

Interaction

ASERVIC

Volume XIII, No. 4

Summer 2014

President's Address:
W. Bryce Hagedorn

Seeking Common Ground by W. Bryce Hagedorn



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If you don't like coffee, I have to wonder if there's something seriously wrong with you...and so launches my time as your new ASERVIC president. My reference to coffee was mostly to get your attention about one of the new initiatives that I'll be proposing for this next year of ASERVIC's services to members. Namely, I am planning to start a series of professional discussions that I'm calling "On Common Ground." These discussions, which will occur while participants are drinking coffee (the "grounds") or their favorite beverage, will center on the presentation of what would appear to be diametrically opposing viewpoints regarding a counseling topic. For example, what might happen if a professional counselor professing a conservative Christian faith were to have coffee with another counselor who identifies as an Atheist and discuss a clinical case example? *That* would be an interesting discussion.

For example, say a client were to present the following comment during an initial meeting: "I'm not sure what I should be doing with my life." The counselor using an Atheist perspective may begin her exploration for such answers by looking within herself for what rings true, which may lead to discussions about personal meaning and purpose. On the other hand, the counselor using a Christian lens may personally see the answer to such a dilemma as coming from one's connection with God and thus direct discussions toward discovering one's calling and seeking God's will. After owning these perspectives, the counselors would thereafter be challenged to seek Common Ground on which they would approach the client's concerns while at the same time honoring their own, and one another's, belief systems.

I believe that the members of ASERVIC would benefit greatly from witnessing professional discussions such as the one I hypothesized. These will not occur as debates but rather will seek to honor one another's meaning-making perspectives while seeking clients' viewpoints on their own concerns. I will be proposing that discussions like these occur through various professional media, to include podcasts, social media posts, ACA Conference presentations, ASERVIC Conference town hall discussions, and publications in *Counseling and Values* and/or the *Interaction*.

Two additional points that I am very excited about for our future as ASERVIC members are (a) preparing for the fourth ASERVIC National Conference that will occur in the Summer of 2015 in New York City and (b) revisiting a discussion around a national registry of spiritually sensitive counselors. I am interested in hearing your perspectives on these and any other ASERVIC issues during my time as your new president, so feel free to contact me at Bryce.Hagedorn@ucf.edu.

And okay, I *suppose* tea drinkers are pretty decent folks as well...



The ASERVIC Ethics Corner

Stephanie F. Dailey, Ed.D.,
Harriett L. Glossoff, Ph.D., &
Leila Roach, Ph.D.

The ASERVIC Ethics Corner will return in the Fall Issue.

The ASERVIC Ethics Committee is always looking for ideas or guest authors for the ASERVIC Ethics Corner. If you have a topic you would like addressed or if you are interested in submitting a piece related to the ethical inclusion of spirituality and/or religion in counseling or counselor education, please contact :

Stephanie Dailey at stdailey@argosy.edu

ACA 2014 Ethics Code
Available for download
www.counseling.org

Spirituality in the Field



Spirituality in the Field

By Lynn Bohecker, M.S., LMFT

The previous issue of *Interaction* contained an article on spirituality in the field that ended with a Hillel quote from the Jewish Encyclopedia, “If not now, then when?” addressing advocacy for incorporating ASERVIC Spiritual Competencies in practice (Hull, Spring, 2014). To expand the idea further, the next question might be, “If not me, then who?”

I have been providing mental health services for the past fourteen years and teaching as an adjunct professor in counselor education for the past eight years. Currently, my private practice of professional counseling is a shared office space with several other clinicians located in a church. My clients are a mixture of church congregants as well as diverse members of the greater community. In working with clients, I regularly remind myself that the topic of spirituality is not confined to within the parameters of religious institutions, but one that is key for the numerous life issues that clients from all backgrounds bring into my office. As a professional counselor, I see it as my responsibility to provide an open space for spirituality to be brought into the room. As I ask myself the above question (if not me then who?), the next question is, “If it is me, then how?”

