

# **Spirituality Groups for Mental Health Clients**

**Presenter: Teresa Roberson-Mullins, MA, MS, BCC, LPC, ADC**

# INTRODUCTIONS.....

Residency in Clinical Pastoral Education

M.A. Pastoral Care

M.S. Pastoral Counseling

Board Certified Chaplain

Licensed Pastoral Counselor



27+ years with SSM Health Care  
Chaplain

Out-Patient Spirituality Group Facilitator

Dir. of Pastoral Care & Ethics  
Developed & Implemented  
In-Patient Spirituality Groups across  
SSM-STL Behavioral Health

Currently full-time Behavioral Health

# Now, about YOU!

## Mental Health Care?

In-Patient?

Out Patient?

Clinic?

Counselor/Therapist?

Certified Chaplain?

Group Therapist?

## Faith Community?

Spiritual Director/Guide?

Minister/Faith Community Leader?

## COMMUNITY PROGRAMS?

Other?????????????????????????????????????

## **WHO HAS FACILITATED SPIRITUALITY GROUPS?**

## **WHO IS LIKELY TO IN THE FUTURE?**

# QUESTIONS WE ARE GOING ADDRESS TODAY

What is Spirituality?

Are Spirituality and Religion the same?

What do Spirituality Groups and Therapy Groups have in Common?

And how do they differ?

What is the research based rationale for Spirituality Groups?

Is there a place for Spirituality Groups for Mental Health Clients  
Within Health Care and in our Faith Communities?

How do we get started?

Are there models for Mental Health Spirituality Groups?

What is “Good Group Etiquette”?

Are there helpful strategies for dealing with difficult Clients in  
Group?

What are YOUR Burning Questions?

# WHAT IS SPIRITUALITY?



NAH MAN, YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A GUITARIST TO SHOP HERE AT GUITAR WORLD. WE CATER TO ALL TYPES OF MUSICIANS! DRUMMERS, PIANISTS, VOCALISTS... THEY'RE ALL WELCOME HERE!

OKAY AWESOME! I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR A NEW SNARE DRUM AND WAS HOPING YOU COULD HELP ME OUT.

WELL, I MEAN, DRUMMERS ARE WELCOME HERE... BUT IF YOU WANT ACTUAL DRUM STUFF YOU'LL NEED TO GO SOME PLACE ELSE.

ASHER FREEMAN (MURPHY)

# WHAT IS SPIRITUALITY?

etymology:

The English word spirit comes from the Latin *spiritus*, meaning breath.

The Jewish concept of spirit used the word *ru'ach*, meaning breath or wind.

In Islam *ruh* is the very breath of God that embodies our spirit of good.

# WHAT IS SPIRITUALITY?

etymology, cont'd:

The Great Spirit breathed life into the (hu)man, and all the good things in the world, while the Evil Spirit was asleep.

Folk-Lore and Legends: North American Indian")

# WHAT IS SPIRITUALITY? CONT'D

Wiccan belief is that the spirit creates and enlivens (brings to life) everything. (An Introduction to Wicca and Wiccan Beliefs)

In Hindu writings, atman (the personal soul or spirit) is the essence of creation. (Fowler, Hinduism: Beliefs and Practices)

Polynesians use the word mana and the Jains use the word jiva, meaning that which animates all life. (Asian/Pacific Study of Spirituality)

## WHAT IS SPIRITUALITY? CONT'D

Many Humanists, Naturalists, Unitarians, Freethinkers, Pagans, skeptics, atheists, agnostics, and others, believe spirituality is part of the “work and reflection” we do to become wiser, to live better over time through continued learning, contemplative practices, and character development. Spirituality is what helps us to live up to our fullest potential. Spirituality is what helps us live a “good life”.  
(train, Spirituality and Naturalism)

