



INTERACTION

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President's Address Dr. Leila Roach

Greetings ASERVIC Friends,

Welcome to the Fall 2018 edition of Interaction. For most of you, the season is Fall and with a chill in the air the leaves change, reminding us of the impermanence of all things. It is a time of letting go. Fall is followed by the cold and quiet of winter, the reawakening of spring, and finally the brilliance and thriving of

summer – a cycle that follows the rhythm of our own life cycle. In Florida where I am living, the seasons are different. For example, we're still in hurricane season, a time of extreme and often unpredictable weather. We also have Love Bug Season - Tourist Season - Strawberry Season- and of course Alligator Mating Season. While these seasons may not reflect the cycles of our life, they do remind us that *to everything there is a season*. All seasons of life offer us opportunities to grow, to learn, to heal, and to transform as spiritual beings. Often these transitions are intense and challenging and require us to let go of what is familiar and enter into the uncertainty of the unknown.

What allows us to make this leap? Growth, change, and healing occur in the context of our relationships. Neuroscientist Dr. Stephen Porges explains the importance of the social engagement system in his Polyvagal Theory. We all need to feel safe – in a physiological sense-calmed by an empathic, warm facial expression, sincere eye contact, and connection with another human being. We need to feel safe so that we can engage in an accepting and non-judgmental space with others and within ourselves. Only then, can we step into the unknown arenas of growth, change, and healing.

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President's Address continued on next page

President's Address Continued

Next summer, the ASERVIC Annual Conference will be held in Colorado Springs at the Cheyenne Mountain Resort. This year's theme, *Healing Connections in Colorado* reflects the importance of community and connection in our work together as counseling professionals. Our keynote speaker, Diane Poole Heller, Ph.D. is an established expert in the field of adult attachment theory, trauma resolution, and healing techniques. Her work teaches about the importance of the mind, body, and spirit connection within ourselves, as well as the healing power of relationships. We hope you will join us to connect and network with colleagues and friends. We hope you will consider submitting a session proposal. More information about the conference appears later in the newsletter.

In the Summer edition of Interaction, I introduced the collaborative efforts among ASERVIC, CSJ, AMCD, and ALGBTIC and our inter-divisional presidential statement. We have already begun making plans for the Joint Day of Service at the ACA Conference in New Orleans next March. We have continued to dialogue and are working on a series of joint webinars that are aligned with our current ACA president, Simone Lambert's initiatives. The first hosted by AMCD will be in late October and focus on Licensure Portability & Parity for the counseling profession; in late November/December CSJ will host a webinar on Promoting Mental Health and Averting Addiction through Prevention Services; in February, ALGBTIC will host and focus on Cultural Encounters; and in early May ASERVIC will host with a focus on Trauma, Disaster, and Crisis Counseling. Please stay tuned for the day/time and access information for these webinars. In addition, ASERVIC hosts a webinar series throughout the year. More information about these webinars and instructions for submitting a proposal are included later in this newsletter.

Please enjoy reading this edition of Interaction and learning about the many opportunities available to you through ASERVIC, as well as being inspired by the articles written by your colleagues. I'll close my address with one of my favorite quotes from Mother Teresa, "We can do no great things - only small things with great love." Small acts of kindness and meaningful connection with others are the daily practices that sustain us all.

With gratitude,
Leila

2019 ASERVIC CONFERENCE



July 6—7, 2019

[Cheyenne Mountain
Resort](#)

Guest Speaker:
Diane Poole Heller

[Click here for more
information.](#)

SPIRITUALITY IN THE FIELD

Blaine Reilly

My name is Blaine Reilly. I live and work in the Northwestern part of the US, and hold a top tier professional counseling license. I have a Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Counseling from a CACREP accredited university and I am a fulltime assistant professor. Truthfully, for most of my life I would not usually say that spirituality and religion have been central to my life and wellbeing. However, that changed as my life experiences influenced my perspective.

Know thyself. This original Greek phrase readily comes to mind when I ponder ‘Spirituality in the Field.’ When I engage with students as a counselor educator, the phrase ‘know thyself’ frequently surfaces in conversations around professional identity. The spiritual competencies I will be discussing in this article are: 3. The professional counselor actively explores his or her own attitudes, beliefs, and values about spirituality and/or religion and 4. The professional counselor continuously evaluates the influence of his or her own spiritual and/or religious beliefs and values on the client and the counseling process.

