Eating Disorder Recovery: A Journey from Illness Identity to Spiritual Identity

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“Recovery is not about spirituality versus Science, rather, it is about spirituality and science”

- Michael E. Berrett, PhD

“There are other ways of understanding and knowing which go beyond primary cognition, the scientific method, and sound research results. These other ways of knowing are from spiritual influences and are connected to an individual’s spiritual identity and spiritual nature”

- Michael E. Berrett, PhD

Research on Faith and Spirituality as Resources in Treatment and Recovery

1. 59% respondents with bulimia said “spiritual pursuits” had been instrumental in their recovery (Hall and Cohn, 1992)

2. Participants said that in the recovery process they experienced something “beyond the self” which they described as “spirituality, love, God, or nature” (Garrett, 1996)

3. There are positive correlations between spiritual well being and improvements in attitudes about eating, body shape, and psychological functioning (Smith et al, 2003)

4. Spirituality enhanced motivation and improved treatment adherence (Marsden, 2007)
Research on Faith and Spirituality Cont....

5. Spiritual Maturation goes hand in hand with positive psychological changes (Marsden, 2007)
6. A client’s spirituality gave them purpose and meaning, expanded their sense of identity and worth, and improved their relationships with God, family, and others (Richards et al, 2008)
7. The developed spirituality of a child is a buffer against multiple stressors, societal ills, addictions, and emotional difficulties (Lisa Miller, 2015)

Clinical Experience on Faith and Spirituality

1. Helping clients find “Reasons for Recovery” can enhance motivation for wellness. These reasons are often connected to deeper spiritual desires, beliefs, and sense of purpose
2. Patients can learn to withdraw acquired faith in addictive illness and reinvest their faith in many other meaningful places. Where we put our faith is a choice
“The transcendent person has all that is humbly available plus the energies of hope, faith, and belief in powers greater than him/herself.”

- Richard H. Cox

“Transcendence shows up in our work in those therapeutic moments when we are most able to surrender what we think we know, inhabit our doubt, and await revelation.”

- Roy Barsness

Six Tenants of Transcendence

1) Love of others (way to soulfulness)
2) Love of work (way to soulfulness)
3) Love of belonging (way to soulfulness)
4) Belief in the sacred (way to spirituality)
5) Belief in Unity (way to spirituality)
6) Belief in Transformation (way to spirituality)

- T. Byram Karasu
Why Transcendence is Important

1. We have ignored and minimized the power of transcendence to create positive change
2. We have minimized “transcendence” and “internal peace” as indicators or as “the witnessing of healing”
3. We have ignored the importance of spiritual influences in the healing arts
4. We have ignored one of the premier change agents in the world – “love”
5. We have focused too much on what is wrong, rather than what is right with our patients

Living a life of internal peace is an island with shelter despite the raging waters
7. We are treating persons, not symptoms
8. We are treating people, not diagnoses
9. We are treating the whole person, not parts of them
10. STORY: Cassie, AN, Dietetics 101, 300 students, 1 listener, know why I faced it
11. STORY: MEB, Portland, speak, discuss AN, woman after, forgiveness, know why I came
Spiritual Identity: Foundation Stones

1. Children are born with inherent spirituality
2. Spirituality and spiritual beliefs, whatever they may be, are foundational for identity and sense of self
3. The spiritual in children can be influenced towards extinguishment or development. We can nurture it!
4. Religion and/or spirituality are important to the majority of human beings on the planet
5. Spiritual practices and experiences ward against individual mental illness and self-destructive patterns
6. Research has shown that religious and/or spiritual influences aid wellness, happiness, recovery and healing

The Process of Identity Formulation

1) PICTURE: Lucy. I am born with a soon to fade understanding of my identity and worth (ages birth to months)
2) PICTURE: In the Mirror. I am the reflection of what others see in me with their eyes and their hearts. In need a mirror to see me. You are my mirror (ages 1-2 & 5-12)
3) I am me only as I am independent from them: rebellion, separation, opposition (ages 3-4 & 13-17)
4) I am me when I am the same as my peers (ages 11-14)
5) I am me when I am different from everyone else (ages 15-18)
We become the mirror of Spiritual Identity for another: negative, neutral, or positive.

The Process of Identity Formulation Cont...