## WHAT IS SPIRITUALITY? Cont'd

**SPIRITUALITY is that which:**

**Gives us meaning, hope and purpose in life**

**Encourages us to seek the best in ourselves and others**

**Fosters positive emotions, positive coping skills, and healthy decision making**

**Leads to the development of a personal value system**

# WHAT IS SPIRITUALITY Cont'd

**SPIRITUALITY is that which: (cont'd)**

**Makes us long to live in communion or community**

**Is what is deepest within us; our motivating force; what makes us “tick”**

**Calls many to a “life lived in the presence of the Divine” (Heschel)**

**Supports us in the journey of life**

## WHAT IS SPIRITUALITY cont'd

Spirituality is the way you find meaning, hope, comfort and inner peace in your life. Many people find spirituality through religion. Some find it through music, art or a connection with nature. Others find it in their values and principles." (American Academy of Family Physicians)

# RE SPIRITUALITY and RELIGION the SAME?



# Is SPIRITUALITY and RELIGION the SAME?

## SPIRITUALITY

Universal awareness of a relationship between all people & things  
search for the sacred, which is a transcendent dimension within human experience

der, 2007)  
cier, 2007)

## RELIGION

- Parochial/Cultural
- Sense belonging to a specific community
- Institutionalized or personal system of sacred beliefs and practices relating to the divine

(Geertz, 1993)  
(Durkheim (1915)  
(Pecorino, 2001)

# WHAT DO SPIRITUALITY GROUPS and THERAPY GROUPS HAVE IN COMMON?



# WHAT DO SPIRITUALITY GROUPS and THERAPY GROUPS HAVE IN COMMON?

Leaders must ensure a safe environment in which participants feel they will be heard and respected at all times.

The leader helps facilitate the discussion and builds upon members' comments so that people are able to see how the ideas fit together.

People in the group learn from each other.

When they hear others' experiences that may be similar, they realize that they are not as different from another person as they had thought.

The leader always makes the connection between the discussion and daily living outside the group so that participants can understand the usefulness of the group beyond the current discussion.

# HOW DO SPIRITUALITY GROUPS and THERAPY GROUPS DIFFER?

## SPIRITUALITY GROUPS

Group Leader does NOT function as an 'expert', but rather as a group facilitator (no right or wrong answer) Leader makes mental note of maladaptive behaviors so as to redirect for the benefit of the group if necessary Goal is acceptance of the person as they are

## THERAPY GROUPS

- Group leader DOES function as an expert in psycho-educational topics
- Leader works to identify maladaptive behavior & helps them to change this behavior
- Goal is psychological improvement

# IS THERE RESEARCH BASED RATIONALE FOR SPIRITUALITY GROUPS?



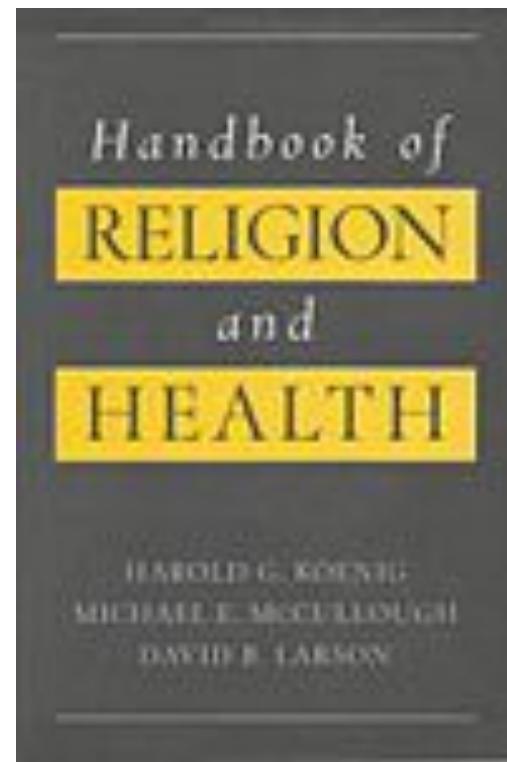
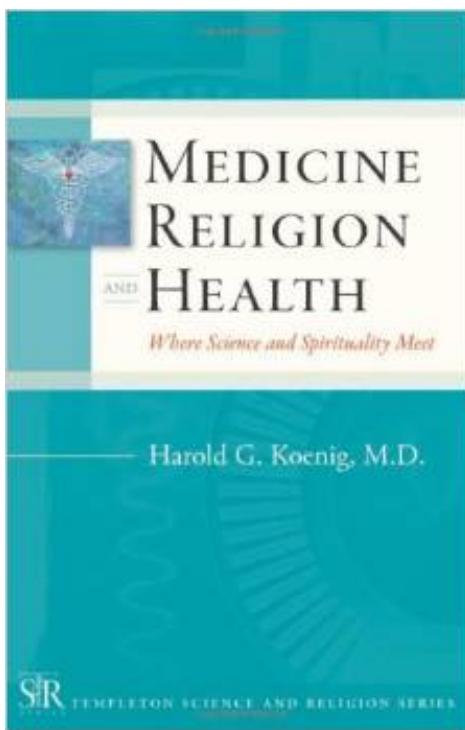
# IS THERE RESEARCH BASED RATIONALE FOR SPIRITUALITY GROUPS?