For example, last summer during our program’s clinical skills courses, I had a pre-practicum student ask to speak with me about a conflict of values he was having. Desperate to want to have a concrete solution to his values conflict, I thought the student might benefit from some processing to talk through his dilemma. So I invited him to my office for a conversation. It was in this space that he disclosed his dissonance related to his religious identity and his evolving professional counselor identity. I encouraged him to say more about his dilemma. Tired as I was from the intense clinical course instruction for the week, I found myself eager—almost physically leaning into his ethical and religious dissonance. The gist of his plight was not unusual from what many other students and clinicians face: how do I retain my identity as a Christian, Muslim, Atheist, etc. while giving full attention to my client’s own spiritual or religious values? I felt in touch with my own process—two



decades worth of exploring a tangible sense of spiritual belonging, my want for a more significant connection beyond the empirical. I kept, for the moment, these memories at bay so I could be fully present with him. Now, I am not sure how much I said; I believe I listened more than I spoke. I do know that had I not been actively engaged in my exploration of spiritual values, I may not have been as present with the student.

I was raised as Catholic for much of my youth. During Catholic Mass, I remember the excitement I felt anticipating the time when I could turn around in my pew and shake people’s hands and say, “Peace Be with You.” I was also aware that I was not interested in religious and spiritual matters at the time. I suppose my heart and mind were focused more on sports, friends, music, and well, sports. This spiritual latency period lasted until my senior year of high school; I stumbled across Dan Millman’s *The Way of the Peaceful Warrior*. My Sophomore year at a Christian uni-

versity, I borrowed a friend’s copy of *Awareness* by Anthony Demello. These works of spiritual prose combined with my developing poetic and philosophical sensibility began to shape the next few decades of my life. In my 30s, it first took recognizing my addiction to alcohol and my deep-seated fear of vulnerability, to admit that I was a spiritual person. It was in multiple 12-step meetings, talks with my sponsor, a series of dark nights of the soul (Keen, 1991), where I began to explore in a more personal way the realm of the spiritual. Here I thoroughly wrestled with various spiritual themes such as surrender, acceptance, higher power, etc. Eventually, these terms were no longer abstract concepts—but gut-wrenching experiences shared with friends, the 12-step fellowship, and partners. Because of this journey, because I identify as an alcoholic and have borne witness to other 12 step members’ deep exploration of their own beliefs and struggle to believe, I find myself willing, able, and truly eager to lean into others’ own quest to know thyself in arriving at authentic religious and spiritual meaning.

SPIRITUALITY IN THE FIELD

Because now my happiness necessarily involves a common commitment to the spiritual search and relationship to my higher power, I am more aware of the value of my clients' (and students) potential need to process their sense of religious and spiritual place in this world. For this student, I did not impose my values; I believe I was able to promote a professional counselor identity in encouraging him to explore his values while mitigating the risk of unconsciously imposing values onto his clients.

Just this past summer, the same student took me aside and thanked me for the conversation. Gone was the desperation and fear of losing his personal identity for that of a professional counselor. Instead was an awareness that he could hold his personal values and those differing values of a client simultaneously and without internal incongruence or conflict.

References

- Association for Spiritual, Ethical and Religious Values in Counseling. (2009). *Spiritual & Religious Competencies*. Retrieved from <http://www.aservic.org/resources/spiritual-competencies/>
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UPCOMING WEBINARS

Publishing in CVJ

Receive 1.5 Free Continuing Education Hours (CE)

2:00PM-3:00PM EST

December 6, 2018

Dr. Craig Cashwell and Joe LeBlanc

[Click Here](#) for Free Webinar Registration

Please join us for the first webinar in The Joint Divisional Webinar Series sponsored by AMCD, ALGBTIC, ASERVIC, & CSJ. Participants must register for the webinar to attend. Seats are limited.

