

Great Lakes ATTC

Presents

When I Get Low, I Get High: Integrating Spirituality and Counseling With African Americans With Mental Illness and Substance Use Disorders Part I

Presenters

Mark Sanders, LCSW, CADC

Kisha S Freed, Certified Success Coach, EQPC, EQAC,
Mindfulness Practitioner/Teacher

Topics to Cover

- Defining Religion and Spirituality
- The Divide between Psychology and Spirituality
- African Cultural Influence on African American Spirituality
- Useful Practices for Spiritual Integration in Counseling
- Integrating spirituality and counseling
- Mental Health and SUD Protective factors for African Americans
- Spiritual Crisis addressed in counseling with African Americans
- Clinical approaches which address spiritual dimensions with African Americans

Integrating Spirituality and Counseling Articles (Parts 1-3)



HOME > NEWS > COUNSELOR'S CORNER: INTEGRATING SPIRITUALITY AND COUNSELING FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN CLIENTS WITH MENTAL ILLNESS AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS, PART 1

Counselor's Corner: Integrating Spirituality and Counseling for African American Clients with Mental Illness and Substance Use Disorders, Part 1

Published: May 19, 2023

This post, the first in a three-part series, shares perspectives from Kisha Freed, a Success Coach, Six Seconds Certified EI Practitioner/Assessor, and mindfulness meditation teacher, and Mark Sanders, Licensed Clinical Social Worker and Certified Substance Use Disorders Counselor.

Over the years, counseling has addressed mind and body. There has been some apprehension about the effectiveness of integrating spirituality into counseling practice. However, in *Does Spirituality Still Have Relevance For Recovery?*, licensed professional counselor James E Campbell mentions that "interest in the spiritual implications of substance use, treatment, and recovery appears to be gaining momentum once again."

In his article *Integrating Spirituality in Counseling Practice*, author Gerald Corey indicates "There is growing empirical evidence that our spiritual values and behaviors can promote physical and psychological well-being. Exploring these values with clients can be integrated with other therapeutic tools to enhance the therapy process."

While continuing research studies are underway to identify the beneficial effects of spirituality in mental health and SUD practices, a 2009 survey conducted by the California Mental Health & Spirituality Initiative revealed that 88% of African Americans agree that their faith is an important factor for their personal and family's well-being.

In this three-part series, we explore some implications of integrating spirituality and counseling with African American clients with mental illness and substance use disorders. We hope that mental health and addiction recovery counselors will find that integrating spirituality into their practice can help them to increase connection, foster a safe space for belonging, and promote quicker recovery for their clients.

In Part 1, we build a foundation for the overall discussion by defining spirituality, discussing the differences between spirituality and religion, and, lastly, the importance of spirituality for present-day African Americans within the context of past oppression and survival. In parts 2 and 3, we will discuss the integration of spirituality and counseling, how to conduct a spiritual assessment, and varieties of spiritual interventions that can be helpful when counseling African Americans with mental health and SUD.

What is spirituality?

Kisha: For me, spirituality is that search for meaning, such as the meaning of life or connecting to something that's bigger than us. This "something" gives us the will to live and to be motivated to endure the challenges of life. The root word of "spirituality" is "spirit." There are no words to describe it other than something (or a part of you) that is bigger than you and connects you to a larger purpose. In the moments we feel our connection to spirituality, we can witness the beauty and the meaning of what it means to be here on earth and in this universe.

Mark: When I think of spirituality, the word that comes to my mind the most frequently is connection. An active substance use disorder leads to feeling disconnected. **Johann Hari's** research revealed that lost connections contribute to the development of mental illness and substance use disorders (2018). Spirituality leads to feeling connected. This can include connections with other people, connections with nature, and connections with individuals who are also seeking recovery. Along with "connection," other words that come to mind when I think of spirituality include



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Counselor's Corner: Integrating Spirituality and Counseling for African American Clients with Mental Illness and Substance Use Disorders, Part 2

Published: September 6, 2023

Twelve Steps Programs, Spiritually-Modified CBT, and Mindfulness-Based Art Therapy

By: Kisha Freed, Success Coach, Six Seconds Certified EI Practitioner/Assessor, Mindfulness Meditation Instructor

Mark Sanders, Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Certified Substance Use Disorders Counselor.

The first article of this series establishes the contextual framework that we build upon in this discussion—especially regarding the historical significance of spirituality for enslaved Africans in America, the cultural importance of community and spirituality for African Americans, and the effectiveness of spirituality as an instrument of self-connection for African Americans engaging in mental health and substance use recovery services.

In this installment, we explore various methods for integrating spirituality and counseling for African American clients in recovery and fostering a connection of trust and care in therapist-client relationships.

Kisha: Mark, you have a lot of first-hand experience with spiritually integrated therapy. What advice can you give to providers who are interested in offering spiritually integrated services for African American clients?

Mark: My approach to integrating spirituality and counseling begins by asking clients a series of questions so I can better understand their perspectives, their needs, and what's culturally or spiritually important to them:

1. What are your sources of comfort, strength, peace, love, joy, and connection?
2. What do you hold on to or what gives you strength during difficult times?
3. When you experience racism, discrimination, or oppression as an African American, what sustains you and keeps you going?
4. Do you believe there are differences between religion and spirituality? If yes, what are those differences?
5. Are you a part of a religious or spiritual community?
6. Did your parents follow any specific religion or spiritual belief system? If yes, what were their views? Do you believe their beliefs influenced their response to experiences of racism, oppression, and other life challenges?
7. Have you kept the same religion or spiritual beliefs you were raised with (if any), adopted new beliefs, or integrated new beliefs with those you were taught as a child?
8. Which aspects of your religion are helpful to you (if any)? Which do you find challenging or not so helpful (if any)?
9. Have challenges caused by mental illness or substance use changed the manner or modality through which you express your spirituality? If yes, how?
10. Many African Americans celebrate and/or share their spirituality through artistic expression (e.g., music, poetry, painting, dancing, rap, drama, creative writing, etc.) How do you celebrate and/or share your spirituality (if at all)?
11. Are you interested in pursuing any creative expressions of spirituality and/or art therapy in your recovery?



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HOME > NEWS > WHEN I GET LOW, I GET HIGH: INTEGRATING SPIRITUALITY AND COUNSELING FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN CLIENTS WITH MENTAL ILLNESS AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS, PART 3

When I Get Low, I Get High: Integrating Spirituality and Counseling for African American Clients with Mental Illness and Substance Use Disorders, Part 3

Published: December 21, 2023

By: Kisha Freed and Mark Sanders

Ella Fitzgerald's 1938 blues song, "When I Get Low, I Get High," eloquently summarizes the medicinal role alcohol and other drugs have played for African Americans experiencing oppression, isolation, and depression (Sanders, Sanders and White, 2006). The first article of this three-part series discusses the cultural importance of spirituality for many African Americans, especially in dealing with the effects of historical trauma and oppression, and describes how spirituality is often an important ingredient of culturally-responsive mental health and substance use services for African Americans. Part 2 focuses on methods of integrating spirituality and counseling with African Americans seeking mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) recovery services.

In this third installment, we focus on the role of the church in supporting mental health and SUD recovery in African American communities. During the holiday season, it's common for people to struggle with stress, past trauma, and personal loss associated with the holidays, and we discuss how feeling spiritually low can increase the risk of getting high. This blog post also addresses what spirituality can look like for African Americans seeking recovery who are not a part of a religious community and strategies to help African American clients cultivate inner peace.

Kisha: What role has the church played in SUDs and mental health treatment and recovery in African American communities?

