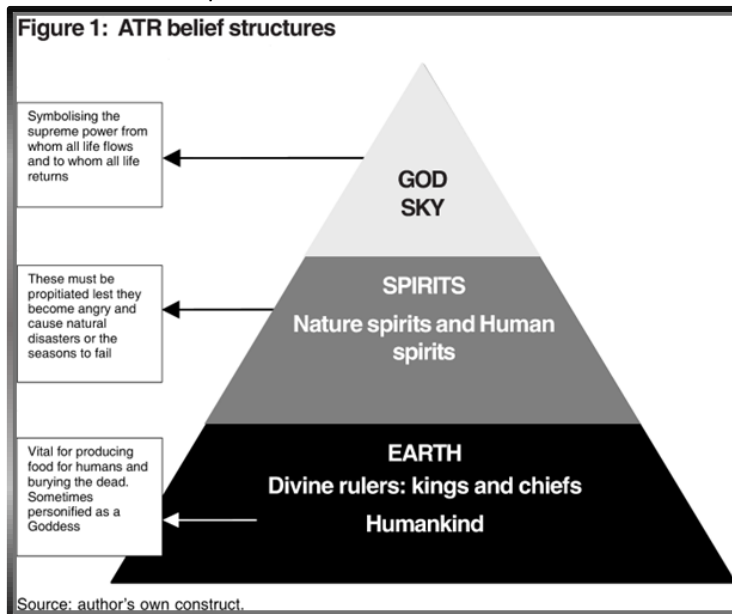
Van Der Spuy (2021c, 3-3) poses a stern warning for counsellors when he states: "A foundational principle in understanding the role of Satan, and/or role of demons

in the lives of believers is the recognition that believers are members of the Kingdom of God." This statement is significant to the counsellor; although the counselee believes in ancestral spirits, they also believe in God and Christ, but their belief structures differ.

Therefore, the counsellor must be well informed on ATB, or the counsellor must refer the counselee. At the same time, the counselee may suffer from a mental disorder due to the continuous fear or anxiety they experienced or suffer from schizophrenia or personality disorder due to bizarre behavioural patterns; thus, referral to a professional therapist is needed (Meier et al. 1991:259; Van Der Spuy, 2021d, 3-4).

Furthermore, the cross brought tranquillity to man due to God's plan and not through ancestral spirits. Therefore, it broke all barriers between people of races and cultures and became a new creation within Christ, born again (Jn 6:38-40; Gal 3:28). Therefore, during sessions, the counsellor must focus on the counselee to part with all divinities and tribal gods (Lk 9:23-25). In other words, the person's whole mindset needs to have a radical transformation to understand and accept reconciling with a divine God as the only form of lasting peace and salvation from demons and secular spirituality (Col 1:19-22; Hebrews 10:1-18) (Turaki 2008, Chap. 37).

In Romans 8:18-22, Paul describes the promise of a fallen and new world for those who turn to God through Christ. In other words, those who choose to live a life of redemption and choose to be reconciled with God through His Son Jesus Christ, leaving the world of gods and spirits, and living in the new world made possible through the cross, thus working towards a counselling concept guided by



The counsellor must assist the counselee with compassion and understanding throughout the process, a bio-psycho-social-spiritual approach to caring for the person as a whole, thus walking that extra mile

the Parakletos (2Co 5:19; Jn 15:19; 17:13-19) (Turaki 2008, Chap. 37).

4.2 A Parakletos Strategy

The counsellor must assist the counselee with compassion and understanding throughout the process, a bio-psycho-social-spiritual approach to caring for the person as a whole, thus walking that extra mile; applying a revised version of Meier et al (1991:261) three-step strategy:

- (1) make sure the counselee knows that Christ wants to be their personal Saviour.
- (2) encourage the counselee to ignore or stop paying attention to the ancestral spirit or demon voices or messages.
- (3) suggest that Christ is more significant than any demon and the Holy Spirit is the only true Spirit; our Helper, and Comforter, the Parakletos, thus living in the Spirit (Van Der Spuy, 2021, 3-4).

Therefore, self-awareness must be at the forefront of a counsellor's approach toward secular spirituality; thus, your spiritual belief must be cast in the working of the Holy Spirit (Jn 16:14; Ga 5:15, 25). McMinn (2011, 12) states: "If we drift away from Christian theology, we find ourselves in the strange world of spiritualism." In other words, the counsellor and counselee might drift away in uncertainty about the problem; therefore, the counsellor must be "flexible without becoming anxious or without needing to be in control," thus letting the Holy Spirit control the situation through the counsellor (Collins, 2007:18).

