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The Elusive Mystery of Being Human

Exploring our Client's Framework for Meaning

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About the Speaker

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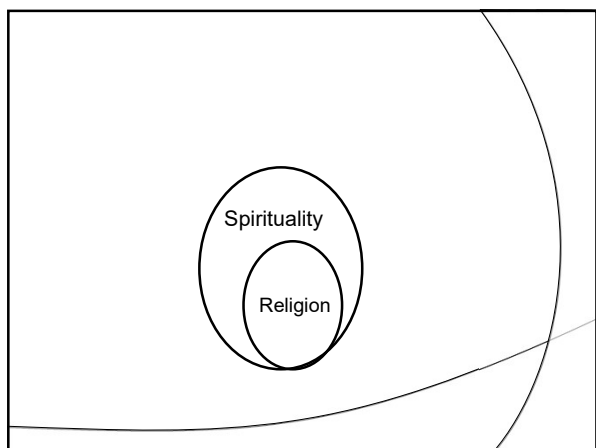
Commercial Associations

- Publishers: Elsevier, Wolters Kluwer, Mental Health Presses

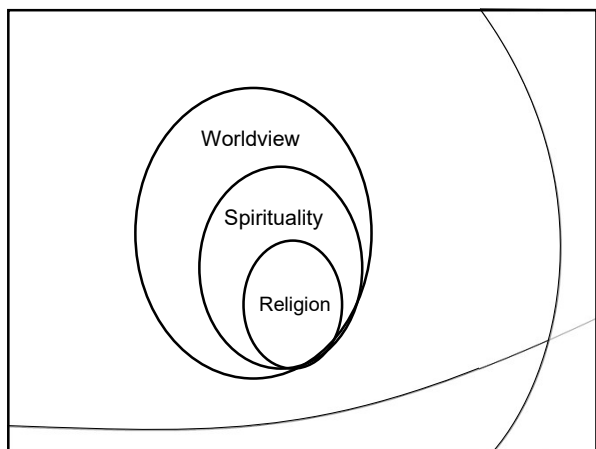
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Religion

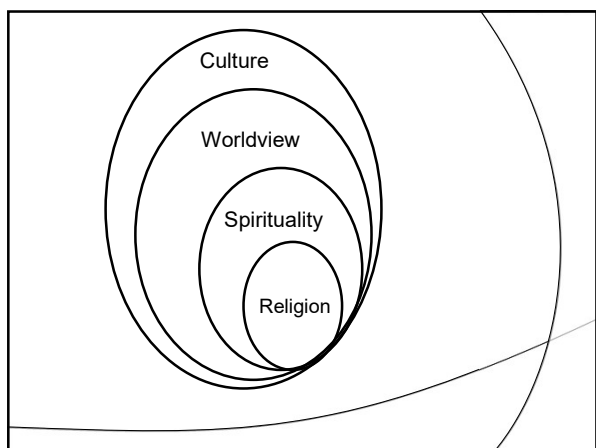
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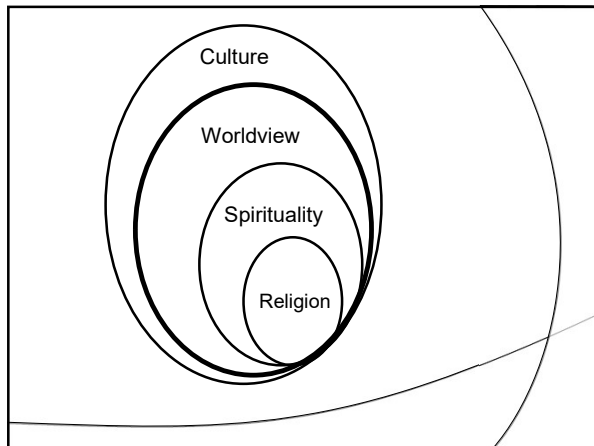
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Clinical Importance

“Why is it useful to understand the client’s worldview?”

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Clinical Importance

- 1) Helps with engagement
- 2) Can spot spiritual crises causing psychiatric symptoms
- 3) Uncover rigid and damaging beliefs
- 4) May lay the foundation for sensitively transforming a client's hesitancy on religious grounds to use a specific pharmacotherapy or psychotherapy
- 5) Point out areas for psychological growth and support
- 6) Important component of a suicide assessment
- 7) May help mobilize hope and resiliency and/or spark personal motivation for therapeutic intervention
- 8) May help short-circuit cultural/spiritual practices that could hurt healing

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The truth of the matter:
If we ask a client to share their framework
for meaning, we must be prepared to
psychologically and professionally handle
the exploration.

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What does it mean that the therapist
must be able to psychologically and
professionally handle the exploration of
the client's world view?

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The Crux of the Problem

"In clinical practice, the clinician either holds
the same worldview as the patient
or does not."

Josephson and Petee

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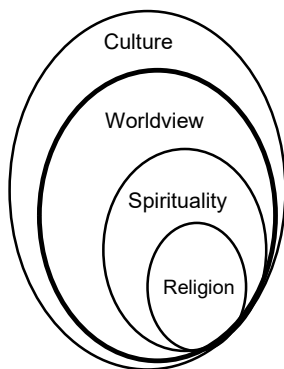
What should you say if a client asks you, “Do you believe in God?”