Mark: In 1986, crack cocaine replaced marijuana as the number one street drug. Addictions Studies and Research Consultant, William White, says the "best" day to have a SUD in America was September 13, 1978. On that date, First Lady Betty Ford went on national television and said, "My name is Betty Ford; I'm an alcoholic" (White, 2017). By normalizing SUDs on a national platform, the public stigma associated with SUDs was greatly reduced and folks began to see SUD as a disease that should be treated.

Perhaps the worst day to have SUD when it comes to public opinion and stigmatization was June 15, 1986. On that date, basketball star Len Bias was drafted number one by the Boston Celtics. He went to a party that night to celebrate, snorted some cocaine, had a heart attack, and died. Congress was so angry about his death they intensified the war on drugs. In 1985, there were 400,000 incarcerated individuals in our nation's prisons. By 1995, the population had grown to 1,000,000, and by 2005, that number had doubled, with a disproportionately large percentage of those individuals being African Americans (White, Kurtz and Sanders, 2006). As stigma increased, insurance companies wavered from covering addiction treatment at a rate of approximately 90% to 10%, and many African Americans who needed treatment suddenly could not afford it (White, Kurtz and Sanders, 2006).

During the time period of 1986 to 1996, every denomination of African American churches formed their own church-based drug ministries to help support the recovery efforts of their members and the wider African American community. One of the most famous African American drug ministries, **Glide Memorial Church** in San Francisco, was established during this time of need. In addition to drug ministries, African American communities across the nation have helped countless people by further establishing HIV ministries, prison ministries, and mental health ministries through local churches.

Mark: Kisha, what are your thoughts about the Black church forming ministries to help with community healing?

Kisha: I'm excited to hear there are programs in place to support African Americans with SUDs, mental health needs, and those who lack housing. As you mention the stigma of SUDs, I think you



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Defining Religion & Spirituality

What Are the Differences?

“Spirituality is not a religion. Spirituality has to do with experience, religion has to do with the conceptualization of that experience. Spirituality focuses on what happens in the heart; religion tries to codify and capture that experience in a system.”

- T. E. Legere, in *A Spirituality for Today, Studies in Formative Spirituality* (1984).


Religion vs Spirituality

Religion

- Promotes relationship to a Higher Being
- Established by institutions, organization of members into roles and hierarchies
- Often involves moral and ethical rules for order and control
- Involves conceptualized beliefs, rituals and practices intended for guidance to prevent or relieve spiritual suffering

Spirituality

- A personal experience of developing a relationship with a Transcendent being and all things
- Derived meaning from a personal or cultural point of view
- Involves emotional experience and expression on both ends of the spectrum



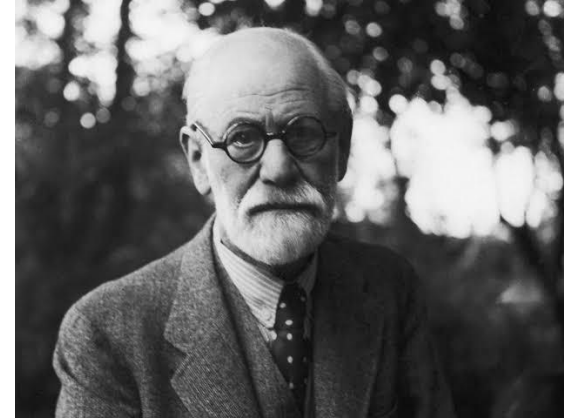
The Divide between Psychology and Spirituality

The Resistance to Integrating Spirituality into Psychotherapy

Religion and Spirituality in Psychology

Freud's point of view:

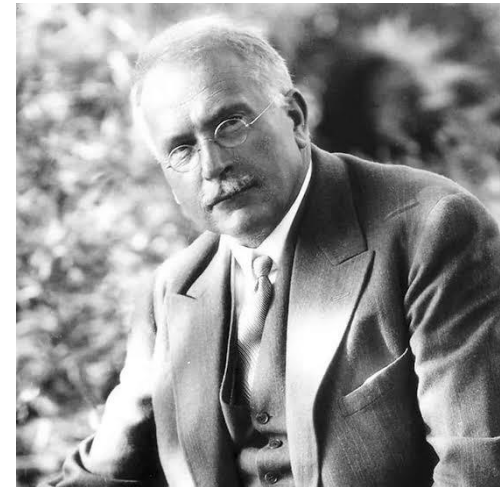
- Religious beliefs are a neurotic illusion
- Religious experiences are a suppression of events and internal conflicts



Sigmund Freud, father of psychoanalysis

Carl Jung and a Spiritual Quest:

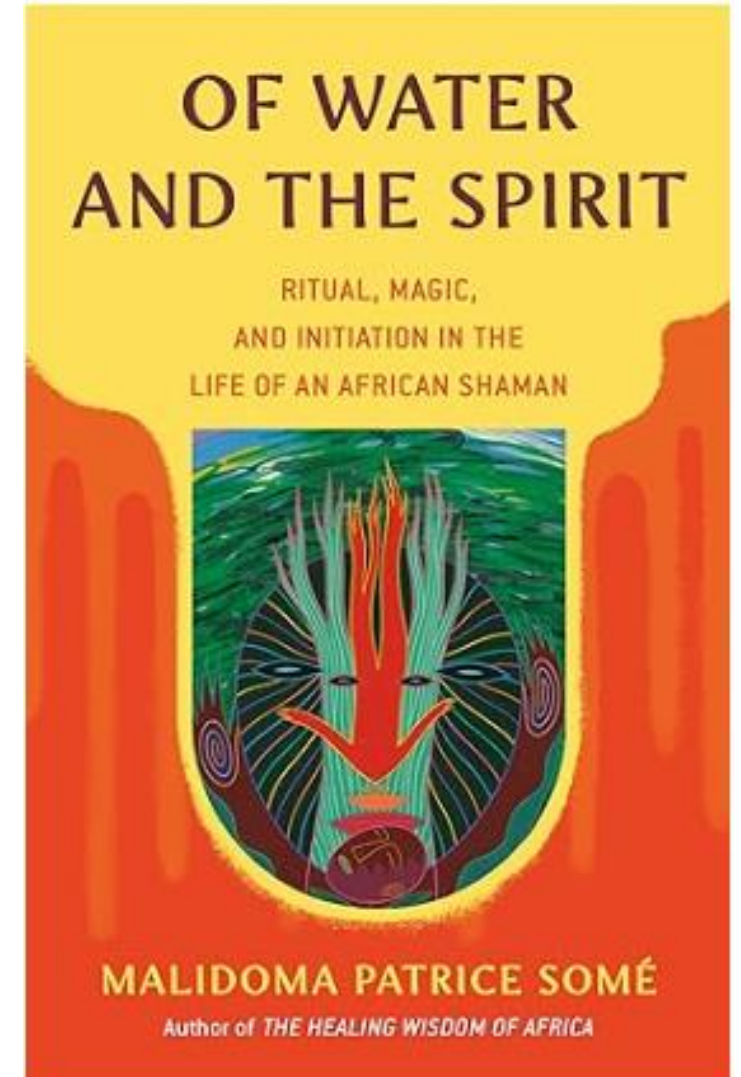
- Broke off from Freud
- Had an interest in spirituality
- Went to Kenya to dive into a deep study of spirituality, culture, alchemy, and spiritual development.
- Believed that everyone has a “religious instinct”



Carl Jung, psychiatrist, psychotherapist and founder of school of analytical psychology

No Scientific Evidence on Spirituality

- The psychology field identifies as a scientific enterprise and relies on quantifiable evidence.
- Spirituality involves experiences that cannot be:
 - measured in a laboratory
 - explained by science
- Mental health providers may have their own unresolved spiritual issues especially if they have endured community, generational, family or childhood trauma.
- Therapists may not be prepared through educational training and study to address spiritual topics with clients.



