



INTERACTION

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President's Address Dr. Claudia Sadler-Gerhardt

Hello ASERVIC Friends!

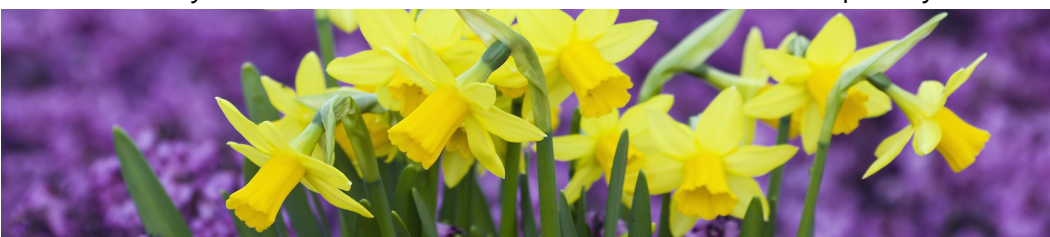
Happy Spring! Although I chuckle at the irony in that greeting since it is snowing like crazy, and the ground is covered with snow. However, the daffodils peeking their yellow through the white snow give me hope that spring is here, although a bit hidden at the moment.

I want to welcome you to this Spring edition of the *Interaction*, the official newsletter of the Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling. Spring is viewed by many as a time of renewal, reflected in nature, as well as in the recent religious celebrations of Holi, Passover, and Easter, and the upcoming Ramadan next month. I know for many who are students or educators, spring is a time of transitions and endings, and I wish you the best for the ending of the semester.

A lot is going on in ASERVIC, with ACA upon us and the 2018 ASERVIC Conference in Dallas just a couple of months away. I know that Drs. Ryan Foster and Daniel Gutierrez are working hard completing the final preparations for the conference, which is going to be amazing. I don't have any details yet, but I can give you a sneak preview of the 2019 conference—it's going to be in Colorado Springs next summer! So stay tuned!

A few years ago, Dr. Bryce Hagedorn, an ASERVIC Past President, wrote a column about Common Ground for the *Interaction*. I don't recall all he said, but I do remember he talked about respecting one another's differences while seeking the common ground we have in honoring the value of the religious faith or spiritual perspective of our clients and of one another. To that end we offer at ACA and at our ASERVIC Conferences sessions addressing this very issue and opportunities for dialogue to learn from one another. We have collaborated with other divisions in hopes of offering support and resources to our membership. We are such a diverse group of people from a myriad of worldviews, but our division is committed to integrating spiritual and religious issues into counseling, and to helping others do so also. To that end, we have offered seven free webinars this year, and a few of them were continued over multiple days.

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2018 ASERVIC CONFERENCE INFORMATION

Location: Magnolia Hotel in Dallas, Texas

Keynote Speaker: Rick Carson

Dates: July 13-15, 2018



Additional information about the conference, keynote speaker, and hotel reservations are available on the ASERVIC website at www.aservic.org. If you have questions about the conference or submission process, please email us at aservic2018@gmail.com.

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SPIRITUALITY IN THE FIELD

Dominique Avery

As part of best practice in counseling, we explore the whole person, right? We ask about the client's mood and psychological symptoms. We ask about their physical well-being, self-care habits, family, school or work, social supports, trauma history, legal history, developmental history, and so on. Somewhere in there we get to values, beliefs, religious and spiritual practices. For those who are religious the answer usually comes easily, but for those who identify as spiritual but not religious the answer is a bit trickier. After all, those who are spiritual but not religious (myself included) usually don't have a named group of membership and central gathering place to define ourselves. We do not have identified holidays celebrating our beliefs. There is no one book we can point to and say this guides my belief system. Spiritual identity without religion is a bit more murky and ambiguous, it can mean most anything.

Spiritual identity without religion may be something that our clients have not given much consideration. Yet, as the ASERVIC competencies reference, these values and beliefs are fundamental in shaping a person's worldview and psychological functioning (ASERVIC Competency No. 2). The number of people who identify as spiritual but not religious across the US is growing, making it even more important that this topic be explored rather than glossed over at intake and beyond. Like many, this is not something I gave much consideration to for most of my life. It was within the context of therapeutic settings that I first began to intentionally explore what spirituality meant to me.