Receive 1.5 Free Continuing Education Hours (CE)

Licensure Portability: Challenges, Implications, Solutions, and OUR Collective Next Steps

December 6, 2018

3:00PM-4:30PM EST

[Click Here](#) for Free Webinar Registration

The Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling (ASERVIC) has been approved by NBCC as a continuing education provider, ACEP No. 1010. Programs that do not qualify for NBCC credit are clearly identified. ASERVIC is solely responsible for all aspects of the program. For more information about ASERVIC's webinars, visit www.aservic.org



Spiritual and Religious Values Committee Column

Guiding Questions to Listen for Spiritual (Religious) Understanding

By Michael Kocet, Yu-Fen Lin, Anita Neuer Colburn, Shawn Spurgeon, and Richard Watts
(taken from the ASERVIC Panel Presentation at the 2018 Annual Conference, Dallas, TX)

If you missed the panel presentation at the annual ASERVIC conference in Dallas in July, we'd like to share this list of questions we developed for counselors, educators, and supervisors to ask themselves as they assess the degree to which they are truly living out spiritual inclusivity and integration. Differences in spiritual/religious belief systems can spark great debate and conflict. We hope your own ability to make room for the "other" may be improved by reflecting on your response to these questions.

1. What will enable me to hear my colleague/client/family member/friend so that I can best understand their religious/spiritual perspective?
2. What is getting in my way of listening to foster spiritual or religious understanding with this person?
3. How can I ensure that I am not contributing to spiritual/religious microaggressions in this professional/personal dialogue?
4. Am I hearing, acknowledging, and validating the spiritual pain that this person is experiencing or has experienced in the past?
5. How am I prioritizing my listening – understand them first, or deliver my own message first?
6. What can I say to this person to nurture to our mutual connection with one another?
7. What am I doing to maintain a "not knowing" position and thereby allowing others to be the expert of their spirituality?
8. Rather than focusing on differences, what areas of spiritual common ground can I attend to in building connections with other persons?
9. What can I say or do to affirm this person's spiritual beliefs?
10. If I choose to live in my own insulated world and do not reach out to have true dialogues with others, what harm could possibly be done?
11. On the other hand, if I do reach out and have true dialogues with those who are different from me, what kind of positive impact would I make?
12. How am I changed for the better as a result of this dialogue?

If you have any thoughts on these or reactions you would like to share, please email Anita at anita.nc@icloud.com.

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Spiritual and Religious Values Committee Column

Religious Diversity: There May Be More Than You Think

By Travis McKie-Voerste

In my work as a professional counselor, I am privileged to work with people from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and religions. Often I have the advantage of knowing much about the people with whom I work, based on information they disclose on forms filled out during or before the first meeting I have with them. With co-workers, students, and professional contacts, I do not usually know this information a priori, although often folks disclose their religious identities in direct and indirect ways. Indirect ways of communicating religion include the wearing of religious symbols, display of religious symbols in their office, or use of religious language, though these may not be reliable indicators of religious belief. More direct means of disclosure involve discussing participation in religious activities or asking others about their religious activity.

For one group of individuals, the topic of religion can trigger feelings of anxiety in professional and social settings. While this may be true for adherents to the non-dominant faiths, this is especially the case for what a recent National Geographic article describes as the second largest “religious” group (Bullard, 2016), the religious “Nones,” or folks who indicate no religious affiliation. Nones are a di-

verse group within themselves, and their comfort with the disclosure of their non-belief will vary from those who conform with social norms and participate in religious activities despite their the non-belief, to individuals vocal about their atheism (Silver, Coleman, Hood, & Holcombe, 2014).

Religionormativity exists in many parts of the United States, but especially in the south, in the region known as the Bible Belt. In this part of the country it is especially important to be aware that religious diversity does not just mean Protestant or Catholic, but also Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, and the Nones, among many more. My dissertation work is a qualitative study that is investigating the experience of the non-religious, non-spiritual (in the supernatural sense) folks of counseling. While I am still working on the data analysis, participants stories include counselors inappropriately using religion in the counseling relationship, leading to increased distrust, early termination of relationships, and feelings of rejection, to name a few. There are also great examples of counselors who are religious and disconfirm stereotypes that non-religious/non-spiritual (NRNS) folks may have about religious individuals. *(continued on next page)*

CONFERENCE CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Conference Theme: "Healing Connections in Colorado"

- Proposals must be submitted no later than 11:59 PM EST on January 5, 2019
If your proposal is accepted, please note the following:
- Decisions will be sent via email to the primary presenter by February 4, 2019
 - You must register for the conference by March 31, 2019

For further information and submission instructions, visit the ASERVIC Conference website at www.aservic.org/conferences/2019-aservic-conference

Spiritual and Religious Values Committee Column

The point of this discussion is to challenge you to be aware of how your direct and indirect disclosure of religion impact the Nones that are in your lives, many of which you may be unaware. If you have already committed to providing inclusive services, whether counseling, education, or supervision, perform a quick inventory to see if you put this into practice. Here is a quick list to get you started.