Substantial empirical evidence points to links between spiritual/religious factors and health in U.S. populations.” (Miller, 2003)

2002, over one thousand search studies had quantitatively examined relationships between religion, spirituality and health.



# IS THERE RESEARCH BASED RATIONALE FOR SPIRITUALITY GROUPS?



Dr. Harold G. Koenig is one of the world's leading researchers, and recognized authorities, on the relationship between spirituality & health. He has written extensively & comprehensively on this complex subject.

# IS THERE RESEARCH BASED RATIONALE FOR SPIRITUALITY GROUPS?

## SELF-REPORTED SURVEY

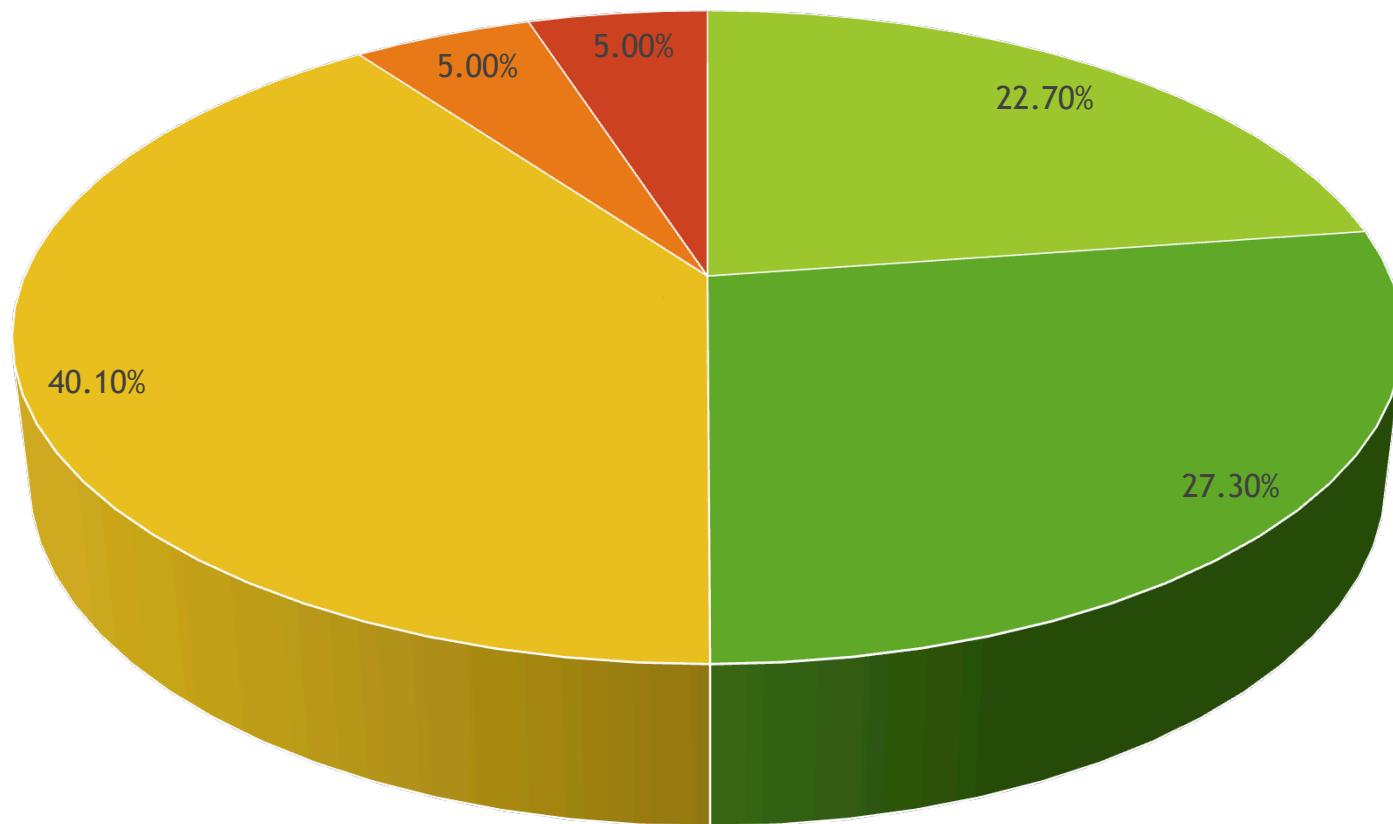
On a Scale of 0-10,

To what extent do you use spirituality or religion to cope?

Not Use (0)	5.00%
Small to Moderate Extent (0.1 - 4.9)	5.00%
Moderate to Large Extent (5.0 - 7.4)	22.7%
Large Extent or More (7.5 - 9.9)	27.3%
One Most Important Factor (10)	40.1%

(Duke University; Koenig 2008)

# IS THERE RESEARCH BASED RATIONALE FOR SPIRITUALITY GROUPS?



- Moderate to Large Extent
- Large Extent or More
- Most Important Factor
- Do Not Use
- Small to Moderate

# IS THERE RESEARCH BASED RATIONALE FOR SPIRITUALITY GROUPS?

Recent studies show that religious beliefs and practices are supportive when coping with stresses in life, and are beneficial to mental health.

Wagner and King conducted a study involving three groups—one group of patients who had psychotic illness, one group of formal care givers, and a third group of informal caregivers. The existential needs were the most important for the patient group, while the other groups considered material need (Wagner LC, King M., Existential Needs of People with Psychiatric Disorders, 2005)

