



INTERACTION

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President's Address Dr. Claudia Sadler-Gerhardt

Happy Fall, ASERVIC Friends!

Welcome to the Fall edition of the *Interaction*. Thank you for your interest in ASERVIC and for reading this issue of our newsletter.

Fall is my favorite season. I live in Ohio, and I love the vibrant blazing colors that accompany fall. Fall to me has always meant the beginning of school, complete with new pencil boxes, new backpacks, new teachers and professors, and new things to learn. I think of raking piles of leaves, the smells of fire pits in driveways, and children trying to get just a few more

minutes of play before dark.

For those of us who are Counselor Educators, fall is not only a return to the classroom, but also biennially, the national conference for the Association of Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES). Members of the ASERVIC Board were there, as were many graduate students who are ASERVIC members. Three of our Board members were honored at ACES for their contributions to the counseling field. Please join me in congratulating Dr. Anita Neuer Colburn, who received the Research in Counselor Education and Supervision Award. In addition to being a Board Member, Dr. Neuer Colburn also chairs the Spiritual and Religious Values Committee and has contributed an article to this issue of the *Interaction*. Dr. Amanda Giordano and Dr. Hannah Bayne received an ACES Research Award for their current research projects. Dr. Giordano has been the ASERVIC Treasurer for the past three years, and Dr. Bayne is a new Board member who is chairing the Emerging Leaders program within ASERVIC. I am very proud of them all and happy to work alongside of them.

The ASERVIC Board also met for a business meeting at ACES, and we learned that our revised ASERVIC Bylaws were approved by the Governing Council of ACA! Revising the Bylaws was a major project that took over two years to complete, and it's a relief to have them approved. According to the ACA reviewers who reviewed our Bylaws, "The ASERVIC Bylaws are very well written and should assist this division with continuing the great work they are doing." Again, I am proud of our Governing Documents Committee Chairs, Dr. Harriet Glossoff and Dr. Leila Roach, who carried the major workload of the revisions, and I was happy to serve with them and Dr. Daniel Gutierrez on the committee. One of the important changes in the Bylaws affects the positions of the Secretary and the Treasurer: Those are now elected officers with voting privileges.



President's Address continued on page 4

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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.

INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING AT THE CONFERENCE?

Volunteers help support the conference in various aspects including technology support, proctoring sessions, and helping with registration. In order to be eligible you must be a member of ASERVIC at the time of the conference. Individuals who are selected will receive a discount on registration and will be expected to attend a volunteer orientation on July 12th. You do **not** have to be a student to volunteer. The deadline to apply has been extended to November 15, 2017. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the conference volunteer committee chair, Dr. Marinn Pierce, at PierceLM@winthrop.edu.

[Volunteer Application](#)

President's Address Continued

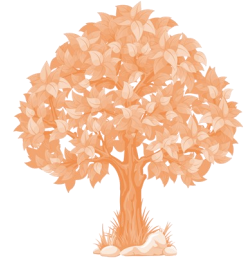
We spent time at the Board meeting discussing plans for the 2018 ASERVIC Conference in Dallas. I do hope you'll plan to join us there! It promises to be another fantastic opportunity to learn and to make new friends, and to reconnect with old friends. We also began initial work on the 2019 ASERVIC Conference and will hopefully have a location to announce soon. If any of you have suggestions of locations you would enjoy or prefer for the conference, please email our Past President, Dr. Stephanie Dailey at Stephanie.dailey1@gmail.com with your ideas.

I would like to publically acknowledge that Dr. Joni Miller will no longer be editing the "Room At The Table" column, which has appeared in the *Interaction* over the past several issues. We thank you, Joni, for all your work with this column and for your service to our profession and our division. We would welcome comments from you, our members, if you have any thoughts or ideas for continuing some type of column that allows for continuing the dialogue that we have started around religious and spiritual differences and how these manifest within our work with clients and alongside one another. Please feel free to email me, or email our *Interaction* Editor, Heidi Henry at counseling@heidihenry.com with your suggestions.