6) Identity conceptualized in knowing "what I am not" without knowing "what I am"
7) Identity conceptualized in abandoning legacy, yet not knowing where I am headed
8) I am me, whether I am the same, or different matters not. I accept my uniqueness, yet care not about sameness or differentness. Principle versus approval driven. Beginning of mature sense of self (age 14-90)
9) I conceptualize self in terms of "who I am" and I don't worry about "who or what I am not"
10) I stick with what I know about me and hold tight to that. I worry less about what I do not know about me

Stuff Happens: sense of worth and identity suffers
Key Drivers in Illness Identity Formulation

1) Shaming experiences as a child open the door for illness identity
2) The eating disorder illness itself formulates illness identity.
3) Roadblocks to spiritual identity formulation open the door to illness identity formulation
4) Common spiritual issues which develop with the ED illness and aid development of illness identity
5) False beliefs and pursuits which come with the illness deepen the sense of an ED identity
6) Western Cultural Model of Self Worth nurtures the development of illness identity

Roadblocks to Spiritual Identity

1) Shame
2) Perfectionism
3) Making myself the exception on all good things
4) Avoidance
5) Seeking approval over love
6) Incongruence to beliefs: damaged integrity
7) Disconnection and lack of presence
Common Spiritual Issues of Patients Suffering ED, MH, or Addictive Illness

1. Loss of connection to higher power, nature, God, relationships with others, relationship with self, and sense of personal spirituality
2. Loss of sense of spiritual identity and worth
3. Loss of ability to see themselves as good, kind, compassionate
4. Tendency in severe stages of the illness to see themselves exclusively as their addictive illness
5. Feelings of being incapable, unworthy, and unlovable

Common Spiritual Issues Cont...

6. Deteriorating relationships (disconnection) with Self, higher power, and others
7. Increasing reliance on addictive substance, process, or illness as the answer and solution to struggles and problems
8. Difficulty noticing and attending to spiritual feelings and messages of the heart
9. Development of false beliefs about addictive illness and it’s ability to provide solutions in their lives
10. Negative images of God, self, and others

Common Spiritual Issues Cont...

11. Guilt and Shame about sexuality, any perceived weakness, and about who they are (identity)
12. Reduced capacity to love and serve
13. Dishonesty and consequent loss of self respect
Ten Common Illness Generated False Beliefs of Those Suffering a Serious Eating Disorder

1) My eating disorder will give me control of my emotions and my life
2) My eating disorder will effectively communicate my pain and suffering
3) My eating disorder will make me exceptional in some way
4) My eating disorder will prove that I am as bad and unworthy as I think I am
5) My eating disorder will help me become perfected at least in some way

6) My eating disorder will give me comfort and protection from pain
7) My eating disorder will give me a sense of identity
8) My eating disorder will compensate or atone for my past
9) My eating disorder will allow me to avoid personal responsibility for my life, which is overwhelming
10) My eating disorder will bring me approval from others

Western Cultural Model of Self Worth

In this unfortunate and false model, worth is dependent on a select few external evidences and on narrow definitions:
1) APPEARANCE – and it better be the fashion industry thin ideal!
2) ACHIEVEMENT – and it better be better than anyone else
3) APPROVAL – If others think I am wonderful, only then might I have value
Interventions: The Journey from Illness Identity to Spiritual Identity

We start again building a sense of self through the mirror of others who have our best interest at heart.
Intervention Might Best Address Basic Human Emotional and Spiritual Needs

Nurturing Spiritual Identity: Understanding the Basic Needs of Developing Youth

1) A sense of acceptance and belonging in a social sphere
2) A sense of being important and valued in the family
3) A sense of spirituality, purpose, and meaning in life which gives hope
4) A sense of self, and worth, and identity
5) A growing set of principles in which one's life is anchored


Assessing the Client’s Spiritual Framework and Other Deeper Aspects of Identity

1) Assess the theory and model of change of the individual patient
2) ACTIVITY: Your model of change, Share
3) Assess the spiritual beliefs and practices of the individual patient, Share
4) ACTIVITY: Your spiritual beliefs and practices, Share
5) HANDOUT: Questions of deeper assessment such as: 3 accomplishments you are proud of, 3 fears you have faced, 3 deep desires and dreams, 3 difficulties you have overcome
Assessing the Client’s Spiritual Framework and Other Deeper Aspects of Identity

6) ACTIVITY / Spiritual Heroes: 1) Who, 2) What is it about them, 3) What are the similarities with you, 4) Share.
7) ACTIVITY: What do you know about the meaning and the purpose of your life. Share
8) ACTIVITY: What is one of your dreams – a deepest desire that has been shared with very few
9) QUESTION: If you could change one thing in our world today – what would you change?
10) QUESTION: If you had only 72 hours to live, what would you do?
11) What do the above answers tell you about your identity?