Sims makes a comment, “It is unfortunate that we as psychiatrists can be so crass as to neglect this area of life which is clearly important to many of our patients.”. (Sims, A. ‘Psyche’--Spirit As Well As Mind?)

## IS THERE RESEARCH BASED RATIONALE FOR SPIRITUALITY GROUPS?

We conclude that both creativity and the potential for transcendence are inherent in the human psyche and can work as allies in the process of healing from mental illness". (Raab-Mayo, 2009))

Empirical studies of many groups dealing with major life stressors such as natural disaster, illness, loss of loved ones, divorce and serious mental illness show that spirituality is generally helpful to people in coping, especially people with the fewest resources facing the most uncontrollable of problems" (Pargamont, 2013)

# IS THERE RESEARCH BASED RATIONALE FOR SPIRITUALITY GROUPS?

When Measuring Spirituality in Research:  
Spirituality is usually measured as religion, or as  
positive psychological or character traits

- ▶ Positive Psychological states include having purpose and meaning in life, being connected with others, experiencing peace, harmony, well being
- ▶ Positive character traits include being forgiving, grateful, altruistic, high moral values and standards

# IS THERE A PLACE FOR SPIRITUALITY GROUPS FOR MENTAL HEALTH CLIENTS?



## IS THERE A PLACE FOR SPIRITUALITY GROUPS FOR MENTAL HEALTH CLIENTS? Cont'd



## IS THERE A PLACE FOR SPIRITUALITY GROUPS FOR MENTAL HEALTH CLIENTS?

ont'd

If mental health clients need spiritual support, send us a sign!