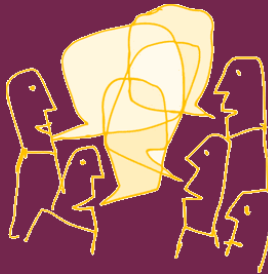
One additional person I would like to acknowledge is Lauren McKenna, our Graduate Student Representative for 2017-2018. Lauren is a doctoral student at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology, and I have the privilege of working closely with her. If you are a graduate student member of ASERVIC, you have already heard from Lauren. She is holding regular phone conference meetings with students, because we really want to hear what you think, how you would like to serve, and what you would like ASERVIC to do that would be helpful to students. Lauren's email is lmckenna@ego.thechicagoschool.edu and I know she would love to hear from you.

Thank you for your continued support of ASERVIC. I hope you have a great fall, whether as a student, a counselor educator, a counselor, or a supervisor. Thank you for your commitment to integrating spiritual, ethical, and religious values into your work with clients, students, and supervisees.

With gratitude,
Claudia



ASERVIC Webinars



Free CE hours are available to ASERVIC members for participating in many of ASERVIC webinars. You may only receive 1 CE hour per hour of each program. Please check your state requirements to determine if NBCC-approved CE hours are acceptable for state-specific credentials.

For questions about ASERVIC Webinars, please contact Missy Butts at cbutts4@uncc.edu

November 9, 2017 1pm-3:15pm EST	Dr. Janice Holden	After Death Communication
December 7, 2017 1pm-2pm EST	Gabi Picciotto	Introduction to Integral Theory



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, CE hours, and using WebEx visit www.aservic.org

ROOM AT THE TABLE

I'm pleased to introduce Esther* and her ongoing story of how she approached her faith and her counseling practice. Esther has been a professional counselor for 10 years and she says she identifies as a Pentecostal/Charismatic Christian "when answering surveys." Hers is a journey of coming through her struggles of working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer/Questioning (LGBTQ) clients to a different understanding of her faith. She says, "My experiences as a missionary in other countries opened my eyes to the reality that the Christian faith has many different expressions, and that no one denomination has the whole Truth. I think this exposure to other faith traditions from around the world was the soil that allowed my initial reluctance to work with LGBTQ clients to be challenged in positive ways, and really helped me examine the countertransference issues that continue to arise when I work with clients from the LGBTQ community." Her interview has been edited for clarity and length. What was your first exposure to an LGBTQ person?

Let me take you back a few years. Growing up in a foreign, Western, country and attending a traditional Pentecostal church I never questioned that homosexuality was a sin. It was standard doctrinal practice. Later my husband and I came to the United States and led a house church. A young man attended our house church who really struggled with his sexuality. He was pretty sure he was gay but he really struggled because he thought that homosexuality was a sin and he wanted to be accepted in the church. When I think back, I wish that I had the knowledge I gained [after attending counseling classes] so that I could tell him that sexuality is on a continuum and, hey, you're gay. Now this gentleman is in the gay community and seems to have rejected faith. I often think I may have had a hand in him going away from faith, although that certainly wasn't my intention. We never contradicted him when he said that the Bible calls him to be straight. We weren't trying to condemn him but that's all we knew.

When I started [in the counseling program] I met a lot of people from many different faith paradigms. As a coach at an anxiety institute I had a lot of gay clients, but they were coming in for help for phobias or OCD. So I had exposure to the gay community but sexual orientation issues were not a problem because I wasn't dealing with it as a counselor. Then, in my training as an intern I had a gay client come back who I had previously worked with around driving phobias. Now he wanted to work on relationship issues with his partner. This was the start of my awakening. I thought, "How am I going to counsel this person when I may not agree with their lifestyle?"



As I prayed about it and wrestled with it and talked with professors, I came to the conclusion that I was going to treat this person as the child of God they are. It wasn't my job to say whether or not I thought their sexual orientation was right or wrong. And by then I started thinking that maybe God didn't care about their sexual orientation as much as we think He should. I had a lot of very supportive friends who are affirming who helped me through that struggle.

A transformational moment for me was when one of my professors brought in a transgender visiting speaker. This person was somebody who had been a male pastor in a really thriving community and grown the church during the process of questioning their personal gender identity. She spoke factually about how the church had treated her, especially after she transitioned. This awoke a passion for social justice in me. The way this person was thrown out of their leadership role and out of their church community was wrong. To me that just didn't seem to be how Jesus would want us to treat somebody. That was such a pivotal moment for me. That's when I really began to say to myself that even if I am wrong and maybe I'll go to hell for it but I'm not going to tell people their sexual orientation is wrong or their gender identity is wrong. I'm going to treat people as a precious gift from God.

