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Nurturing Spirituality across the Lifespan

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Purpose

The challenges of today's world may adversely affect a person's balance and spiritual journey. In this interactive workshop, participants will nurture their spirituality thus contributing to the collective consciousness. A sense of connection reinforces the power of our relationship with self and others, resulting in deeper self-awareness and strengths enhancement at physical, emotional and cognitive levels. We will facilitate an exchange of ideas using intervention activities and case examples to support participants in effectively applying the intuition and creativity of their own spiritual journey to their counseling practice across work settings.

Learning Objectives

- Identify evidence-based research and best practices for nurturing spirituality
- Discuss specific ethical considerations across work settings
- Understand the implications of the research regarding the provision of counseling in culturally appropriate ways

Evidence-based Practices

Mindfulness (Rebecca Attebury)

Think of a moment this past week, or even today. Pick an interaction that has happened in your life where your actions were purely reactionary. It could be a time that you lashed out at your children or a partner over a frustrating incident. Maybe you experienced something out of your control and you didn't know how to handle the experience and that caused a specific reaction. Notice the reaction and take time to sit with it. Were you anxious? Were you frustrated? Sit with your emotions, and notice where you feel the emotions in your body. Then, follow the script below. Once you've gone through the script, reflect on how you may have acted differently had you used this tool in that situation. Would you have chosen a different reaction? How would you have engaged differently? What did this script allow you to explore emotions, while in the moment, seemed hidden? How can you use this with future clients? Yourself?

P.E.A.C.E Acronym to use with students. Directly taken from Mindful School curriculum.

- **PAUSE**, When things start to get hard...just stop for a minute.
- **EXHALE**, Breathe in...breathe out...repeat as many times as needed.
- **ACKNOWLEDGE, ACCEPT, ALLOW**, Acknowledge the situation and emotions for what they are. Accept the situation and the emotions. Emotions are okay. Allow yourself to sit with the emotions but don't let them make you react.
- **CHOOSE**, When you are ready, choose how you will respond. Don't rush.
- **ENGAGE**, When you have chosen your response and are ready to re-enter the world, breathe in and out one more time. Now engage.

Lectio Divina (Divine Reading) (Greg Sandman)

1 Peter 5:6-7 New International Version (NIV)

⁶ Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.

⁷ Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

Begin by reading the passage quietly to yourself. Then go back to the passage a second time (possibly a third time) and read it more slowly and reflectively, allowing it to sink into you.

Pause now and reflect upon the passage. Ruminant upon it, to see what if anything the passage (or God) may be saying to you.

Now, let your heart respond to the passage. Set your thinking aside and simply let your heart respond to what you have heard in this passage.

Now, rest. Set aside all the thoughts, ideas, plans we may have and simply rest in the passage. Allow what you have read and gleaned from this passage to settle in to your life.



Mantra Making (Kristina Faimon)

- show example of your own from art journal or some other inspirational resource
- show slides on trusting your intuition and embracing your faith
- offer participants about 7 minutes of reflection time on what they want their mantra to be
- consider how to apply this exercise with clients to help them listen to their guts and trust their hearts.

Your Spiritual Timeline (Mary Alice Bruce)

- Instructions: Chart your spiritual journey across time. You may want to include: Defining Milestones, Rituals, Spiritual Events, Spiritual Support, Challenges
- Provide paper, pencil, colored markers, scissors, etc. for each person to create a life timeline.
- Allow about 15-20 minutes and begin extensive processing with prompts such as:

How was it to create this timeline? Tell me about yours.

What spiritual truths are emerging for you?

What has been helpful for you on your spiritual path? What continues to be challenging?

As you build on your strengths, who will be your support/mentor/spiritual guides?

Help participants notice the use of lines, shapes, pictures as symbols, as well as themes such as:

- * Family of origin and other Relationships
- * Events involving Power, Freedom, Grief and Loss, Crisis/trauma/struggle, Rebirth
- * Emotions such as Comfort, Thriving, Joy
- * Realization of Spiritual Gifts as well as ongoing contemplation & meaning making

The purpose of this activity, appropriate for all developmental levels, is to enhance personal awareness, self-nurturance and growth.

Resources

Brown, C. B. (2010). *The gifts of imperfection: Let go of who you think you're supposed to be and embrace who you are*. Center City, Minn: Hazelden.

Cameron, J. (1992). *The artist's way: A spiritual path to higher creativity*. Los Angeles, CA: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Perigee.

Parker, S. (2011). Spirituality in counseling: A faith development perspective. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 89(1), 112-119.