Further Understanding of Self

1) What do you know about your life purpose, meaning, and your deepest desires, hopes, & dreams?
   ACTIVITY: Share one of your highest hopes and dreams with your partner
2) Are you clear about the “reasons” you do the things you do – especially this exhausting work?
   ACTIVITY/SHARING/REASONS: Why did you come today?
   Why did you begin and remain in this work?
   STORIES: MEB: 1) Survival trip and aftermath “you’ve got to help the young people”

Self Assessment: My Model of Self Worth

ACTIVITY/ REFLECTION: What is your model of self worth? How do you know if you are alright – or wonderful? How do you know if you are enough? What is your way of knowing?
Core Components of Sense of Identity and Self Worth

- 1) Progenitors
- 2) Personality
- 3) Passion – EXAMPLE: Jenni, closet, guitar
- 4) Purpose
- 5) Principles
- 6) Potential - QOUTE: George Eliot
  SLIDES: big mtn
  - (adapted from Roger Allen, PhD, HDI )

Quote

“It’s never too late to become who you might have been”

- George Eliot

6 Spiritual Pathways to Recovery and Spiritual Identity

1) Listen to and follow the heart
2) Learning a language of spirituality
3) Principled Living
4) Mindfulness and spiritual mindedness
5) Giving and Receiving the good gifts of love
6) Seeking the therapeutic mirror which reflects spiritual identity

- Berrett, Hardman, Richards (2012)
“One sees clearly only with the heart. Anything essential is invisible to the eyes.”

- Antoine de Sainte-Exupery
  The Little Prince
Listening to and Following the Heart:
Guidelines and Interventions

1. Directly teach clients the concept of listening to and following the heart
2. Adapt the language of “listening to the heart” to the spiritual framework of the individual client
3. Ask theistic clients to look for God’s hand, providence, or miracles in their lives
4. Teach them how to know if the message is from the heart
5. Encourage “quiet times” or “solos” and proper use of such opportunity
6. Encourage “writings of my heart” journal

Attend, Listen, and Follow Your Heart

1) Heart – symbol of love, light, life since beginning of man
2) Heart impacts decisions directly in influence on the brain (McRaty, et,al)
3) Thoughts, feelings, and heart
4) Heart is something deeper – connected to deepest desires and truth
5) To each – individual interpretation: sensibility, sensitivity, real me, true self, wizard within, UC mind, intuition, inspiration, best self, God talking to me, attunement with the universe

Attend, Listen, and Follow Your Heart Cont.....

7) STORIES / PAPERS:
- Call the girl for survival SHS, “want you to come with us”
- Palestinian father
- Bike Mart
- Kenyan boy and the apple
- Taxi driver
- Great, great, great grandfather and the crumpled paper
Attend, Listen, Follow Your Heart Cont.....

8) ACTIVITY/IMAGERY: First, sharing thoughts and feelings today, then, a little deeper: Reflection, introspection, hand on heart, find what know in heart to be true, message from the heart to remember and follow, that transcends thoughts and feelings? Sharing

9) MUSIC

10) ASSIGNMENT: Each night – write among other journal entries – impressions from the heart to be honored and, embraced, followed
Follow your Heart – Follow Your Star, Passion, Purpose, Dream, and Deepest Desire

1) Make your passion and purpose of highest priority
   • Clients have often given up on their dreams – they are even afraid to admit them, and terrified to share them
   • Have we disconnected from or abandoned our dream? Are we suffering similarly?
   • ACTIVITY/WRITE: I want to... “have” thru “become”
   • STORY: Jenni Schaefer guitar: “What’s in your closet?”
   • REFLECTION: What is the guitar in your closet

Learning a Language of Spirituality
"I have learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel"

- Maya Angelou
Principled Living: Clinical Guidelines and Interventions

1. Discuss regularly in session the courage and bravery of the client in living in harmony with their heartfelt convictions
2. Help clients learn the value of “self correction” versus the damaging impact of self judgment
3. Help clients once again make commitments and promises to self, higher power, and others to increase motivation and empower them through their value for integrity
4. Help patients examine this query: “What will it mean for me to be true to my heart?”
5. Teach clients to live the 24 hour honesty rule

Integrity: A Core Principle of Spiritual Identity

- 1) One part of Integrity is living our proclaimed and/or internalized beliefs
- 2) Another part of integrity is practicing what we preach
- 3) We must be willing to do what we ask our patients to do
- 4) Example, Congruence, Integrity are woven together
- 5) STORY: “The Wooden Dish,” Leo Tolstoy

Courage: A Life of Engagement Versus Avoidance. What are You Waiting For?