I'm attending a church right now that's much more about grace and mercy. And that helps a lot. The pastor is more about "Let's love people into the Kingdom rather than beat them over the head into the Kingdom."

You said in what you wrote to me that sometimes people in your faith community tell you that you should be encouraging clients to be cis-gendered heterosexuals. What kind of things do they say?

"How could you work with somebody like that?" "Why aren't you telling them the 'truth'?" I think the hardest one is, "You must be a sinner because you aren't telling them what they should be." I understand where they're coming from because 30 years ago I was just as dogmatic, until I got to know people who are transgender or gay and got to hear their stories. What does it feel like when people tell you those kinds of things?

Oh, it hurts. It really hurts because these are people that in many other ways I really respect. People who are living out their faith. Hearing them tell me that I'm being deceived. Sometimes I really struggle and question myself, "Am I?" Then my answer is, "If I am, then Lord forgive me, because I feel that God has called me to treat everyone with the same level of respect." But it does hurt, it stings.

ROOM AT THE TABLE CONTINUED

Can you talk about specific experiences with LGBTQ clients you've had?

I've had one client struggling with gender identity issues who came to me after being discharged after a suicide attempt. I was honest with the client about my level of knowledge and experience [with transgender clients]. When the client first came I tried to refer them to [a colleague who has experience working with transgender clients] but logistically it wasn't going to work because the client lived in a rural community. So we continued to work together and over the course of two years the client transitioned from male to female. I received a lot of consultation from more experienced colleagues. The client has since transitioned and we touch base every now and again. I haven't had to see the client in at least a year or more. And she is so much happier as female. Her life went to pieces during the transition, she lost her home, she lost her family. The children have since reconciled with their biological father who is now a woman. The former wife has never reconciled. Walking through that process with her, every time I would sit in the room with her I would ask, "What is in the best interest of my client? Is what I am doing in the best interest of the client? Yes, then, okay, let's keep going." I think having a therapist who was open about her struggles was also helpful to the client because the client had some faith before the process began but is now integrated into a church community. Her faith has deepened as a result of going through that transition.

Part of the reason I proposed this column to ASERVIC was that I sometimes saw liberal counselors being unkind to people who were struggling with this. What advice can you give more liberal counselors to interact with their peers who are struggling with their faith and their approach to clients?

I'm going to be blunt. Shut up and listen. [I had a counselor friend who] was wonderfully helpful. She would listen to my struggle, and then she would give me a different perspective to look at without minimizing or diminishing my struggle. I think having friends who were open and accepting of me as I was go-

ing through that struggle helped me. I score very high in openness to experience in the NEO personality profile. For me it was easier to wrap my head around looking at things in different ways. Often people who are attracted to more conservative faith are lower in openness to experience and they're just going to need even more time. Perhaps invite them to hear somebody who has gone through a struggle, or to talk with transgender people, particularly trans people of faith.

I have peers who would struggle working with a transgender person in transition. And I have peers who believe homosexuality is a sin but are able to work with clients no matter what their sexual orientation. And to my non-liberal peers I would say be willing be open and hear from the other side as well.

There's a saying from my youth, "You have to build a bridge of friendship before you can drive over the train of truth." Before you tell somebody that what they're doing is wrong you have to build relationship with them. For me, having that relationship with people is important. And I've learned that maybe "my train of truth" is a little different than I thought it was going to be.

This will be my final Room at the Table column. Let me end on Esther's poignant words: let's build a bridge of friendship. We each have a different understanding of the divine and by sharing our understanding we each grow in knowledge of both the infinite and humanity. Our increased understanding helps each of us as people and, ultimately, our clients are enriched because of our growth.

Dr. Joni Miller is a Certified Pastoral Counselor and has a PhD in pastoral counseling from Loyola University Maryland. As the founder of Spiritual Geography LLC, Dr. Miller uses her MBA, background in business, and counseling skills to provide consulting services and workshops to the counseling, faith, and business communities. She may be reached at joni@spiritualgeography.net.

* Not her real name

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ETHICS CORNER

Multiple Heritage Individuals: Facing Religious and Spiritual Challenges Richard C. Henriksen Jr., Ph.D., LPCS, NCC

Increased attention has been drawn to addressing spiritual and religious issues clients face and, in particular, with clients who have a non-majority identity and who view their religious/spiritual life as a major component of their self-identity. However, the discussion of the inclusion of religion/spirituality often focuses on when and if the topic should be assessed/addressed or if it should even be addressed at all (Richards, Bartz, & O'Grady, 2009). Counselors who believe that religious and spiritual values are important to understanding the whole person, such as the members of ASERVIC, see a clear need to address the values held by clients, especially the religious and spiritual ones.