How to incorporate spirituality into client sessions can be as varied as our clinical interventions. This article provides concrete examples of how I have incorporated ASERVIC Spiritual Competencies into my private practice in a way that is congruent to and a fit with my way of being as a practitioner. The initial visit for a new client of mine includes an informal bio-psycho-social assessment. One section of this interview is devoted to cultural formulation and contains specific questions related to client beliefs (or absence of beliefs) about spirituality. Questions in this section address ASERVIC Spiritual Competencies numbers 2 and ten; to recognize how a client’s worldview and functioning are influenced by the client’s beliefs about spirituality and/or religion

(ASERVIC, 2009, No 2) and during the intake process gathering information in order to understand a client's spiritual and/or religious perspective (ASERVIC, 2009, No. 10).

Within the bio-psycho-social assessment, I developed the cultural formulation section based originally on the DSM-IV-TR and now the DSM-5. Examples of specific questions include, "What do you think are the causes of your [problem]?" and, "What are the most important aspects of your background or identity?" or "Are there any aspects of your background or identity that make a difference to your [problem]?" The questions I ask directly related to spirituality are, "Have you ever or do you currently belong to a faith community such as a church, synagogue, temple, mosque or religious order?" and providing a Likert-type rating scale, "How would you currently rate your spiritual health?" and "Do you want to incorporate your faith/spirituality into the counseling process?" Responses to the above questions inform a part of my development of the client's treatment plan, which addresses ASERVIC Spiritual Competencies 11 through 14 (ASERVIC, 2009).

Counseling practitioners are challenged to develop methods of incorporating spirituality into counseling. One way is to include specific questions about religion and spirituality as part of the cultural formulation section in an informal assessment during the client intake process. Asking questions to obtain specific knowledge and gain understanding of a client's religious and/or spiritual beliefs and worldview provides some of the important information used to develop competent treatment plans. The specific examples of my intake process offers one response for who, when, and how to incorporate aspects of the ASERVIC Spiritual Competencies in the field. In my personal experience, clients have responded with relief when I incorporate questions about their religious and/or spiritual beliefs and respond by normalizing their religious and/or spiritual values and traditions. I have found that consulting with or incorporating faith based or spiritual leaders into counseling has been helpful for treatment planning, interventions, and validating for the client. This is one way for counselors to encourage and open a safe space for clients to integrate their spirituality in session that also gives room to include or not include this into their personal counseling work.

ASERVIC Competencies for Addressing Spiritual and Religious Issues in Counseling. (2009). Retrieved from <http://www.aservic.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/201712182-Competencies-for-Addressing-Spiritual-and-Religious-Issues-in-Counseling.pdf>

Hillel. (1906). In Jewish Encyclopedia. Retrieved from: <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/7698-hillel>

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 *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 Jodi Bartley (jlbartl2@uncg.edu).

- ◇ Follow the ASERVIC newsletter “guidelines for submission” as published in the most recent newsletter publication (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 Fall issue of the *Interaction*?
Deadline is **September 15, 2014!**

Please refer to ASERVIC.org for guidelines for publication or contact the Editor at cgerhard@ashland.edu for information.

**OPPORTUNITY FOR REVIEW
FOR
COUNSELING & VALUES**

The Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values (ASERVIC) is seeking editorial board members for the *Counseling and Values Journal*. Reviewers are selected for a three-year term of service, and can expect a review request every 30 to 60 days. The review process takes place on the ScholarOne platform, so regular access to the internet is needed. In addition, reviewers are expected to be members of ASERVIC.

If you would like to apply for a reviewer position, please contact the Editor, Dr. E. H. Mike Robinson, at cvj@ucf.edu by July 26, 2014. Please include the following:

- ♦ **A short letter of interest, describing your background**
- ♦ **Your reason(s) for wanting to serve on this journal's review board**
- ♦ **Your CV.**