**ATTENTION**

## THERE A PLACE FOR SPIRITUALITY GROUPS OR MENTAL HEALTH CLIENTS? Cont'd

Most patients identify as religious, and state they would like that addressed in their health care. (Press Ganey)

Most patients have stated spiritual needs related to illness that could affect mental health, but feel those needs go unmet. (Press Ganey)

When hospitalized, patients are often separated from that which supports them spiritually and/or religiously. (NACSW)

Religious beliefs, and spirituality affect medical decisions (AMA)

TJC (The Joint Commission) requires spiritual needs be met!

## IS THERE A PLACE FOR SPIRITUALITY GROUPS FOR MENTAL HEALTH CLIENTS? Cont'd

Evidence-Based Research confirms that Spirituality shapes the health care choices we make.

But NO Guessing Allowed,  
as to How and Why?



## IS THERE A PLACE FOR SPIRITUALITY GROUPS FOR MENTAL HEALTH CLIENTS? Cont'd

Learn HOW and WHY Spirituality impacts the client's health care choices, by asking them!

### Spiritual Assessment Tools

Gives the facilitator a greater understanding of the concepts and language to assess for the client's spiritual needs.

# IS THERE A PLACE FOR SPIRITUALITY GROUPS FOR MENTAL HEALTH CLIENTS? Cont'd

## ASSESSMENT TOOLS

HOPE (Anandarajah & Hight, 2001)

- H Sources of Hope (meaning in life, peace, comfort, strength)
- O Organized Religion
- P Personal Practices
- E Effects on Medical Treatment; Mental Health Treatment; and other decision making

WHAT QUESTIONS WOULD YOU ASK TO ASSESS SPIRITUAL NEEDS, USING THIS MODEL?

# IS THERE A PLACE FOR SPIRITUALITY GROUPS FOR MENTAL HEALTH CLIENTS? Cont'd

## ASSESSMENT TOOLS

WITH (KING, 2002)

- F Do you have a Faith or religion that is important to you?
- A How do your beliefs Apply to your health?
- I Are you Involved in a faith or spirituality community?
- T How do your spiritual views affect your views about Treatment?
- H How may I Help you with any spiritual needs?

WHAT QUESTIONS WOULD YOU ASK TO ASSESS SPIRITUAL NEEDS, USING THIS MODEL?