Helping all clients is important and, as noted by Baruth and Manning (2016), the ethical practice of counseling requires that we are all trained to work with clients from diverse backgrounds and that would include clients who are multiple heritage (commonly referred to as biracial or multiracial). Additionally, Davenport (2016) pointed out that religious affiliation plays an important role in the identity formation of individuals, which is often the focus of counseling for multiple heritage individuals (Henriksen & Paladino, 2009).

Counselors throughout our profession seek opportunities to meet the specific needs of our clients and as members of ASERVIC we are particularly sensitive to the spiritual and religious needs of those who seek our assistance. For many counselors, there is an existing challenge when the client is of multiple heritage back-

grounds, which often includes having parents of two differing religious/spiritual identities. This often leads counselors to ask, *How do I help clients whose family includes two different religious/spiritual backgrounds?* Kenney et al. (2015) pointed out that ethical practice with the multiple heritage population requires that counselors "Appreciate that culture goes beyond race and ethnicity and includes factors such as gender, religion/spirituality, diverse sexual orientations and gender identity/expressions" (p. 12). This would suggest that counselors should explore the meaning of religion/spirituality with their clients, focusing in on how the client expresses the differing religious/spiritual traditions that exist in the client's family. For example, an adolescent client stated to me, "When I was 12 I realized that my religious faith was at the center of who I was but I did not understand how I came to my beliefs. I was different than both of my parents." Another client said,

When I was a younger adolescent I realized that religion was not that important to me. My parents are both religious and tried to pass that on to me but for some reason I just don't know what to think and I have no one to talk to.

It is our role as professional counselors to help our clients explore these issues, is clients express a desire to do so.

Kenney et al. (2015) also noted that one of the primary goals of counseling with multiple heritage individuals is to complete a comprehensive biopsychosocial assessment that includes all areas of life - including religion/spirituality - and not just focus on race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, and all the other cultural factors that affect individual identity development. With multiple heritage individuals, like all others, it is important to value the whole person and to acknowledge the influences of all parts of the person's background. It is not enough to just complete an assessment, however; counselors must also take into account the unique characteristics of being multiple heritage especially at it includes religion/spirituality.



ETHICS CORNER

By exploring the multiple dimensions of multiple heritage people, counselors can take a helicopter view of the whole person and see how each of the dimensions affect the individual. "Intersections of gender, ethnicity, religion and spirituality, sexual orientation, national origin, indigenous heritage, geographic region, and other cultural factors" (Henriksen & Paladino, 2009, p. xiii) will all come into focus during a comprehensive assessment. As licensed professional counselors and as members of ASERVIC, we pride ourselves in valuing and respecting other people's religion/spirituality and to that end we demonstrate that valuing by seeking to gain insight into how our clients experience their individual religious/spiritual identity.

The ASERVIC (2009) competencies included language that focused on not only being aware of our individual "attitudes, beliefs and values about spirituality and/or religion" (Comp. 2), but also included language about being respectful of our client's spiritual/religious beliefs and integrating client spirituality and values into our counseling practices (Comp. 8). Attending to the competencies with multiple heritage clients goes a long way toward helping them gain trust in the counselor and the counseling process.

Helping multiple heritage clients who are experiencing the challenges of incorporating multiple religious/spiritual identities is no easy task. However, focusing on the client's goals is one of the keys to a positive counseling experience. From an existential perspective, counselors seek to help clients find meaning and purpose as it relates to their religious/spiritual beliefs or nonbelief. The ASERVIC (2009) counseling competencies help counselors recognize that our clients' individual religious/spiritual practices can enhance their overall well-being, contribute to the multi-

tude of problems clients may be experiencing and even under the right circumstances lead to a worsening of the client's problem (Competency 8).