NOTE: More research is being done on the intersection between religion, spirituality and health as an EBP.



African Cultural Influence on African-American Spirituality

From the Homeland to the Americas

Intersection Between Culture, Religion, and Spirituality

- Our culture influences our religion and spirituality
 - Influence religious beliefs we hold
 - Shape how we practice religion and spirituality
 - The way we think about and experience prayer, ritual, and concepts like God
- The influence of African culture/spirituality on African-American spirituality is based on these common themes :
 - **Community**, tribal connectivity
 - **Connection** to the supernatural or a Transcendent Being
 - **Creative** expression through dance, song, storytelling, etc.

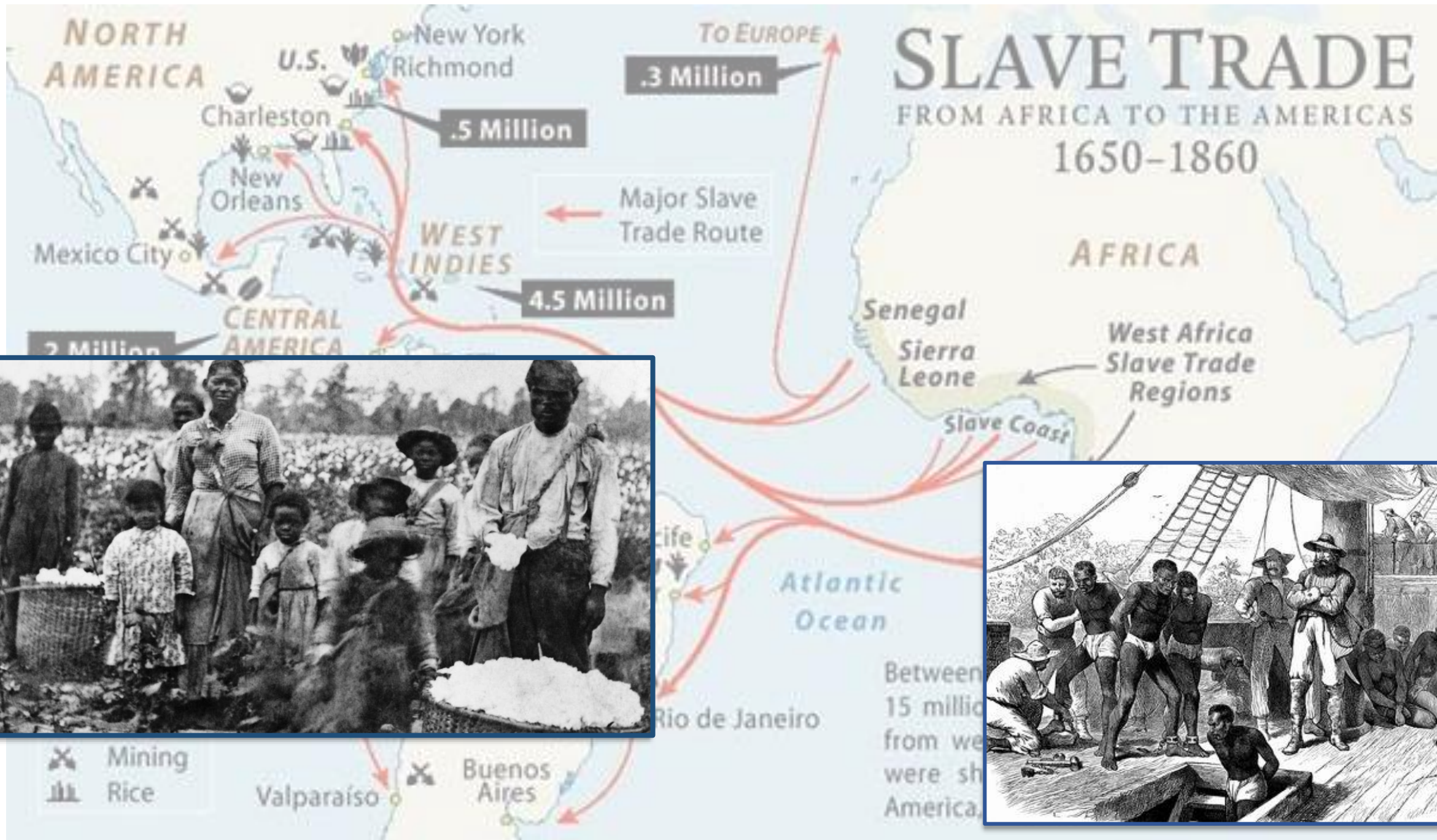
Zulu Song and Dance Performance (2024)

Igoma (spiritual warfare):

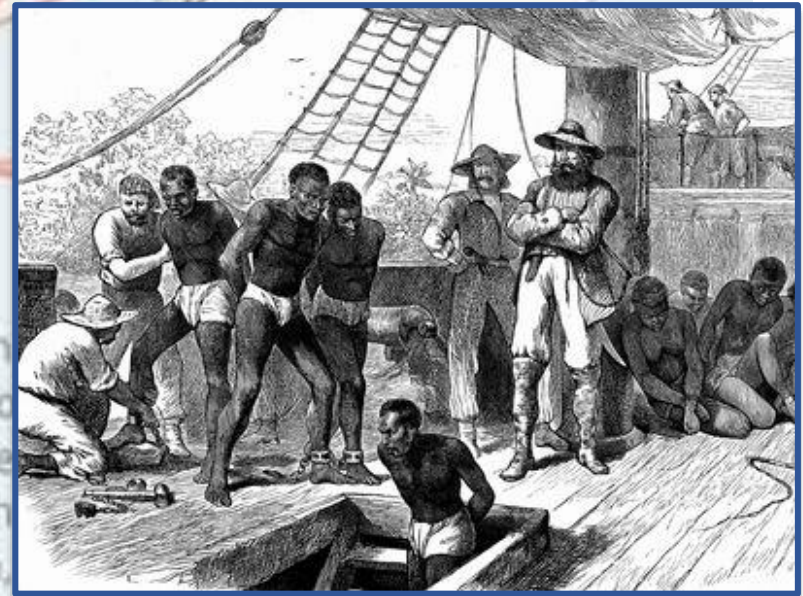
- **Community**, tribal connectivity
- **Creative** expression (call and response song, dance)
- **Connection** to the Supernatural and ALL things



[Zulu Song and Dance: Call and Response \(3:45 – 5:45\)](#)