- 1) Opposite of avoidance is engagement
- 2) Avoidance maintains low self esteem (R.Bednar, APA Book). Opposite of avoidance is engagement
- 3) Self respect demands that we face fear: We do and say what we need to do and say
- 4) Courage: “Not the absence of fear, but rather the willingness to take a step despite fear”
- 5) We Do hard Things
- 6) EXAMPLE/STORY: DHB Family Reunion
- 7) STORY: Engagement: A moment with Patch Adams MD
- 8) PAPER/STORY: Starfish
- 9) Living with faith and hope
Choosing, Embracing, and Living Gratitude

1) Learn from adversity and embrace gratitude. Gratitude is a choice and a way of life, not a list.
   
   QUOTE: Victor Frankl “The will for meaning, the ability to choose one’s attitude in any set of circumstances. This is the last of all Human Freedoms”

   STORY: Kenya – the boy and the apple
   STORY: Kenya – Jonny and the returned crackers
   STORY: 1936 Olympics and Jesse Owens
   STORY: Thanks to a teacher
   ACTIVITY: Express gratitude to each other including for each other
Hope

“Hope begins in the dark, the stubborn hope that if you just show up and try to do the right thing, the dawn will come. You wait and watch and work: You don’t give up.”

-Anne Lamott born 1954, author, activist

Make Your Journey an “Upward Striving:” Live up to Your Potential

1) QUOTE: “What I do today is important because I am trading one day of my life for it”
2) Live with congruence, honesty and integrity with an upward striving. This is the power to change and grow
3) Striving includes making commitments and promises to self and others
STORY: Power of promise: Frodo and Sam
4) We make rapid and never ending self correction and honesty with self and others
   We live the 24 hour rule for honesty for ourselves (N. Hawkins)

Make Your Journey an Upward Striving Cont.....

5) QUOTE: James Branch Cabell
   “While it is well enough to leave foot prints on the sands of time, it is even more important to make sure they point in a commendable direction”
6) QUOTE: George Elliot
   “It is never too late to become who you might have been
7) QUOTE: “Growth may happen best not with incessant raising of a bar which is too high to reach, but rather, with the methodical witnessing of the great things we have done, and the good people that we are” MEB
8) STORY: MEB – marathon, hot seat, beginning of speaking. An upward striving
ACTIVITY/REFLECTION:

- What would it mean in your life to take the “high road?”
- When have you taken the lower path and what were the consequences, and what did you learn?
- When have you taken the higher pathway and what were the consequences and what did you learn?
Mindfulness and Spiritual Mindedness: Interventions

1. Spiritual mindedness is mindfulness about spiritual things
2. Teach clients directly the difference between thoughts, feelings, and heart
3. Teach that listening to and following the heart is the primary activity connected to spiritual mindedness
4. Help clients understand how pondering, meditating, reflecting, and praying are all practices that can promote spiritual mindedness
5. Ask clients to write impressions of the heart versus writing just feelings and thoughts in their journal, to learn to differentiate

Mindfulness can be a Deliberate Awareness which Increases Balance in Life which influences Spiritual Harmony

- Stop and smell the roses
- Take time for the beautiful: art, music, dance, story, written word, architecture, nature, wilderness, the human form
  - STORY: “The Violin”—we can miss it!
  - ART & NATURE: Be with it
  - ACTIVITY: Listen to a beautiful song

Quote

“God speaks to us in moments of silence”

- Mother Teresa
Stack the Deck in Favor of Personal Transcendent Experience

1) Be thoughtful, mindful, or reflective before and during therapeutic work, play, life for self and others
2) EXAMPLE: I pray for my clients before seeing them. It is a plea for divine inspiration, and it helps me connect with and feel love for my clients
3) Extend oneself within safety, wisdom, and ethics.
4) Be 110% present and undivided in attending
5) Take a risk when the impression comes
6) Expressive and experiential activities can “stack the deck” towards transcendence
7) Solitude, solo, nature, wilderness, ponderance helps
Stack the Deck in Favor of Personal Transcendent Experience Cont.....

- 8) Express your care, concern, love, and high hopes for others and for yourself. Love invites.
- 9) Gentle movement such as dance, and yoga can invite transcendence.
- 10) ACTIVITY: Make your own list of ways you invite transcendence into your life.
- 11) Regularly participate in rituals, or activities of invitation.
- 12) Attend, listen to, follow the heart.

- Berrett, Maine, McGilley, Ressler (2013)

Giving and Receiving the Good Gifts of Love

Quote

"The things that matter most in our lives are not fantastic or grand. They are moments when we touch one another, when we are there in the most attentive or caring way. This simple and profound intimacy is the love that we all long for. These moments of touching and being touched can become a foundation for a path with heart, and they take place in the most immediate and direct way. Mother Teresa put it like this, "In this life we cannot do great things. We can only do small things with great love."