To provide effective helping in the areas of religion and spirituality for multiple heritage individuals it is necessary to develop a plan that is multidimensional and provides guidance for the process of counseling. McLennan, Rochow, and Arthur (2001) provided guidelines for assisting clients with issues involving religion and spirituality. These same principles can be used when working with clients from multiple heritage backgrounds. First, include questions focused on the client's religious/spiritual background in the intake. Work to make it safe for clients to discuss their religious/spiritual issues and let them know that it is okay to question their beliefs. Second, seek to determine what relevance religion/spirituality plays in clients' lives and how it might be related to current problems and determine whether or not clients' religious/spiritual beliefs are supportive of - or a block to - experiencing mental health. Understanding these influences on clients' lives can lead to the development of effective, appropriate, and relevant counseling plans.

Ethical counseling practice requires that each of us is sufficiently trained to meet the needs of communities that are becoming more and more diverse. One group that is often overlooked is the multiple heritage population. This little snippet of how we might help those who struggle with their multiple identities is just a beginning. Hopefully, you will take this beginning and become more immersed in the literature and attend workshops on helping the multiple heritage population, so that both you and your clients benefit from your development.

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SPIRITUALITY IN THE FIELD

Hailey Martinez



As the human population continues to grow so too does the need for mental health services. America has been historically considered the “melting pot” with a constant increase in diversity, and where “minority” will one day cease to exist with the meaning it has today. Just as the growth in population persists, the ever-growing increase in diversity stimulates a new kind of dialogue surrounding religious and spiritual practices. The conversation surrounding religion and spirituality is of critical importance in recognizing the client and the client system’s overall wellness. It is imperative for licensed mental health counselors, school counselors, marriage and family therapists, supervisors, and counselor educators to recognize the significance of creating a safe space for courageous dialogue to occur surrounding religion and spirituality.

The moment a person enters into the helper-helping relationship there presents the opportunity for authentic dialogue to be fostered with acknowledging each entity as a cultural being. It is important to ask oneself who they are as a cultural being and what it means to bring one’s full authentic self to the relationship. In mental health work, clients are oftentimes met in their initial contact of seeking out services with paperwork to complete, with or without the presence of a counselor. Intake paperwork is oftentimes inconsistent with standards for including a section on religious and spiritual backgrounds. This presents an opportunity to begin a dialogue regarding the importance of continuing to attend to and develop competencies of spirituality and religion in relation to the counseling profession’s ethical obligation to acquire information on the backgrounds of our clients, and understand how one’s religious and spiritual backgrounds influences the client’s decisions and drive a client’s behavior.

Research speaks to the significant impact religion and spirituality has throughout one’s life, impacting both personal and professional domains. Recognizing this impact and understanding how these pieces of one’s cultural identity influence and impact people throughout their life, is a way to “show up” for people and invite them to sit in relationship and explore aspects of themselves that oftentimes get overlooked and go unacknowledged for exploring its significance.

Recently, I was presented with the privilege of sitting next to an individual on a plane ride who identified with a predominant religion found here in the United States and across the world. We began conversing over what brought us to be flying to the destination we

were both headed. As we began talking, he quickly brought up his specific faith background and the work for which he identified to be traveling. He explained that his wife was currently at home with children who were all under school age. He explained that the rationale for her not working outside the home was because it is “too expensive to be able to afford childcare for so many children, and it made sense for her to stay at home with the children.” I instantly felt at odds with this individual. As a Hispanic woman, I have been raised learning and participating in ceremony of Lakota Sioux traditions- interwoven with Buddhism; I was raised in a mostly white community where the majority of people belong to a predominant religion found here in the United States and across the world. Growing up I did not feel like I belonged anywhere, as my Hispanic background made me an identified minority, and my upbringing in a “non-organized” religion was seldom invited in to spiritual and religious dialogues in my school or in encounters with members of my community. Now, I balance career with motherhood and family expectations. I have explored and learned to understand how these aspects of who I am as a cultural being align with my spirituality. This individual represented for me my community during my youth- where I was left with the feeling of never fitting in and shamed for who I was because it deviated (because it always did) from what was the “norm”. 8

SPIRITUALITY IN THE FIELD CONTINUED

This inner dialogue is something that is not foreign to me and has presented itself in my work with clients as a licensed mental health professional and counselor educator. Our conversation on the plane ranged from decisions on parenting and family to career and working with individuals of different walks of life. The dialogue represented the ongoing dilemma spoken to in the counseling field of how to engage in dialogues that present a conflict in religious and spiritual beliefs and values without shutting one side or the other down and remaining committed to our respective Faith beliefs. I was reminded of the ASERVIC competencies for addressing spiritual and religious issues in counseling related to Communication which states, “7. The professional counselor responds to client communications about spirituality and/or religion with acceptance and sensitivity.” I had the opportunity to expand the application of this competency to engage and model acceptance and sensitivity with a stranger.