- ✓ My practice/programs website and advertisements do not include religious symbols or are inclusive of a multitude of religious and non-religious symbols such as atheist or humanist symbols.
- ✓ My profile does not identify the counselors' religious affiliation or is intentional in stating that counselor helps clients of religious and NRNS identities.
- ✓ I avoid wearing items that display religious symbols, or if religious items are worn, this is discussed with my client/supervisee/student to ascertain the impact on the relationship.
- ✓ Forms that I use that inquire about religion or spirituality include options to identify as non-religious, non-spiritual, atheist, humanist, freethinker, or I use an objective assessment such as the NRNSS (Cragun, Hammer, & Nielsen, 2015).
- ✓ When I meet individuals I do not assume that they have a belief in God, even if they indicate/state that they attend religious rituals, or wear religious symbols.
- ✓ I acknowledge the stigma related to the rejection of belief in a god.

References

- Bullard, G. (2016). The world's newest major religion: No religion. *National Geographic*.
- Silver, C. F., Coleman, T. J., Hood, R. W., & Holcombe, J. M. (2014). The six types of nonbelief: A qualitative and quantitative study of type and narrative. *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, 17(10), 990-1001. doi:10.1080/13674676.2014.987743

Travis McKie-Voerste is a Ph.D. Candidate in the University of Georgia Counseling and Student Personnel Services program (Counselor Education and Supervision), and a lecturer in psychology at Dalton State College. Correspondence can be addressed to tmckie@uga.edu

CALL FOR WEBINAR PROPOSALS

The Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling (ASERVIC) invites members, colleagues, students, and other related specialists to submit proposals for our webinar series! The webinars are offered to ASERVIC members as a division benefit, and archived webinar recordings are stored on ASERVIC's website as a resource for ASERVIC members. Additionally, participants and presenters may receive free continuing education hours for eligible programs.

Webinars are scheduled based on the presenter's availability and expertise, and topics of webinars must remain within the guidelines of ASERVIC. To submit a proposal for ASERVIC's webinar series, please complete the form using the following link: https://unccprojectmosaic.az1.qualtrics.com/iframe/SV_3wQPAic0YXelDIH

For questions about ASERVIC's webinars, please contact Missy Butts at cbutts4@uncc.edu

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ETHICS CORNER

The ASERVIC Competencies and Ethics: Spiritual and Religious Assessment in Treatment

Rosanne Nunnery

The ASERVIC competencies encourage best practices when working with diverse clients across a multitude of worldviews. Specifically, the categories focus on understanding a client's worldview, utilizing counselor self-awareness, considering developmental processes, use of effective communication, and ongoing application of appropriate assessment to diagnose and treat (ASERVIC, 2009). The ASERVIC competency on assessment encourages an initial and ongoing assessment of a client's spiritual, religious, or even nonreligious perspective to ensure a comprehensive understanding of these aspects for the individual receiving counseling. The code of ethics section *E.8. Multicultural Issues/Diversity in Assessment* (ACA, 2014) outlines a standard to consider the types of assessments chosen and administered, the assessment needs of diverse clients including assessing for the influence of spirituality and religion, and ethical interpretation of assessment. Considering the competencies and other ethical codes, along with the diversity of clients served; how can clinicians ensure that the assessment process is properly managed?

The assessment process begins at the point of contact with the client, couple or family. After the informed consent and HIPAA required documents (ACA, 2014), counselors meet with a client and ask questions to effectively complete the intake or biopsychosocial assessment. Although some agencies have established assessments for a counselor or trainee to utilize, *E.12 Assessment Construction* (ACA, 2014), asks counselors to consider how assessments are constructed and the factors considered in the development. To take into account the spiritual and religious needs of a client, assessments should not only include the standardized questions regarding presenting problems, medication, mental health, and familial history but provide a separate section that specifically asks about religion and spirituality perspectives. Some of these questions might include: Do you belong to a particular religious or spiritual group or is it individualized belief? What is your level of involvement in your spiritual/religious practice? What are the benefits of involvement with your spiritual/religious practice?