My personal identity as a spiritual person has been a haphazard journey. My mother described herself as a "recovering catholic". My father on the hand was largely silent on the topic and took a laissez faire attitude towards religion. His religious upbringing was divided among gender lines; his mother and sister attended the Church of England, he and his father stayed home on

Sunday mornings. As a child, on occasion I would attend church service with a friend after a Saturday night sleep over. Other than these random religious services, my main exposure to the realm of organized religion was my mom's mild disgust of anything Christian and especially Catholic.

Even as a child, I was aware of the significant impact religion and spirituality had on a person's identity. I remember (I was somewhere around elementary school age) asking my mother "what are we"? By this I meant, if we are not Catholic, Christian, or Jewish like our friends (I didn't know anyone at the time who was Buddhist, Muslim, or anything outside the major Western religions), what is our identity? My mom replied, "we are humanists"; meaning for her that we believe in the good in people. Although this satisfied my young, concrete mind at the time, it was only the beginning of my journey towards a spiritual identity.

Throughout my teen years and young adulthood, my intentional exploration of what it meant to me to be a spiritual person was largely put on the back burner. There were times throughout these years when I would briefly become aware of a spiritual moment. These mostly occurred in the presence of nature or horses: the quiet of working in a barn in the early hours of a new day, sliding into flow while riding my horse, summiting a peak and being awestruck by the beauty of the world around me. In times of distress, I gravitated towards natural spaces. My first instinct toward healing during 9-11 was to go to the beach and seek solace in the wildness of the Oregon coast wind, the pounding of waves, and the cold sand under my feet. At the time, I would have not called myself a spiritual person. Religion and spirituality we still tied up as one in my mind. Thus, I had a hard time reconciling what these moments meant separate from the apathy towards or contempt of religion I had inherited.



SPIRITUALITY IN THE FIELD CONTINUED

My adult relationship with myself as a spiritual person was closely aligned with my development of my identity as a counselor. Prior to becoming a counselor, I worked as a field instructor for a wilderness therapy program. In this era of my life, I spent two weeks every month out in the desert with a group of adolescents. In this setting, I once again began to contemplate the effect the stark beauty of this environment had on my soul. I witnessed the healing power it had on the children with which I worked. The way that being at the mercy of the elements strips a person down to their core and distills out what is important. It was not just the children who were healed in this environment, I too found my own, grounded self. A connection with my soul, who I am as a person separate from conscious thought.

It was later in my counseling master's program that I began to intentionally put words to my experiences as a spiritual person. This is an important aspect of counselor training, as exploration of one's own values and beliefs about spirituality (ASERVIC Competency No. 3) is an integral step in the ethical practice of avoiding imposing personal values (ACA Code of Ethics, 2014, A.4.b.). Going through exercises in the classroom that I would later use

with clients, helped to shape my cognitive understanding of what I had experienced unconsciously as my spirituality. Spirituality for me is a recognition of something greater than myself, a practice of gratitude, a connection with nature, an appreciation of the beauty of the small moments in life that bring joy or tears, of connecting with those I love, and a million other aspects that shaped who I am and how I am. This was important because spirituality for me was not anything I could previously describe to others in a coherent way. I could not point to a book, a church, or any single teaching to say, "this is who I am". Just as I am sure to which many would attest, my own spirituality is as unique to me as my own finger print.

Today, I carry this journey to understanding with me when the topic results in confused or blank stares from clients or counselors in training. Understanding of what it means to be spiritual but not religious is more complicated than checking the "N/A box" of religious affiliation; it is an intentional cultivation of the felt and known self. As counselors, I believe we are uniquely positioned to provide this space for exploration but it starts with expanding the conversation rather than moving on when someone states they are not religious.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS CONTINUED

Another exciting happening is that we are actually beginning a strategic planning initiative. This is something that we have talked about over the past few years, but the tyranny of the urgent would rear up causing us to shift our focus. I'm excited to consider the preliminary reports from the committee, because we agree that ASERVIC needs to be more intentional about our direction, about what cross divisional collaboration we want to participate in, and what projects we should invest in for the best outcomes for our members. This is an exciting time for our division!