We sat in dialogue over those things that we have no control over yet relentlessly continue to attempt in manipulating to result in a condition of our favor. Our conversation continued to a topic that reached a common interest, regardless of our religious and spiritual backgrounds. With so many variables standing in between us as we engaged in conversation, I felt myself consciously aware of the Spiritual and attend to not moving away from the discomfort I felt when the discussion moved towards working with individuals who go against one’s belief system, moral judgment, and value system. He shared his wife’s interest in entering a counseling program and he expressed worry about this conflicting with their beliefs. I knew where this was headed and encouraged him to continue with his thought. It moved to wondering how counselors of different religious backgrounds can work with individuals who conflict with their religious beliefs, specifically individuals who identify as LGBTQIA+. Noticing the reaction I was having to the individual, and feeling a strong sense to “put” this guy in

his place and advocate and think through a social justice lens, I breathed deeply and leaned into the conversation further. In this moment, I could have shut the conversation down-letting him know how wrong he was for what he believed and returning to reading my



book in silence. Instead, I wanted him to have a voice, just as much as I want those who are oppressed to have a voice, bringing their full self to relationship. By continuing the dialogue, I was able to advocate on the criticalness of the issue and how by having faith in one another we can still hold true to our religion and spiritual beliefs while supporting and holding space for others as they are navigating challenges in their life without passing judgment. I was able to challenge this person in a compassionate way to see it from the other person's perspective. I did not have the intention to change his mind and beliefs on the matter, yet begin a conversation for inner dialogue on these critical issues that are present in our country today.

As our world is continuing to grow, it is vital for humanity to move into relationship with each other and listen to all sides. What is meant by the importance to have faith? Faith doesn’t mean to follow blindly yet instead to walk with an open heart and mind, leading by example to something that you trust fully in, because you have invested the energy and time to question that what you believe for the reasons why it is true. In Buddhism, heart and mind are used interchangeably and speak to this notion of finding balance in one’s faith. What would it look like to instill faith in our client(s), our family, and each other? It goes back to having faith in oneself and trusting that each of us has the ability to show up and hold space for another to explore who we are as cultural beings....as spiritual beings. To have faith in one another and celebrate diversity. In ceremony, I enter the sweat lodge to pray, to meditate, to hold space for all of creation. As we enter and leave a sweat lodge, we use the phrase, “Mitakuye Oyasin” meaning “All My Relations”. For me I remember this phrase, entering into relationship and working with individuals from different walks of life and beliefs differ from mine. Remembering that we are all related and thinking and feeling through a balance of heart and mind.

I invite you all to ask yourself: How are you getting in your own way? What actions can we take to attend to our growth and constant work on competency of diverse religious and spiritual practices and beliefs? What would it look like to be able to sit with our clients, with our family, with each other in an open-safe space where we explore what is to be a spiritual being?

THE THOUGHTFUL COUNSELOR PODCAST

One of our ASERVIC members, Mike Shook, is a counselor living and working in Beijing. He runs a podcast dealing with spirituality in counseling and has featured various ASERVIC members in the podcast. Below you will find links to two episodes, one featuring Craig Cashwell and the other featuring Amanda Giordano and Elizabeth Prosek.



[Spirituality and Religion in Counseling: Definitions, Competencies, and Spiritual Bypass with Craig Cashwell](#)

[Culture, Diversity, and Spirituality in Counseling: A Conversation with Amanda Giordano and Elizabeth Prosek](#)

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



RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL VALUES COLUMN

Including ASERVIC's (2009) *Spirituality Competencies* in Clinical Supervision Anita A. Neuer Colburn, Chair, Spiritual & Religious Values Committee

Counselors report their desire to ethically and competently include spirituality in their counseling relationships, as well as their discomfort about not having been trained to do so. (Giordano et al., 2014; Henrickson et al., 2015; Hartwig Moorhead et al., 2015). While spiritual integration in the counseling process is beginning to gain some headway in counselor education, even as one aspect of multicultural counseling, many counselor educators are ill-equipped to provide this training (Shaw et al., 2012). Therefore, it is incumbent upon clinical supervisors to fill the gap. In this short article, I will summarize some strategies supervisors can use at various stages of the supervision process to effectively integrate spirituality into the supervision process.