Map by Mappenstance



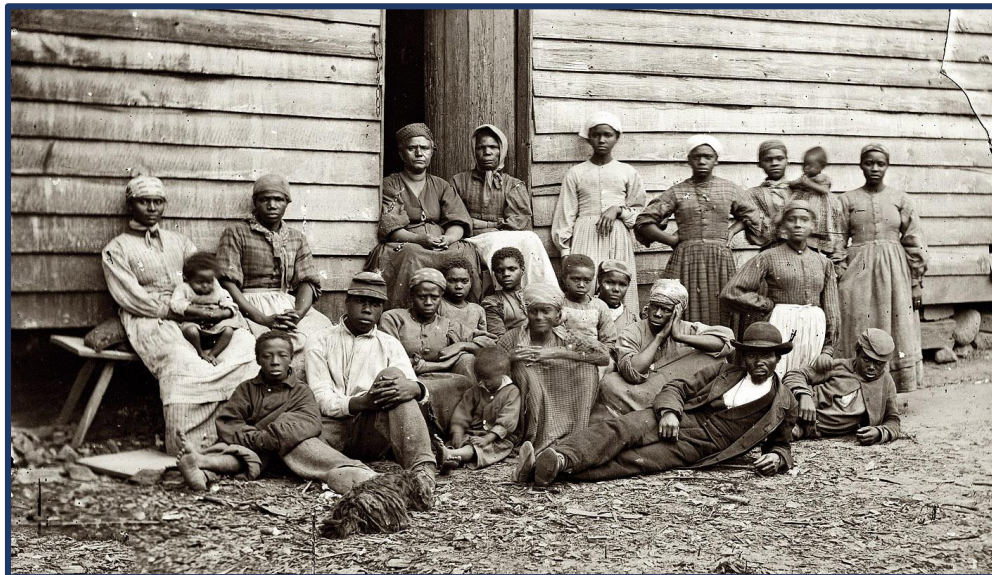
Spirituality: A Means for Survival through Oppression



John Lewis beaten by an AL State trooper on March 7, 1965, Selma Voting Rights March (USA Today)



Book Cover: *Were You There? Lenten Reflections on the Spirituals.* by Rev. Dr. Luke A. Powery



African-Americans during the Reconstruction Era, 1862 (Library of Congress)



Tulsa Black Wall Street Race Riot, 1921 (Public Radio Tulsa)

Negro Spiritual

Mother, is master going to sell us tomorrow? / Yes, yes, yes! / O, watch and pray

Going to sell us in Georgia? / Yes, yes, yes! / O, watch and pray

Farewell; mother, I must lebe you / Yes, yes, yes! / O, watch and pray

Mother don't grieve after me / No, no, no! / O, watch and pray

Mother, I'll meet you in heaven / Yes, my child! / O, watch and pray





Useful Practices for Spiritual Integration

Emotional Intelligence and Mindfulness Practices

Developing Spiritual Connection

2 Connection to the Transcendent



1 Connection to Self

Connection to Others 3



Emotional Intelligence and Mindfulness Practices



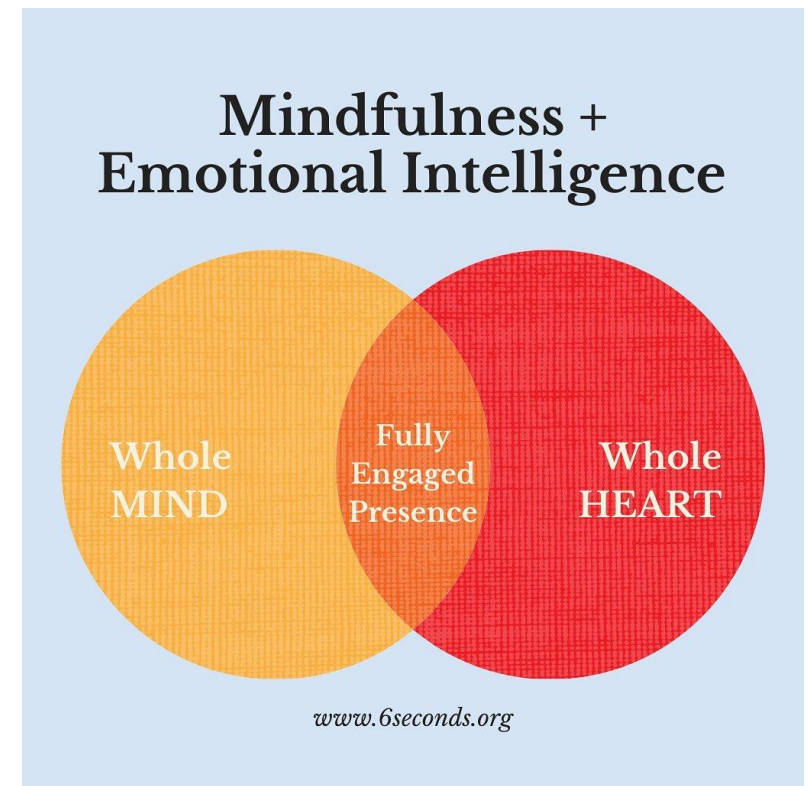
Develop greater connection to self, others, and the Transcendent (God, Universe, Nature, Spirit, a bigger purpose) through:

- Emotional Intelligence:

“Feeling” one’s emotions, whether pleasant or unpleasant, to develop a deeper understanding of oneself and others

- Mindfulness:

Being present with one’s emotions, body, mind, environment and not judging it.



The Power of Emotions (Mundane and Spiritual)

- The brain, body, and spirit act as conduits of emotions.
- Song, dance and other art forms allow expression of a spectrum of emotion: sorrow, grief, pain or joy, gratitude, and celebration. (Soul music)
- Connection between feelings and Spirit is a core function in the African American spiritual experience and that union transcends into the spiritual.
- Fuller experience by vulnerability, surrender, letting go and feeling without resistance



Mahalia Jackson, singer



Spirituality-integrated Counseling

Spirituality-integrated Counseling

An approach to counseling that acknowledges, addresses, and integrates the spirituality of the client and the spirituality of the Counselor into the process of change.

Each year SAMSHA publishes an annual report on substance use by race. Consistently, African Americans rank fourth on the list. Mental health research indicates that African Americans have similar rates of mental illness as other groups. With a history of enduring 250 years of slavery, the reconstruction era, Jim Crow Laws, lynchings, mass incarceration, police brutality, community violence, poverty and discrimination, what are the mental health and substance use disorders protective factors for African Americans?

Carl Bell, MD, PH.D, MPH



Spiritual Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders Protective Factors for African Americans

A strong belief in God and Group Worship

- A sense of we'ness (friendship bonding)
- Extended family orientation and love
- Kinship like bonds-taking in nonrelatives "our own child welfare system
- Humor (group laughter)