- Jack Kornfield from A Path with Heart
“When you love another person, you see the face of God”

- Hugo / Les Miserables
I Can Hold On

Receiving and Giving Good Gifts of Love: Guidelines and Interventions

1. **ACTIVITY:** How do you resist love?
2. Teach clients to directly and clearly ask for the gifts and support they need from others.
3. Teach clients to give love to self through consistent attentiveness to needs and affirming, reassuring, and kind messages to themselves.
4. Help clients notice and change their reasons and methods of refusing love in their lives.
5. Help clients notice the good gifts of love they give, and the good gifts of love coming into their lives from others.
6. **EXAMPLES:** Use experiential exercises to amplify the love in their lives (“thank you I know” or “love and tissues” group exercises).
7. Help clients express their love for others more vulnerably and more fully.

Nurturing and Deepening Loving Relationships and the Spiritual Experience of Love

- **QUOTE:** “If you want to make a friend for a lifetime, ask someone to do something for you.”
- **STORY:** “The boy and the rock”
- **Deepen connections with Johari window:** emotional intimacy via feedback and self disclosure: vulnerability
- **EXAMPLE:** Daddy daughter dance – multiple family group
- **EXAMPLE:** MEB Christmas/Holiday gratitude sharing meeting
Giving Self a Kind Gift: Recognition of Positive Truths About Self

Give yourself the gift of acknowledging, embracing, internalizing the truth of your positive influence
- EXAMPLE/NOTE: MEB note from patient
- MUSIC: “Sudden Inspiration”
- ACTIVITY / IMAGERY: The Recognition of Impact:” When the music begins to play, I would ask you, invite you, to go inside of you, and meet the moment, and the person, where you touched and influenced a special persons life for the better –parent, child, client, student, friend - Look at them in the eyes, and beyond - into their heart, and hear and receive their message of gratitude for what you have done for them
Holding up the Therapeutic Mirror which Reflects Spiritual Identity

1. When holding up the mirror for the client – point out their successes, their courage, their good intentions, their motives, their love, and their qualities and gifts.
2. Metaphors and stories, parables and allegories often speak deeply to the soul. Where possible, use symbols, ceremonies, metaphors and stories to help clients see who they are and the depth of their goodness and spirituality. STORY: “That was love.”
3. Ask clients to tell stories of heroes in their lives that have spiritual qualities they respect. Help them see the similarities between themselves and their heroes.
4. Help them see a new reflection of self through you, and help them notice and take ownership truths of self.
Holding up the Mirror of Spiritual Identity: Becoming Acquainted with You

1) ACTIVITY/SHARING: Declare to your partner what one global change you would make towards making the world a better place if you could.

2) ACTIVITY: Write down three deeply held beliefs about life, relationships, spirituality which are anchors and guides in your life.

3) ACTIVITY / SHARING: Share one of those beliefs with your neighbor now.

4) Hold up the therapeutic mirror of spiritual identity for oneself – especially character (Our chapter in M Maine...)

5) STORY: “You’re one in a million”

6) STORY: “Listened phone call by a mother “That took courage”

7) STORY: 1) I don’t love anyone, 2) Witnessed, 3) “That was love”

8) ACTIVITY: Journaling: accomplishments you are proud of, evidences of character, noticed glimpses of who you are from today. Focus on the positive.

9) The power of declaration: It exposes incongruence, reveals confusion and needed understanding, and solidifies truth and clarity.

10) ACTIVITY: Declare your truth on paper and out loud.

11) QUOTE: Mother Theresa “I serve not because people are broken, but because they are holy.” That means you are holy.

12) QUOTE: From Kingdom of Heaven (Saladin)

“The kingdom of heaven is not this land, it is not a place – it is all of us – it is the people”

13) ACTIVITY / REFLECTION: Think and get connected to one whom you view as a spiritual hero, or one of “spiritual greatness”

What is it about them which makes them spiritual and which attracts you to them?

What is it about them which is similar with you?

Will you own that likeness and commonality?
As the MUSIC BEGINS I would like you to – I invite you to
Go to a safe place inside
Join and connect with a few of those who truly have your best
interest at heart
Experience what each feels about and towards you
Experience what they see in you and know about who you are
Experience what you mean to them, and what they mean to you
Listen as they tell you what they want –not from you- but for you
Listen as they share their highest hopes for you
Listen as they give you guidance on what you need to do to best
care for yourself and those you love
Tell them what is in your heart for them
My sincere thanks...

heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you for being a part of this webinar today. I sincerely hope you received at least one thing of value.

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