# IS THERE A PLACE FOR SPIRITUALITY GROUPS FOR MENTAL HEALTH CLIENTS? Cont'd

## ASSESSMENT TOOLS

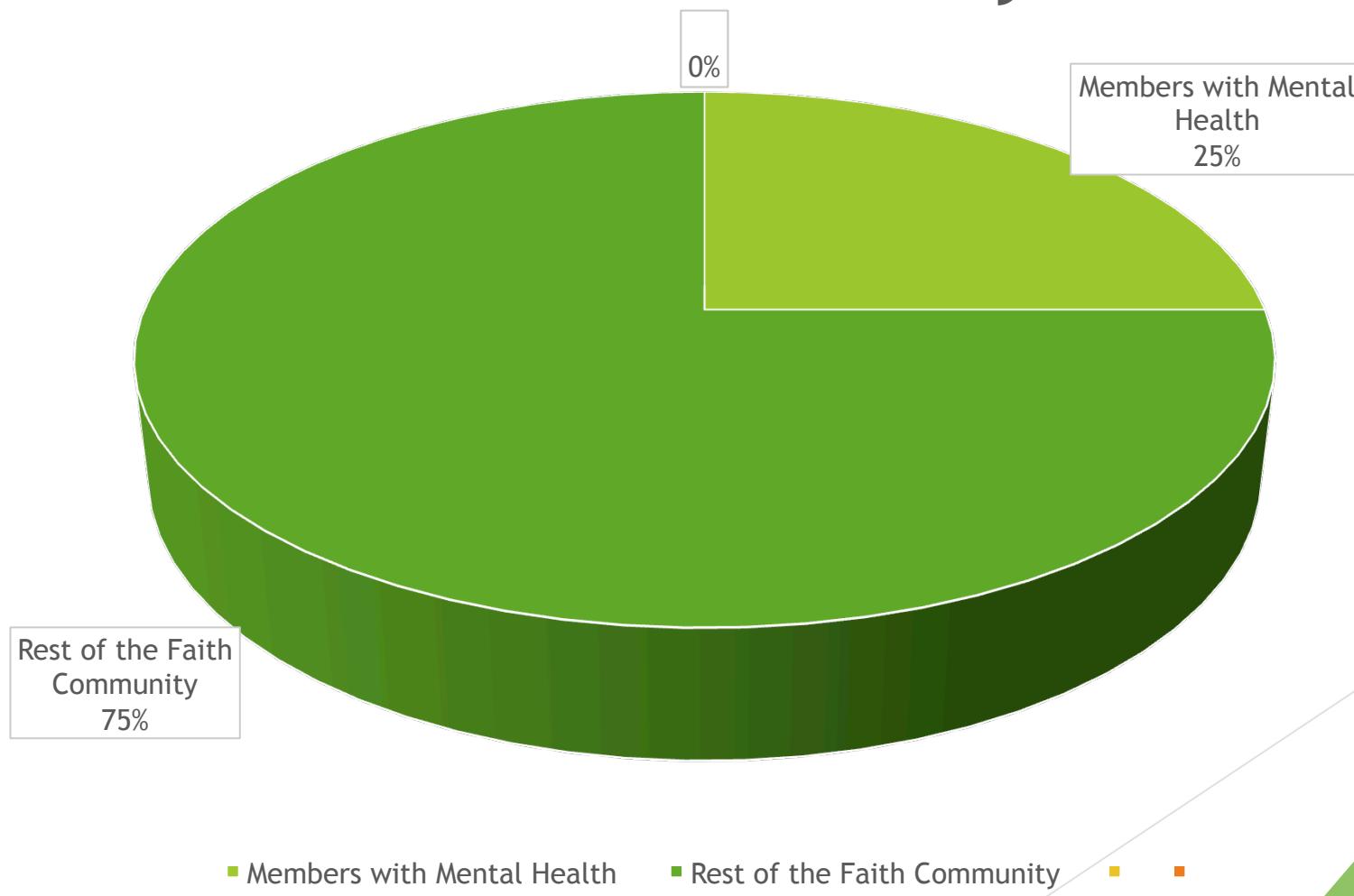
FACT (LaRocca-Pitts, 2008)

- F Faith (or Beliefs)
- A Active (or Available, Accessible, Applicable)
- C Coping (or Comfort); Conflicts (or Concerns)
- T Treatment Plan

WHAT QUESTIONS WOULD YOU ASK TO ASSESS SPIRITUAL NEEDS, USING THIS MODEL?

HERE A PLACE FOR MENTAL HEALTH  
SUPPORT GROUPS IN YOUR FAITH  
COMMUNITY?

## Faith Community



IS THERE A PLACE FOR MENTAL HEALTH  
SPIRITUALITY GROUPS IN YOUR FAITH  
COMMUNITY?



# HOW DO WE GET STARTED?



# HOW DO WE GET STARTED?

Gather the data!

- ▶ Be ready to present the rationale and the research
- ▶ Have a plan - You will have already answered the “Why?” question.  
Next is: Who? What? Where? When?

# HOW DO WE GET STARTED? cont'd

WHO?

Who will champion the program?

Who will be “guides” for the program?

Who will facilitate the group?

WHAT?

Be prepared to answer the question, “What is a Spirituality Group?”

# HOW DO WE GET STARTED? Cont'd

WHERE?

Where will the group meet?

WHEN?

Weekly, Monthly, Day, Evenings, Etc.

## HOW DO WE GET STARTED? Cont'd

One more “Who?” question: Who is writing the cheque?



# HOW DO WE GET STARTED? Cont'd

How are you going to promote your program?