Moms Mabley



Redd Foxx



Richard Pryor



Eddie Murphy



Wanda Sykes



Chris Rock



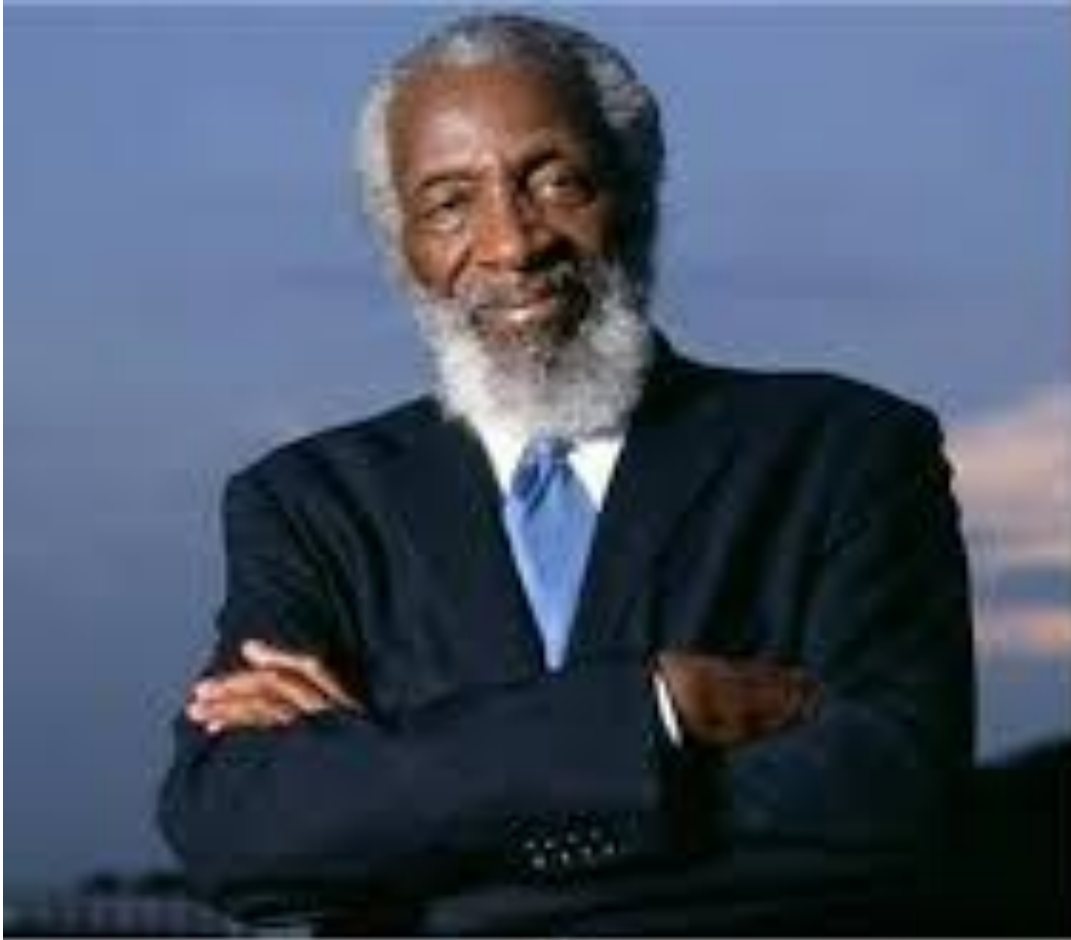
Kevin Hart



Source: flickr commons



Source: flickr commons



Dick Gregory

Source: flickr commons

Spiritual Protective Factors for African Americans Continued

- Music
- When I Get Low I Get High



- From Blues To Hip Hop

Spiritual Protective Factors for African Americans Continued

Dance and Movement

Cha Cha Slide
Humpty Dance
Lean Back
Cake Walk
Crank
The Harlem Shake
Steppin
Lindy Hop
The Doug E.
Bop
Robot
The Spank
Pop Locking
Moon Walk
The Doug E.
Kick 'N' Step
Electric Slide
Running Man
Break Dance
Hammer Time
Bus Stop
Tootsie Roll



Source: flickr commons

Spiritual Protective Factors for African Americans Continued

- Group Activism – dealing with oppression by taking up a cause



John Lewis



Dr. Martin L. King, Jr.



Angela Davis



Source: flickr commons

Protective Factors for African Americans Continued

- Empathy-Produced by oppression (connection with other groups who suffer)

The Civil Rights movement and The Poor People's Campaign.

Team Sports

- "Legal Aggression, creativity, laughter and peer bonding"

Grit - a byproduct of surviving oppression

Source: Carl Bell, MD, PH.D, MPH and Wade Noble, PhD

“I watched that show Survivor. If they really want to learn survival skills they should go to the west side of Chicago.”

Hall of Fame Basketball Player Isaiah Thomas



Source: flickr commons

Which of these spiritual protective factors can be incorporated into your work with African Americans?

- Belief in God and Group Worship
- Group bonding-friendship
- Extended family orientation
- Kinship like bonds-taking in non-relatives
- Humor
- Music
- Activism
- Empathy
- Sports
- Grit

Spiritual Crisis and Emergencies Addressed in Counseling

- Trauma (historical, childhood, current, 24-7-365 terror)
- Childhood abandonment
- Addiction
- Discrimination and racism
- Isolation

Spiritual Crisis Continued

- Losses/grief
- Suicide
- Disillusionment with the church
- Religious burnout
- Religious Addiction
- Internalized Homophobia

Spiritual Crisis Continued

- Depression
- Father hunger
- Mother hunger
- Medical illness
- Mental illness
- Life transitions - “Now what?”

Spiritual Crisis Continued


- Oppression
- Resentments
- Personality disorders
- Unemployment

Spiritual Crises Continued

- Secondary PTSD/compassion fatigue
 - Loss of hope
 - Loss of energy
 - Loss of enthusiasm
 - Spiritual distress

Therapeutic Approaches Which Address Spiritual Crisis With African Americans

- Culturally Responsive individual, group and family therapy.
- Faith-based counseling
- Rites of Passages



Clinical Approaches Continued Which Address the Spiritual Dimension

Logo Therapy

Definitions

A form of psychotherapy than emphasis meaning/purpose.

A therapy that helps clients discover their purpose. It is derived from the Greek work “logos,” which means “purpose.”




Statue of Liberty

Developer – Viktor Frankl

“You can take everything away from a person except for one thing: the freedom to choose how they will respond to whatever horrible circumstance they find themselves in.”

Viktor Frankl – Third Viennese School of Psychotherapy

Things That Give Life Meaning



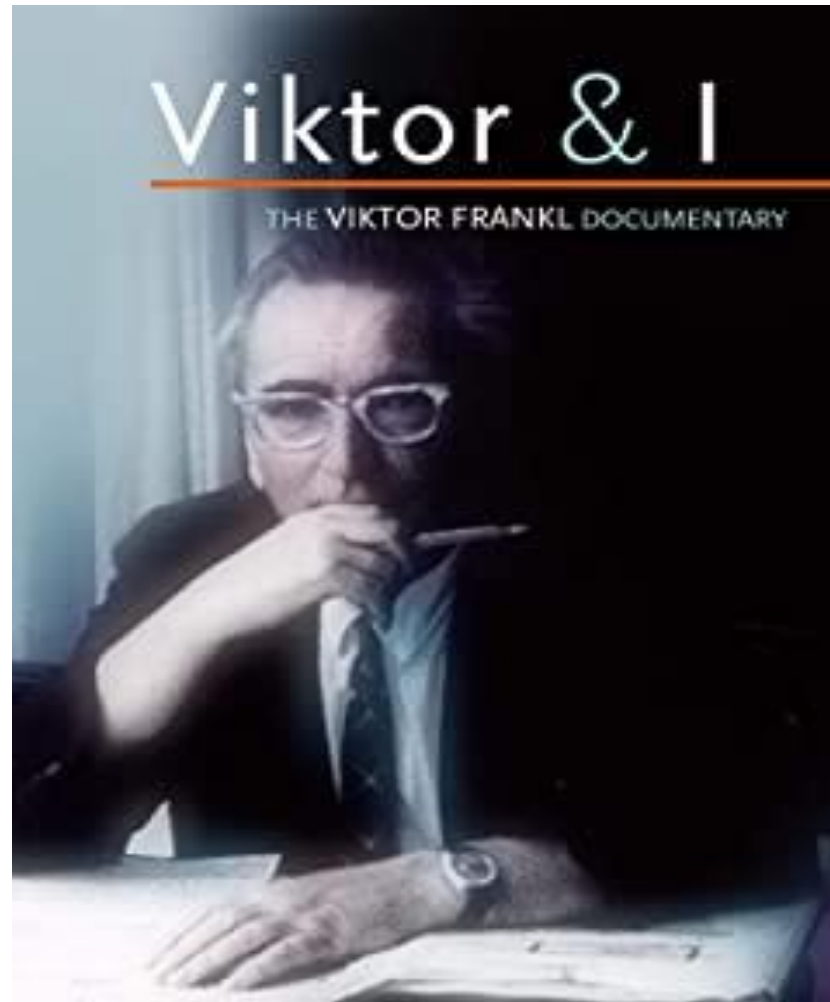
1. The attitude that one takes toward unavoidable suffering-Turning life pain Into a cause.