As the year comes to a close, I want to acknowledge the very dear people who are leaving the Board of Directors. Dr. Stephanie Dailey, our Past President and a dear friend, will be ending her term of service. She has been a wonderful servant leader who has much wisdom about ACA and ASERVIC. We aren't really saying good bye, however; she will be co-chairing the 2019 ASERVIC Conference, along with another Past

President, Dr. Carmen Gill. Dr. Richard Watts, Dr. Harriet Glossoff, and Dr. Daniel Gutierrez are also ending their terms on the ASERVIC Board. They have served in many capacities, most recently, Dr. Watts as Chair of the Ethical Values Committee, Dr. Glossoff as the Chair of Governing Documents Committee, and Dr. Gutierrez as the Technology Chair on the Media Committee and former webmaster. Please join me in thanking them for their tremendous service to us all!

This is my final column for the *Interaction*. I have been humbled and honored to have served as your ASERVIC President. It has been a privilege to serve you, our members, and to have worked with the wonderful individuals on our Board and the very important Chairs and members of our committees. ASERVIC is very dear to me! I welcome Dr. Leila Roach to the ASERVIC Presidency in July! I look forward to working with her and know she will be a great President! With much gratitude,
~Claudia

RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL VALUES CONTINUED

Once the mind is returned to clarity and calm, the second part of pratipaksha bhavana begins – self analysis. This is discovering the motivation for the negative impulses and understanding their consequences. While Patanjali believed selfish behavior, any behavior that was only for the benefit of the person at the expense of others, always brought pain, the second pratipaksha bhavana sutra identifies greed, anger, and infatuation as specific motivations. When greed is the negative impulse, clients often equate wanting with entitlement. They may not tolerate the craving, believing it is proof of entitlement, and an excuse for negative thoughts or acts. Self analysis allows the client to understand that wanting is not entitlement and find a positive way to tolerate the craving for something that is not a benefit or to achieve a want that is beneficial.

While our culture often accepts or promotes righteous anger, retaliation when wronged, Patanjali believed anger as a motivation harms the client and ignores higher motives. Even thousands of years ago, yogis recognized anger disturbs equanimity, causing toxins to be released, unbalancing the nervous system, and compromising rational thought. While anger at an injustice is limiting, Patanjali believed not caring, being immune to another's suffering, was worse. Rather he recommended the middle path of acknowledging the injustice, clearing and focusing the mind,

and correcting the injustice in the most effective way. Counselors may find this process of value in working with clients from all spiritual and religious traditions.

Finally, the second sutra addresses infatuation, considered a state of delusion, where perspective is lost due to lengthy, strong, or complex selfish emotions, which causes the client to forget the lessons of experience. Understanding the process of infatuations allows the client to return to the initial attachment and bring their experience to self analysis of the benefit or negative consequences of the object of desire.

While many of the current counseling theories and techniques address negative thoughts and acts, with the knowledge of pratipaksha bhavana, counselors may understand this practice in the Hindu and Yoga communities or explore its application across cultures.

ASERVIC Competencies Referenced

1. The professional counselor can describe the similarities and differences between spirituality and religion, including the basic beliefs of various spiritual systems, major world religions, agnosticism, and atheism.

13. The professional counselor is able to a) modify therapeutic techniques to include a client's spiritual and/or religious perspectives, and b) utilize spiritual and/or religious practices as techniques when appropriate and acceptable to a client's viewpoint.

Come chat with us on ASERVIC CONNECT

If you are a current member of ASERVIC or a current state division member of ASERVIC you should have access to ASERVIC Connect through ACA Connect. To find ASERVIC Connect and make sure you have access, go to ACA's website to locate ACA Connect and the ASERVIC Community:

- 1) <http://community.counseling.org/home>
- 2) **Select Communities**
- 3) **Select My Communities**
(you may be promoted to login to ACA)
- 4) **Find the ASERVIC Community**

If you cannot find ASERVIC under your communities, be sure that you are a current member.