# Are there Models for Mental Health Spirituality Groups?



# Are there Models for Mental Health Spirituality Groups?

Published by the National Alliance on Mental Illness  
**SPIRITUALITY/FAITH-RELATED  
MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT GROUPS (July 2013)**

This document is downloadable from the NAMI Faith Net web page  
[www.nami.org/faithnet](http://www.nami.org/faithnet)

For more information, contact:  
[namifaithnet@nami.org](mailto:namifaithnet@nami.org)  
NAMI Help Line at (800) 950-6264.

# Are There Models for Mental Health & Spirituality Groups? Cont'd

Some of the Programs Models include:

CROSS Ministries (Christians Reaching Out in Support & Sharing) - Lexington, Ky. p. 2

FAITH AND FELLOWSHIP Mental Health Support Group - Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago p. 3

HOPE'S NEST - Trinity United Presbyterian Church, Santa Ana, Calif. p. 4

MENTAL HEALTH FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP - St. George Episcopal Church, San Antonio p.5

MISS Support Group (Mental Illness Spiritual Support Group) - Toledo, Ohio p. 6

SPirituality Support Group-Adult and Child Behavioral Health, Indianapolis, Ind. p. 72

Pathways to Promise - They are here for the Spring Institute!

# WHAT IS “GOOD GROUP ETIQUETTE”?



# WHAT IS “GOOD GROUP ETIQUETTE”?

Honor each other by listening attentively, accepting differing opinions, and not interrupting.

Allow each person the opportunity to express themselves, before speaking again.

It is OK to be silent. You may say “pass” at any time.

Do not try to solve each other's problems, rather, support and comfort one another.

Be open to every one's understanding or experience of spirituality, and what has helped or hindered them.

Respect every one's privacy. Do not share what is said, with others.

Do not judge or argue with someone else's spirituality

Group begins and ends on time, but if you feel a need to leave, you are free to do so.

# ARE THERE HELPFUL STRATEGIES FOR HEALING WITH DIFFICULT CLIENTS IN GROUP?



# ARE THERE HELPFUL STRATEGIES FOR HEALING WITH DIFFICULT CLIENTS IN GROUP?

What defines “the difficult client” ?

- ▶ Chronically disruptive behavior
- ▶ Chronically inappropriate
- ▶ Competitive and Contagious
- ▶ Attention Seeking
- ▶ Monopolizes Group Time



# ARE THERE HELPFUL STRATEGIES FOR HEALING WITH DIFFICULT CLIENTS IN GROUP?

In action plan derived from research, experience, observations, and from consulting the work of psychologist Robert Bramson.

## 1. Create a conducive climate

- ▶ Supportive
- ▶ Cooperative
- ▶ Non-Competitive
- ▶ Non-Judgmental



# ARE THERE HELPFUL STRATEGIES FOR HEALING WITH DIFFICULT CLIENTS IN GROUP?

Stop wishing that difficult people will change



# ARE THERE HELPFUL STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH DIFFICULT CLIENTS IN GROUP?

## 3. Try not to encourage the disruption

- ▶ Don't placate the difficult client
- ▶ Don't be pulled into responding in a like manner
- ▶ Defer the difficult client to a more appropriate time (especially attention seekers)



# ARE THERE HELPFUL STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH DIFFICULT CLIENTS IN GROUP?

Attempt to convert the disruption into a constructive conversation

This can include the group confronting the difficult client, by using diversion phrases, that redirect attention, back to the group.



Diversion Phrases:

“Perhaps the group could provide a better solution.”

“Perhaps the group sees the situation differently.”

“Perhaps someone else in the group would like a chance to participate.”

## ARE THERE HELPFUL STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH DIFFICULT CLIENTS IN GROUP?

5. Confront the difficult client directly, in the group situation if necessary, to maintain group boundaries.

CONFRONTATION SHOULD BE  
DESCRIPTIVE,  
NOT EVALUATIVE!



## ARE THERE HELPFUL STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH DIFFICULT CLIENTS IN GROUP?

6. Separate the difficult client from yourself and the group.





amiliar with this commercial?



My version of the Jiffy Lube concept for  
Mental Health Spirituality Groups.....

IN (self)  
OUT (others)  
UP (The Spiritual)  
FIXED? (requires cont'd service)