2. Meaningful work



Stem



Alexander Vesely,
Grandson of Viktor Frankl

Source: Amzon.com



3. Love

4. “Doing the will of God.”



Ruby Bridges

Things Which Give Life Meaning Continued

5. Helping others
6. Using your artistic gifts to make the world a better place
7. An experiential journey
8. A Near death experience
9. Looking out for the next generation



Evidence Based Approaches Which Integrate The Spiritual Dimension

Mindfulness Meditation

Trauma-based psychotherapy- Judith Herman

- Victim
- Survivor
- Thriver- finding a trauma mission
- Solution Focused Brief Treatment

Person-centered Mental Health Treatment

- Goal-to help clients achieve a meaningful life
 - Wellness strategies freely chosen by the client
 - Supportive employment
 - Connection with peers

Spiritually - influenced cognitive behavioral therapy - To challenge cognitions that can lead to self-destructive behavior, i.e., “God hates me.” “No one could possibly love me as I am.” “God expects me to be perfect.” “I am the worst of the worst.”



Conducting a Spiritual Assessment

The Hope Model

H - Source of Hope, Meaning, and Comfort

- What are your sources of meaning, comfort, strength, peace, love and connection?
- What do you hold on to during difficult times?
- What sustains you, keeps you going?

O - Organized Religion

- Are you a part of a religious or spiritual community? Does it help you? How?
- What aspects of your religion are helpful to you and not so helpful to you?

P- Personal Spirituality and Practices

- Do you have any personal spiritual beliefs that are independent of organized religion?
- What aspects of your spirituality practices do you find most helpful to you personally?

E - Effects of the Presenting Problem

- Have the challenges you are addressing in counseling affected your ability to do things that usually help you spiritually?
- As a counselor, is there anything I can do to help you access the resources that usually help you?

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When I Get Low, I Get High: Integrating Spirituality
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Part II

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Performing an Extended Spiritual Assessment

1. What was the spiritual tradition of your parents? Were they strict or lenient in their beliefs?
2. What effects do your parents' spiritual traditions have on you today?
3. What were your parents' most important spiritual beliefs? Did they pass these on to you? If yes, how?

Performing an Extended Spiritual Assessment Continued

4. Have you kept your parents' religious/ spiritual beliefs, or have you developed your own or a combination? How has your spiritual orientation changed since your upbringing? What is the reason it changed? Were there events or experiences that led to the change?
5. Do you have a current religious or spiritual affiliation? If yes, what are its major beliefs or values?

Performing an Extended Spiritual Assessment Continued

6. When you experience racism, discrimination or oppression as an African American, what sustains you and keeps you going?
7. Do you believe there are differences between religion and spirituality? If yes, what are those differences?
8. Have the challenges you have faced while addressing addiction or mental illness changed how you approach spirituality?

Performing an Extended Spiritual Assessment Continued

9. Many African Americans Celebrate their spirituality through artistic expressions. Are artistic expressions a part of your spiritual journey?

God and the Presenting Problem

- Is there a God?
- How does God view you?
- How does God view your addiction?
- How does God view mental illness?
- How does God view imperfection?
- Where is God when people suffer?

Ethical Considerations: When Spiritual Interventions May be Indicated

- In counseling, the client asks to address spiritual issues.
- The client specifically asks for spiritual interventions to be incorporated in the treatment plan.
- The client has the capacity to consent to spiritual interventions.
- The spiritual issue or concern is related to the presenting problem.

Ethical Considerations: Possible Contra-Indications

- The client is actively psychotic.
- The client is extremely paranoid.
- The client has expressed a lack of interest in spiritual and religious matters being a part of the treatment plan.
- The organization forbids the use of spiritual practices in counseling.
- The counselor lacks culturally competent, spiritual sensitivity.

Ethical Considerations: Ways Therapists Can Support Client's Spirituality

- Examine your own beliefs regarding spirituality and religion
- Become aware of the impact that your beliefs have on the therapeutic relationship
- Respect your client's spiritual and religious beliefs
- Consider how you will respond to clients who ask you your spiritual or religious views
- Be willing to challenge client's beliefs.

Ethical Considerations: Ways Therapists Can Harm

- Debating doctrine
- Assuming clients of your same religion share your same spiritual beliefs
- Not exploring spiritual matters important to the client
- Trying to rescue God

Ways Therapists Can Harm Continued

- Believing that you have divine knowledge
- Countertransference reactions
- Premature spiritual interventions
- Blurring boundaries
- By not exploring a range of spiritual options

Additional Spiritual Interventions

- Prayer
- Meditation
- Forgiveness work
- Charitable work
- Volunteerism
- Yoga

Interventions Continued

- Gratitude journal
- Teaching relationship skills
- Helping clients discover their purpose
- The use of spiritual/ religious quotes
- Homework
- Relaxation tapes

Interventions Continued


- Stress management
- Adventure therapy
- Referring clients to spiritually-based mutual aid groups
- Referring clients to indigenous community healers

Spiritual Interventions Continued


- 12 step groups
- African American Faith-based drug Ministries
- Reentry circles
- Women's groups
- Men's groups

Case Vignettes

1. You sense that a client is not opening up to you because of current and historic tension between yours and the client's religious group. What do you do?
2. A client asks you to pray for her during a session. What do you say? What do you do?
3. A client who is atheist asks you to, "Tell me about God." As his therapist, what do you say?



How Faith Based Communities Have Addressed Substance Use Disorders In African American Communities