Consider the Discrimination Model (Bernard, 1979) of supervision with a developmental twist. Supervisors take on the role of Teacher, Counselor, or Consultant as they help their supervisees address Process, Conceptualization, and Personalization. The manner with which supervisors embrace those roles and the specific interventions they choose will be based partially on the supervisory relationship/working alliance, the particular issue being addressed, and supervisees' overall development. The stages of the supervision relationship generally parallel the supervisee's development, so that early in the relationship, the supervisee is still needing a significant amount of guidance and later in the relationship, we expect the supervisee to be functioning fairly autonomously. The stage of the supervision relationship can also inform the manner with which supervisors weave the Spirituality Competencies into their work.

Early in the supervision relationship, and utilizing the Teacher role, supervisors can gently introduce

spirituality as an integral component of overall wellness, pointing their supervisees to models of wellness (e.g., Meyers & Sweeney, 2005; SAMHSA, 2016). Supervisors can model the appropriateness of discussing spirituality by devoting part of the supervision time to talking about their own spirituality and wellness, and asking supervisees about their spirituality and wellness. In a Counseling capacity, supervisors might ask supervisees to consider their own thoughts and feelings about addressing spirituality with their clients.

Taking on the Consultant role, supervisors can then direct supervisees to the current literature addressing the use of spirituality in the helping process. Supervisors should be intentional about revisiting the conversation without leaving supervisees feeling strong-armed into "having" to do it.

Given a safe relationship, an initial examination of the use of spirituality in counseling, and some discussion of the supervisees' own comfort level with imagining themselves integrating spirituality, supervisors can then invite supervisees to visit the ASERVIC website and read the competencies. To follow up, supervisors should take on the Counselor role by asking about supervisees' feedback and reactions to reading the competencies, giving them space to continue processing their feelings about spirituality discussions with clients. From a Consulting perspective, supervisors can encourage their supervisees to share thoughts about the ethical value of including or not including spirituality in case conceptualization and treatment with clients. From a Teaching perspective, supervisors can work with supervisees in assessing the degree to which the supervisee meets each competency. Supervisors may consider having their supervisees keep a copy of the competencies on their desktop, or somewhere easily accessible for quick reference.



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In the working stage of the relationship, supervisors in the Teaching role can help their supervisees develop plans for meeting the competencies. In this stage of the relationship, supervisees should be starting to gain more autonomy; accordingly, supervisors should begin to be slightly less directive in their approach. Using the Consulting role, supervisors may encourage supervisees to choose the order in which they would like to work on the competencies, and also to offer any initial ideas supervisees think may be most helpful before adding others. A few helpful strategies include conducting internet research to develop a religious/spiritual holiday calendar, consulting with local clergy representing belief systems unfamiliar to supervisees, reading, completing a spiritual genogram, interviewing a member of a different faith group, and attending a service or other immersion-style experience. As each competency is improved, supervisors can use the Counselor role to gently debrief the process and invite additional self-reflection from supervisees. Supervisors can ask supervisees about how the process of learning the competencies is impacting the supervisees' own spiritual journeys and the ways they might integrate the competencies with their existing clients, keeping in mind that supervisees' comfort with their own spirituality will likely impact their comfort with integrating spirituality with clients.

As more competencies are mastered, supervisors can encourage supervisees to begin integrating spirituality into their client work by adding a question about religion/spirituality on the Intake form and discussing it with their clients in the first interview. Supervisees might consider moving to a bio-psycho-social-*spiritual* assessment when getting to know new clients. Supervisors should listen with keen ear (and provide verbal feedback) for any changes they notice in how supervisees present and conceptualize their clients.

As the Termination stage of supervision ensues, supervisees should be functioning very independently, hopefully demonstrating their ability to "self-supervise" and knowing when they need consultation. They should be able to accurately assess and address their own professional development needs, particularly as related to the integration of religion and spirituality in the counseling process. At this point, supervisors can initiate an evaluative discussion about the integration of spirituality in the supervision relationship, and encourage supervisees to continue utilizing concrete steps for integrating religion/spirituality into the counseling process (Hartwig Moorhead et al., 2015). Throughout the process, supervisors should be intentional about when and how religion and spirituality are introduced and integrated in both the supervision and counseling relationships.

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