Finally, as a counsellor, we need to demonstrate the relevance of Christ as the perfect human ancestor who takes precedence over all ancestors,

becoming the mediator between Christians and God, with the Holy Spirit as their Counsellor and Comforter, the choice of how to live (Rom 8:34; 9:5). This newly experienced phenomenon will prove Christ's presence and positive influence in their lives (Van Der Spuy, 2021d, 3-4). Thus, depending on the counselee's commitment toward God and Christ, the counsellor's task will become enlightened through their love, obedience, and respect as the sole supernatural beings (Jn 1:1, 2, 18) (Oladipo in Light 2010, Chap. 6). Therefore, the indigenous portrayals of Jesus as a mediator and sacrificed being will assist in the understanding of His work and salvation by setting one free from traditional fears, as a serving Lord and an ever-present Being, not a spirit with dubious means (Mt 28:20; Hebrews 2:17) (Light 2010, Chap. 6).

Conclusion

In my reflection on the central tenets of spirituality in the ATR, I concluded that the concept of demon possession is a reality in an African spiritual context. Further-

more, I described the spiritual schema of the ATR concerning monotheism and polytheism, whereby I identified ATR with the possible practice of polytheism. At the same time, the significance of the power of spirits, divinities, and ancestors embedded in the ATR came to the forefront, thus establishing the functions of all spirit beings functioning in specific roles or tasks delegated to them by higher beings as the controlling factor of people. In other words, it establishes the ignorance that prevails towards the Holy Spirit's superiority.

On the concept of spiritual conflict and Christianity, it is significant to note the role of the Christian counsellor amidst religion giving way to spirituality due to superstition and traditional beliefs. The role of the counsellor is to be aware that the beings the counselee accepts as a superior force are not the same as the Supreme Being; therefore, the counsellor needs the intervention of the Holy Spirit. Consequently, a conflict of interest on a negative note will face the counsellor, meaning the counsellor will find themselves between two spirits. Thus, be prepared and knowledgeable about the possibilities of conscious and unconscious manipulation or intimidation, thus relying on the Holy Spirit for wisdom and support in addressing the matter.

The counsellor's strategy must be an informed praxis on the problems of counselling a person with a different spiritual worldview and an informative engagement with the counselee on knowing Christ as Saviour. But significantly, the Holy Spirit is the only true Spirit, the Helper, and Comforter, and portrays Christ as the perfect human ancestor who takes precedence over all ancestors.

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Notes from the Finance Office

Dear CPSC Affiliate

I trust that this message finds you well.

I often think back to the first 5 years with CPSC when I was in the full position, and I still pray that you will constantly be aware of the closeness of our Lord and His daily blessing and that you will continue spreading His eternal Light.

In my position as Finance Officer all, or nearly all, of my messages are now pertaining to financial matters, as I am responsible to keep you updated and informed about everything regarding the **annual renewal of the CPSC subscription as well as being always in good standing.**



Fully paid 2024 CPSC Subscriptions

Thank you to the record percentage of **65,22%** affiliates who have already paid the 2024 CPSC subscription up to **26 February 2024**. This gives us hope that **Covid is finally losing its relentless grip** on our besieged affiliates. If you have **already renewed your subscription for 2024 you are currently in good standing and comply with the SAQA and ACRP requirement in this regard.**

- If you have paid your 2024 CPSC fee and received your 2024 CPSC certificate, you can ignore the remainder of my Notes from the Finance Office.
- If you have already paid your 2024 fee but have not yet received the 2024 CPSC certificate, please contact me at finance@cpsc.org.za for a copy. I will also reactivate it on the central system to be sent from there.
- Thank you so much for the excellent way in which you conducted your 2024 CPSC Subscription. You are financially in good standing with CPSC and comply to this SAQA and ACRP requirement.
- I still have three unidentifiable unallocated payments with no reference whatsoever and which I could not identify or allocate.
- Please let me know at finance@cpsc.org.za if you have perhaps paid and not received any notification of "allocation of payment" or your certificate. The unidentified payment might then be yours.

Unpaid 2024 CPSC Subscriptions

34,78% of the annual CPSC Fees for 2024 is still outstanding and payment is due no later than **31 March 2024** to remain in good standing.

Annual renewal notices

- Please contact me at finance@cpsc.org.za if you have not received your 2024 renewal notice and I will send you a copy of the renewal notice.