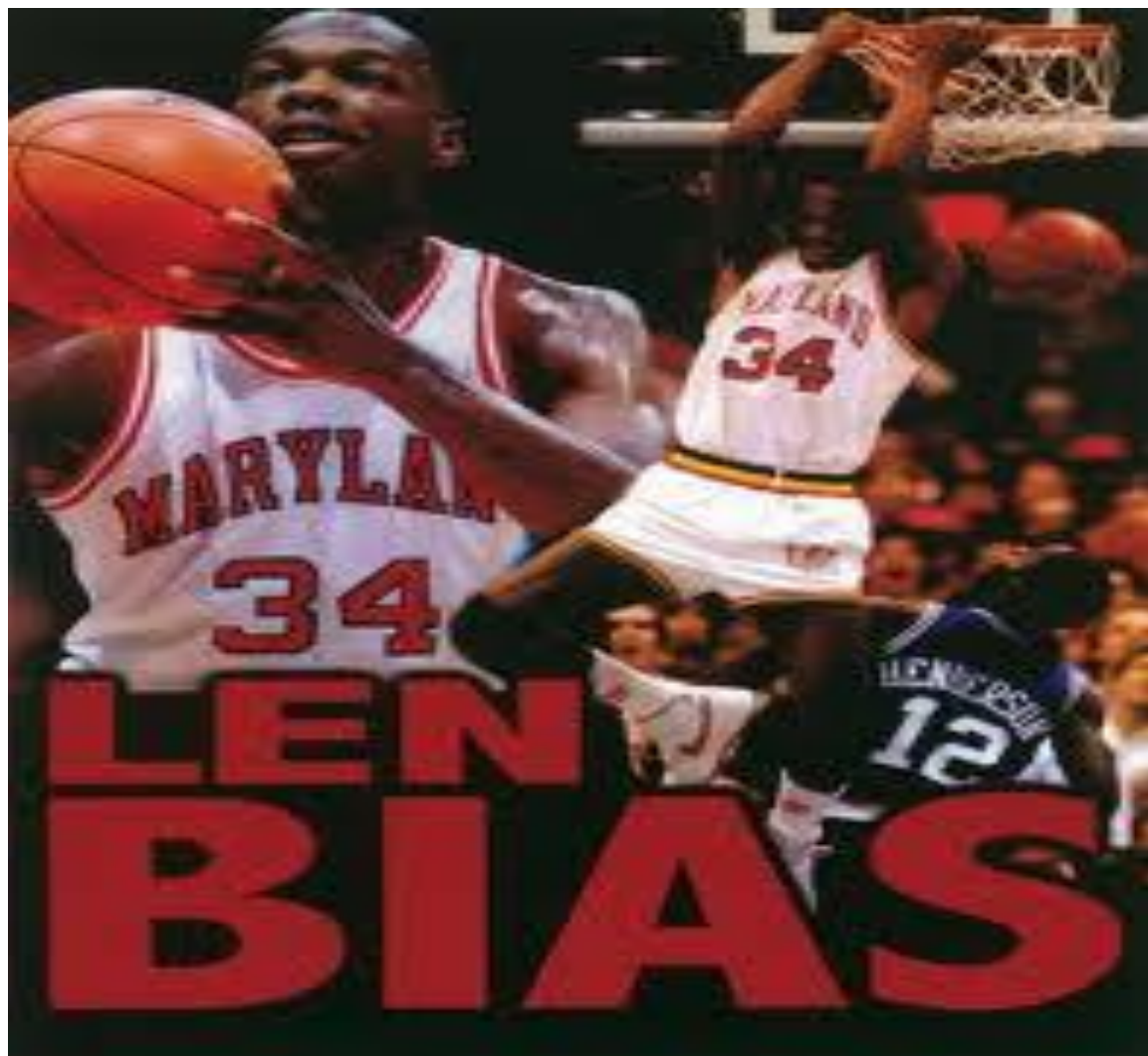
1986

Crack Cocaine Crisis



Richard Pryor

Source: flickr commons



Source: flickr commons

Prison Increase

1985 – 400,000

1995 – 1 million

2005 – 2 million

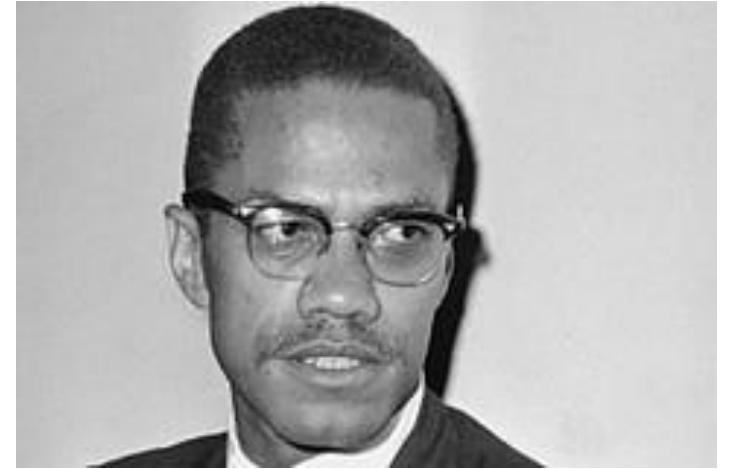
Today

Crisis Continued

- Felony arrests
- Stigmatizing language
 - “Crackhead”
 - “Crack babies”

Faith Based Community Involvement

- Salem Baptist Church
- Apostolic Faith (60 licensed therapists)
- Georgia
- Free-in-one
- ATR
- Millati Islami (integration of Islam and the 12 steps)
- Glide Memorial Church (San Francisco, Community marches, 16 generations working on recovery)





Imani Breakthrough Project

Faith-based Community-driven Approach to Racial and Ethnic Disparities in SUD Treatment and Care

Imani Breakthrough Project (CBPR*): Addressing Mental Health and SUDs in Black and Brown Communities

- Addresses the healthcare inequities in Black and Latine groups
- Faith-based harm reduction recovery program in churches serving Black and Latine persons with SUDs
- Key stakeholders are both Black/Latine people with and without SUDs
- Developed in response to a call for action from the State of Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) funded by SAMHSA to address rising rates of death due to opioid overdose, and other negative consequences of substance misuse.

*CBPR: Community-based participatory research



Drs. Chyrell Bellamy (left) and Ayana Jordan
<https://portal.ct.gov/dmhas/newsworthy/news-items/the-imani-breakthrough-project>

A Community-driven Approach

Imani Breakthrough is a two-phase 22-week intervention developed by the community and operates in Black and Latine churches.

Nine months of didactic community meetings and twelve weeks of education in a group setting related to the recovery process. Includes the impact of trauma and racism on substance use, and a focus on citizenship, community participation and the 8 dimensions of wellness.


Ten weeks of mutual support, with intensive wraparound support and life coaching focused on the social determinants of health (SDOH).

Findings: - 42% retention rate retained at 12 weeks

- significant increase in both citizenship scores and dimensions of wellness from baseline to week 12

- greatest improvements in the occupational, intellectual, financial, and personal responsibility dimensions.

2024 Hall of Fame Awards: Museum of AA Addictions, Treatment and Recovery



The screenshot displays a YouTube video player with a grid of seven video thumbnails. The thumbnails are arranged in three rows: the first row has three thumbnails, the second row has three, and the third row has one centered thumbnail. The participants are identified by their names in small text below each thumbnail: Chyrell Bellamy, PhD, MSW; Felicia Pullen, PhD; MARK A SANDERS; Representative La Shawn K. Ford; Fred Dyer, PhD, LAOC; Kisha S. Freed; and Corie Whelan, PhD, Harvard Medical School. The video player interface includes a play button, a progress bar showing 4:23 / 1:29:53, and various control icons. Below the player, the video title is "Black History Month Panel Presentation: Featuring 2024 Hall of Fame Award Recipients". The channel name is "Great Lakes Current" with 733 subscribers. There are buttons for "Subscribe", "Like" (1), "Share", "Download", and a menu icon.

Chyrell Bellamy, PhD, MSW

Felicia Pullen, PhD

MARK A SANDERS

Representative La Shawn K. Ford

Fred Dyer, PhD, LAOC

Kisha S. Freed

Corie Whelan, PhD, Harvard Medical School

Play (k)

4:23 / 1:29:53

2024 Oct 3 10:10:11

Black History Month Panel Presentation: Featuring 2024 Hall of Fame Award Recipients

Great Lakes Current
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> *J Subst Use Addict Treat.* 2023 Oct;153:209057. doi: 10.1016/j.jsat.2023.209057. Epub 2023 May 18.

Breaking through social determinants of health: Results from a feasibility study of Imani Breakthrough, a community developed substance use intervention for Black and Latinx people

Ayana Jordan¹, Mark Costa², Charla Nich³, Margaret Swarbrick⁴, Theresa Babuscio³, Janan Wyatt³, Maria O'Connell³, Kimberly Guy³, Kimberly Blackman³, Reverend Robyn Anderson⁵, Graziela Reis³, Luz Ocasio³, Merarilisse Crespo³, Chyrell Bellamy³

Affiliations + expand

PMID: 37207836 DOI: 10.1016/j.jsat.2023.209057

Abstract

Racial and ethnic disparities in substance use intervention design, implementation, and dissemination have been recognized for years, yet few intervention programs have been designed and conducted by and for people who use substances. Imani Breakthrough is a two-phase 22-week intervention developed by the community, run by facilitators with lived experience and church members, that is implemented in Black and Latinx church settings. This community-based participatory research (CBPR) approach is a concept developed in response to a call for action from the State of Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) with funding from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to address rising rates of death due to opioid overdose and other negative consequences of substance misuse. After nine months of didactic

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Emotional Intelligence and Mindfulness Practices in Integrated Spirituality Counseling

How You Can Support Clients of Faith and Non-Faith

Ask AI: Can EQ improve mental health and SUD counseling?