Questions can be directed to:
Isabel Thompson, ASERVIC Secretary



A Bird's-Eye View of Native American Spirituality

Selin Philip, Ph.D., LPC

Native American spirituality is a vital part of Native American existence. Native Americans consider their spirituality as a way of life rather than a religion and it encompasses their whole life. Without understanding the Native American spiritual traditions, one cannot understand the Native American culture. The ASERVIC Competencies (2009) state, "The professional counselor recognizes that the client's beliefs (or absence of beliefs) about spirituality and/or religion are central to his or her worldview and can influence psychosocial functioning." Therefore, counselor's competence to work with Native Americans entails an understanding of the Native American spiritual traditions.

Native American spirituality is vast, richly diverse, and complex. While some tribes have complex forms of writing, there is no written Native American sacred text or guidelines to follow. Native Americans use storytelling or oral traditions as a way to pass down customs, history and heritage. Although the tribal composition is heterogeneous, most Native Americans share a common belief in a supernatural entity or Creator, who is all-powerful and all-knowing. They also call the creator, "the Master-Spirit" who is assumed to adopt a variety of forms. They believe in a host of lesser supernatural entities, such as evil god, who represented disaster, suffering, and death.

The Native American beliefs are dominated by Animism and the culture of Shamanism. By Animism, the Native Americans believe that, the universe, and all natural objects within the universe, have souls or spirits. Thus, they do not believe in a distinction between the natural and the supernatural realm, instead they find the "material" and the "spiritual" as a unified concept. They pray to the spirits for a good hunt and sacrifice valuables, such as the first tobacco and food to appease them. They also have spiritual leaders, called as a Shaman or a medicine man who

acts as a medium between the spirit world and the visible world. They believe that the Shamans or Medicine Men had special powers, medicine and magic to heal the sick, control the hunt, and predict the future.

Most Native Americans believe in the immortality of the human soul and an afterlife. The primary feature of this belief is the abundance of every good thing that makes earthly life secure and pleasant.

Along with the Native American beliefs come several rituals, ceremonies, and practices. It is common for

Native Americans to use sweat lodges, much like a sauna as purification, spiritual renewal, and empowerment. This is comparable to the other religions' fasting rituals on specific days. Religious festival and dances are an inherent part of the Native American culture. These festivals, ceremonies, and dances include

chanting and singing and play an important role in their emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being.

As counselors, it might be impossible for us to be experts in the various, complex Native American spiritual beliefs and practices. However, familiarity with Native American spirituality will assist us in "recognizing the (Native American) spiritual and/or religious themes in client communication and address these with the client when they are therapeutically relevant" (ASERVIC, 2009).

References

- Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling. (2009). *Competencies for Addressing Spiritual and Religious Issues in Counseling*. Retrieved from <http://www.aservic.org/resources/spiritual-competencies/>
- Irwin, L. (2000). *Native American spirituality: A critical reader*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.
- Locke, D. C., & Bailey, D. F. (2013). *Increasing multicultural understanding*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications



Submission Request

SPIRITUALITY IN THE FIELD

Do you have ideas or a story to share regarding your practice of spirituality in the field? If so, please submit to the next edition of the *Interaction*.

The Innovation Committee would like to formally invite current ASERVIC members to consider sharing their “Spirituality in the Field” experiences for publication in an upcoming ASERVIC newsletter.

Inquiries and submissions for this special section of the newsletter can be sent to
LYNN BOHECKER (lbohecker@nnu.edu)

- ◇ Follow the ASERVIC newsletter “guidelines for submission.” (See ASERVIC webpage www.aservic.org)
- ◇ Articles include an opening paragraph introducing the author to the readers.
- ◇ Articles include a second paragraph describing how the author incorporates one or multiple Spiritual Competencies in practice.
- ◇ Articles include a concluding paragraph or list of resources (books, trainings, websites/blogs, inspirational quote, etc.) related to the practices and competencies addressed in the article.
- ◇ A professional picture of the author is attached (in .jpeg format) with the article.

**Interested in submitting an article for
the SUMMER issue of the
Interaction?**

**The deadline is
FRIDAY, July 13, 2018**



Please email Heidi Henry, *Interaction* Editor, at counseling@heidihenry.com for more information.