- Please note that the renewal notice would have come from admin@pastors4africa.com

- The 2024 CPSC annual renewal notices were sent by the ACRP central system to your email address on our system on 25 October and 1 December 2023 and will be sent again during the first week of March. Emails with attachments sent as part of mass mail, unfortunately often go to spam where they remain for 30 days before being deleted automatically.

- Please check your spam folders during March for the renewal notice sent during the first week of March 2024.

There are **certain realities** regarding the **2024 renewal** of you CPSC subscription:

- The 2024 annual subscription was already due on 31 December 2023.
- Your 2023 CPSC certificate has already expired on 31 December 2023.
- 31 March 2024 is this is the cut-off date to make a payment to remain in good standing and the end of March is approaching at an alarming speed.
- You may not work under the auspices of CPSC if you are not in good standing.

All outstanding subscriptions need to be settled in full by 31 March 2024 to remain in good standing and being in good standing is a specific SAQA and ACRP requirement.

ACRP as Professional Body states that the annual fee may be no more than 3 months overdue.

Payment correspondence to expect

- After receipt of the annual payment in our Nedbank account, I allocate the payment on the ACRP central accounting system and the zero or credit balance activates the 2024 CPSC Certificate to be sent automatically by the system.
- You will receive an "**allocation of payment**" email confirming receipt and allocation of the payment and **another email** with the attached **2024 CPSC Certificate will be following shortly.**
- Please remember that the allocation of payment email as well as the email with your 2024 certificate will be sent from admin@pastors4africa.com
- The subject of the certificate email from admin@pastors4africa.com will be "Re: ACRP Certificate".

- Please take note that it is an unmanned email address.
- Please note that these two emails will both come from admin@pastors4africa.com but with cover letters from me. If you should reply to this email address, the reply will be rerouted to me at finance@cpsc.org.za
- **NB Please do not send any new emails to the admin@pastors4africa.com email address as it is an unmanned email address and only replies are rerouted to me.**
- **No other new emails can be sent to this email address.**
- After payment, please remember to check the spam folders as the certificate often ends there due to anti-virus protection and firewalls installed.

- It will remain there for 30 days after allocation of payment before auto-deleting.
- **Please add admin@pastors4africa.com to your whitelist/list of trusted contacts** and please remember to always **check the spam folders if you have not received the 2024 certificate shortly after the allocation** of payment notification.

Thank you in advance for attending to payment of the annual renewal of your CPSC subscription at your earliest convenience but before/on 31 March 2024 if still unpaid. Your most urgent attention will be highly appreciated as the requirement is to always remain in good standing.

Warmest regards and blessings

Anita ■

Notes from the Admin Office

Dear CPSC Affiliate

Love stories grab us all – I think even the staunchest anti-Valentine's Day individual gets a little sentimental when it comes to great love stories.

We get roped into the real-life, or fictional, love stories of couples like Romeo and Juliet, Oliver and Jenny of the film "Love Story", Cleopatra and Mark Antony, Prince Harry and Megan Markle, etcetera, etcetera.

The greatest love story ever to have unfolded, also happens to be absolutely true. It is the story of complete, selfless, and unconditional love and we commemorate this love over the weekend of the 29th of March.



May you never forget that you are so loved that God gave His son so that you may have eternal life. May you rejoice in the fact that Jesus loved – and loves -- you so much, that He suffered a terrible death for you.

The cross reveals the depth of their love for us. Jesus' death is not just a historical event. It is the ultimate act and declaration of love for all people.



Romans 5:8 declares, "God proves God's love for us in that while we still were sinners, Christ died for us."

Wishing you all a very blessed Easter.

Warmest regards, Ilse

<p>CPSC Administrative Office <i>Ilse Grünwald</i> Cell: 072 705 1183 (am)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Email for administrative matters: admin@cpsc.org.za ▪ Email specifically for matters regarding CPSC CPD points: cpd@cpsc.org.za <p>CPSC Finance Office <i>Anita Snyders</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Email for all financial matters: finance@cpsc.org.za 	<p>BANKING DETAILS CPSC (The Council for Pastoral and Spiritual Counsellors) Nedbank Branch: Woodlands Branch code: 136-305 Account no: 1020501553 <i>E-mail proof of payment to the CPSC Finance Office at finance@cpsc.org.za.</i> <i>Please state your initials and last name as reference for any deposit made.</i></p>	<p>DISCLAIMER</p> <p>While CPSC supports initiatives for equipping pastoral and spiritual counsellors, statements and opinions expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views and/or opinions of CPSC. CPSC does not make any warranty regarding the information supplied. CPSC shall in no event be liable for any decision or action taken in reliance on this information.</p>
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