✦ AI Overview

Emotional intelligence (EI) is a key aspect of mental health counseling, as it can help people understand and manage their emotions, which can improve their overall well-being. Therapists can help clients develop EI through a variety of techniques, including: [🔗](#)

- Mindfulness: Learning about nonverbal communication and practicing empathy, active listening, and assertiveness [🔗](#)
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT): A technique that can be effective in enhancing EI [🔗](#)
- Interpersonal therapy: A technique that can be effective in enhancing EI [🔗](#)

The Link between EQ and Mental Health

Best Definition yet!

Emotional intelligence (EQ) involves being able to identify:

- which emotions you're feeling
- why you may be feeling them
- how to sit with and process them.

Source: PMAC Consulting, Ltd (London)

Emotional Intelligence: Three Pillars



Six Seconds KCG Model

Know Yourself: self-awareness
(Which emotions am I feeling? Why am I feeling them)

Choose Yourself: feel your emotions and consider your options for best outcome *(How do I process and navigate these emotions?)*

Give Yourself: take action on what gives you meaning *(How do I get my emotions and thoughts in agreement?)*

Emotional Intelligence and Congruency

- EQ practice creates balance, integration and congruency between the rational and emotional brain
- The thoughts and feelings become aligned
- Clients are able to make decisions using both rational and emotional mind and take action



Image: Stellalevi



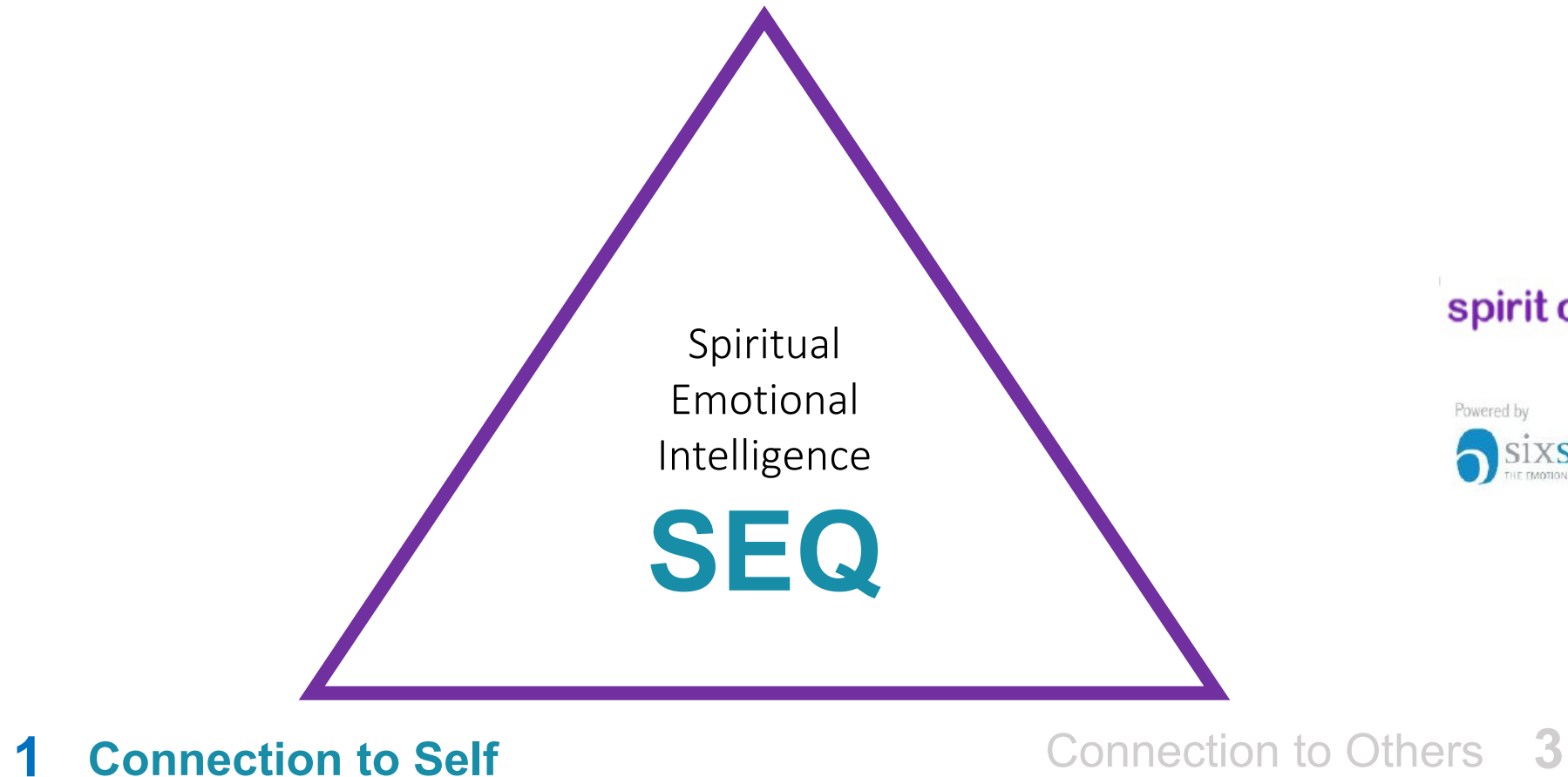
Connection to Self and the Transcendent

Begin with ourselves:

- Emotional Intelligence and mindfulness begins with self; building emotional self-awareness and emotional connection. Aligning thoughts, beliefs and emotions, creates alignment with authenticity in holding to and acting upon spiritual values and principles.
- In our connection to a Higher Being, we can express our most vulnerable emotions whether it be pain, anger, joy or gratitude. The act of surrender connects us to our spirituality.
- We have all witnessed the crying mother or father in a spiritual moment. Being in touch with our emotions in the moment opens us to spirituality.

Developing Spiritual Connection

2 Connection to the Transcendent (or Purpose/Meaning)



The Link between EQ and Mental Health

Best Definition yet!

...

It also involves the ability to recognize other's emotional states and respond appropriately. Individuals with higher levels of emotional intelligence can better navigate interpersonal relationships and cope with difficult situations.

Source: PMAC Consulting, Ltd (London)

Connection to Self and Others: Building Connection through Empathy



1 Empathy for Self

2 Empathy for Others

Developing Spiritual Connection

2 Connection to the Transcendent (or Purpose/Meaning)



1 Connection to Self

Connection to Others 3



EQ Application for Spiritual Integration in Counseling

Applying EQ and Mindfulness in Counseling:

Integrate EQ into the questioning to help the client to develop greater self-awareness and understanding through the emotions.

- **Ask questions that explore emotions:**

What emotions are coming up for you right now? Why might you be feeling sad, worried, angry, etc.?

- **Acknowledge any emotional cues your client may be displaying:** “Your shoulders dropped when you said that. What were you feeling just now?”

- **Connect through emotions:** I can see how that might make you feel _____.” “You sound really upset. How did that make you feel? “

- **Stay connected to your own emotions:** Be mindful of the emotions that arise within you as you work with the client.

Additional Caution: Spiritual Bypassing

Ignoring how we really feel about situations and deflecting to conformity and platitudes that are common in religious environments.

Additional Interventions and Practices for Clients

- Mindfulness Self-Compassion practices
- Mindfulness-based Art therapy
- Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy
- Music and art therapy

Mindfulness Practice: Emotions as Object

