

MENTAL HEALTH ILLNESS WITH GRACE

FOURTH SESSION- SPIRITUALITY AND MENTAL HEALTH

- Opening Prayer

OPENING DISCUSSION

- "What does Spirituality mean for you?"

HOW DOES OUR FAITH NOURISH US?

Sacramental life of the Church (Celebration of the Eucharist, Sacrament of Reconciliation, spiritual direction)

Spiritual practices (devotions rosary, novenas, Stations of the Cross, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament,

Meditation, Lectio Divina (praying with the Sacred Scriptures)

Prayer groups, Bible study groups

Reading spiritual books

Retreats, days of reflection

COMPONENTS OF CATHOLIC SPIRITUALITY

- personal relationship with God
- Understanding of Catholic faith (how it applies to their daily life)
- Religious practices
- As we minister to people with mental distress/illness it would be important to **listen and observe for these three aspects** in order to have an idea about people's spirituality.

HOW EXPLORING AND INTEGRATING SPIRITUALITY CAN BENEFIT INDIVIDUALS TO THRIVE.

Five Dimensions of Health

1. Physical
2. Social
3. Emotional
4. Intellectual
5. Spiritual

HISTORY OF MENTAL HEALTH

- Prior to 1980s the mental health field was predominantly a secular practice. Religious beliefs and spirituality were ignored and pathologized.
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- Freud's psychoanalytic perspective viewed religion as the unconscious mind's need for fulfillment

- Albert Ellis, an American psychologist, and psychotherapist who founded rational emotive behavior therapy, in 1961 disparaged religion as being “on almost every conceivable count, directly opposed to the goals of mental health”. Over the next forty years, Ellis’s views on religion and mental health changed dramatically. In 2001, he co-authored a book “Counseling and Psychotherapy with Religious Persons: A Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy Approach”. Although he remained an atheist, Ellis demonstrated how core Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy values and principles are compatible with many religious systems of belief.

- Since the 1980s the importance of incorporating spirituality, has been recognized as an essential component in the treatment of people suffering from mental illness.
- David H. Rosmarin, director of McLean's Spirituality and Mental Health Program and an Assistant Professor of psychology in Harvard Medical Schools Department of Psychiatry, developed a program in 2017 after a hospital survey showed that "eighty percent of patients found religion useful in dealing with stress and that more than half wanted religion to be part of their treatment". The medical field in general has recognized that healing involves mind, body and soul. Research studies published in medicine, nursing and psychology journals have shown that support from faith is of greater quality than support one receives from other sources.

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RESEARCH ON SPIRITUALITY/MENTAL WELLNESS:

- -Having a spiritual belief have been associated with:
- -Better general good physical health and mental health
- -Less cognitive decline with aging
- -Better immune lower deaths "longevity"

BENEFITS OF INTEGRATING SPIRITUALITY INTO MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

- -Better coping from life stressors
- -Sense of connection- reduces the isolation that often accompanies mental distress: depression, debilitating anxiety and panic attacks, traumatic experiences, unresolved childhood adverse experiences, stigma stemming from and hospitalizations due to mental illness
- -Greater recovery from depression
- -Related to less anxiety, fewer substance use disorder
- -More positive emotions
- -Meaning, purpose in life and hope

BENEFITS OF INTEGRATING SPIRITUALITY INTO MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

- More generosity and happiness
- -Gratitude
- -Altruism
- -Greater marital and family stability
- -Less involvement in delinquent and acts of crime
- -lower suicidal rates

BENEFITS OF INTEGRATING SPIRITUALITY INTO MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

- Rosmarin in 2019 stated that “most clinicians he interviewed had not had a single 60-minute class- on spirituality and religion in their professional training .
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- Research has indicated that intrinsic religious values, (people try to live their lives according to their religious beliefs, values) have a positive impact on people’s healing, treatment, recovery.
- **Example:** Belief in a loving and forgiving God.
- Belief that we are all God’s children “Love one another”

BENEFITS OF INTEGRATING SPIRITUALITY INTO MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

- **Extrinsic religious beliefs**, belief in a vengeful and punishing God, as well as fear of punishment are often related to harmful effects. It is recommended to identify beliefs these beliefs which have negative effect on treatment outcomes, healing and recovery.
 - **Examples:**
 - -God tests the faithful by sending calamities, illness, accidents, death of loved ones...
 - -God sitting above in heaven watching and taking notes about people's wrongdoings.
 - -Transferring images of God based poor parental human experiences
 - -Belief that life own's suffering like the result of punishment by God
 - (God is a puppeteer)

GROUP DISCUSSION

- Thoughts, questions, insights

ROLE OF THE MINISTER

- Supporting individual's sense of connection with God who (supports, protects, guides, teaches, helps and heals).
- Providing opportunities for individuals for exploring spiritual beliefs so they can understand the relevance of their faith in the experience of their mental distress or mental illness.
- To become aware religious conflicts frustrations, unresolved painful life experiences that may be contributing to exacerbate people's distress.
- To assess people's beliefs that do not reflect Catholic teaching about God and life suffering. **Gospel as Good News.**
- Prayer, spiritual reading, reflection, consultation and education.

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