How important is your practice to your physical, emotional, and psychological wellbeing? How would you prefer to have your spiritual/religious practice incorporated into your treatment planning process?

Asking these and other questions creates a framework for allowing space for a client and counselor to build rapport, trust, congruence, and positive regard from the onset of treatment and then leading into the ongoing assessment process that helps to align treatment goals and successful treatment outcomes. A clinician should examine the worldview of the client without judgment of type or practice of religion or spirituality and utilize this assessment knowledge as part of the overall case conceptualization just as all other biopsychosocial assessment information. This type of clinical questioning sets the tone for the discussion of these and other religious and/or spiritual topics to be an open dialogue of conversation between a client and a counselor.

After the intake process, additional assessments should be considered to formulate a proper diagnosis (ACA, 2014, Section E.5.a.) and subsequent treatment plan. The ASERVIC Competencies (2009) highlight how spiritual and religious perspectives contribute to client treatment in a variety of ways and how treatment goals should include these factors as they are pertinent to the overall establishment of goals and should influence the use of theories and interventions to align with those perspectives. Having this spiritual and religious knowledge does not negate the use of evidence-based clinical practice to treat the specified diagnosis such as depression. However, if a specific mantra provides a sense of calm and peace when in the midst of anxiety, a counselor should allow space for this to be a part of a treatment just as the use of mindfulness-based cognitive therapies might be used. What would a goal look like when considering the importance of a mantra meditation for a client? Daily implementation of mantra meditation to reduce thought patterns that lead to an anxiety response.

(continued on next page)

ETHICS CORNER

Considering the formulation and integration of goals and treatment outcomes along with specified techniques and treatment, what happens if clients are seeking spiritual or religious perspectives from counselors? The informed consent process (ACA, 2014, section A), that fully outlines the clinician's background, scope of practice, and limitations should indicate that the treatment process will include the assessment of all facets of one's life including spirituality and religion; there should be a clear disclaimer that a counselor's personally held religious or spiritual beliefs nor values will be the focus of a client's individualized treatment. A counselor should *A.4. avoiding harm and imposing values* (ACA, 2014) and be cognizant that some aspects of treatment might be reserved for a referral using appropriate consultation by the counselor such as to a religious leader to understand a religion more fully or by the client who might consult with spiritual leader or practice literature to have a deeper analysis. However, it is important that a counselor's lack of competence in regard to religion or spirituality does not hinder the consideration of spiritual and religious aspects in the

overall assessment and ongoing assessment of a client.

Overall, the ACA code of ethics (2014) and the ASERVIC competencies (2009) encourage the consideration of all aspects of a client's worldview. Worldviews are multifaceted both for a counselor and a client so it is imperative that there is an open awareness that part of knowing the client, fully, includes communicating, assessing, and effectively considering religious and spiritual factors within treatment.

References

- American Counseling Association (2014). *ACA code of ethics*. Alexandria, VA: Author
- Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling. (2009). *Spiritual competencies*. Retrieved from <http://www.aservic.org/resources/spiritual-competencies/>

Rosanne Nunnery, Ph.D., LPC-S, NCC, BC-TMH is a member of the ASERVIC ethics Committee. She is a CORE Faculty at Capella University. Email: Ro-

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

ithompson@nova.edu



Submission Request

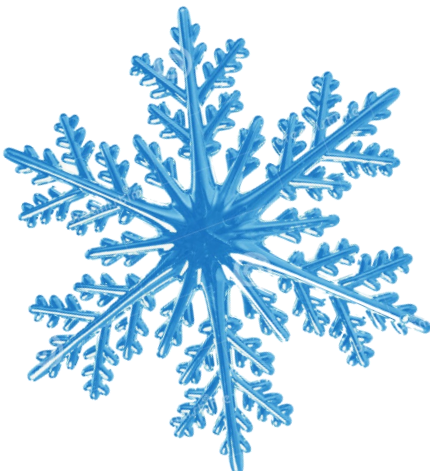
SPIRITUALITY IN THE FIELD

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@liberty.edu)**

- ◇ 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 WINTER issue of the
Interaction?**

**The deadline is
FRIDAY, January 18, 2019**

Please refer to ASERVIC.org for guidelines for publication or for more information, or email Heidi Henry, *Interaction* Editor, at counseling@heidihenry.com