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Self-Disclosure

Only used if it is needed in order to create engagement.

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The Crux of the Problem

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Josephson and Petee

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Purpose of Therapy

To soften the suffering of our client
using our very best skills.

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Our Compass

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“Kulturbrille Metaphor”

(Franz Boas, a founder of American cultural anthropology)

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Damaging Clinician Kulturbrille Effects

- 1) May cause a clinician to avoid exploring the client's worldview.
- 2) May result in a “falsely neutral” exploration
- 3) May cause a clinician to proselytize
- 4) May lead to frank prejudicial feelings and/or behaviors towards the client

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Countertransference

“In clinical practice, the clinician either holds the same worldview as the patient or does not.”

Josephson and Peteet

- 1) “Why am I having such a strong reaction to this patient?”
- 2) “Is my own skepticism about some of these matters an impediment to the therapeutic process?”
- 3) “Is my personal interest in this area leading me to focus too much on it?”

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Harry Stack Sullivan's Wise Adage

"... The clinician is an expert having expert knowledge of interpersonal relations, personality problems, and so on; he has no traffic in the satisfactions which may come from interpersonal relations, and he does not pursue prestige or standing in the eyes of his patients or at the expense of his patients.

In accordance with this definition, the psychiatrist is quite obviously uninterested in what the patient might have to offer, temporarily or permanently as a companion, and quite resistant to any support by the patient for his prestige, importance, and so on. **It is only if the psychiatrist is very clearly aware of this taboo, as it were, on trafficking in the ordinary commodities of interpersonal relations**

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SAFETY

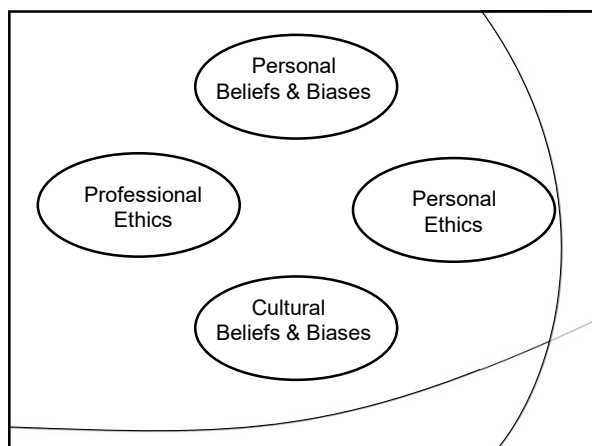
(Being save to say whatever comes to mind)

Watchfulness for Kulturbille Effects

Sullivan's Adage

No Hidden Clinician Agendas

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Purpose of Therapy

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Our Compass

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Respect

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“How many of you feel that it is
important to respect your client’s
culture and community?”

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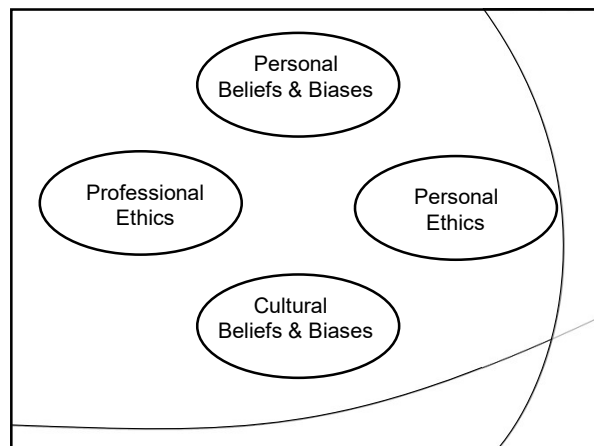
Webster's Definition

Respect: to feel or show honor or esteem for; hold in high regard.

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Carl Roger's Unconditional Positive Regard.

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“A master clinician is not someone who has no psychotherapeutic limitations but someone who accepts and understands that they do.”

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Techniques for Raising the Framework for Meaning

1) Indirect

- A) Listening for openings in a person's language (James Griffith)
- B) Asking existential questions (James Griffith)

2) Direct

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Griffith's Existential Questions

- 1) For what are you deeply grateful?
- 2) What is your clearest sense of the meaning of your life at this time?
- 3) Why is it important that you are alive?

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Griffith's Existential Questions

- 4) To what or whom are you most devoted?
- 5) To whom, or what, do you freely express love?
- 6) What has sustained you?
- 7) From where do you draw your strength?

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Griffith's Existential Questions

- 8) Where do you find peace?
- 9) Who truly understands your situation?
- 10) When you are afraid or in pain how do you find comfort?

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Direct Method #1: The What Makes You Tick Question?

"People really vary on what makes them tick, for some it is religion, for others it is their family, for others it is their community, and, of course, it could be a combination of things; What would you say makes you tick?"

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Direct Method #2: The Spiritual Continuum Question?

“People really vary on their spiritual beliefs from believing in a god to being agnostic to being an atheist, where would you place yourself on that continuum?”

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Direct Method #3: The Childhood Upbringing Question?

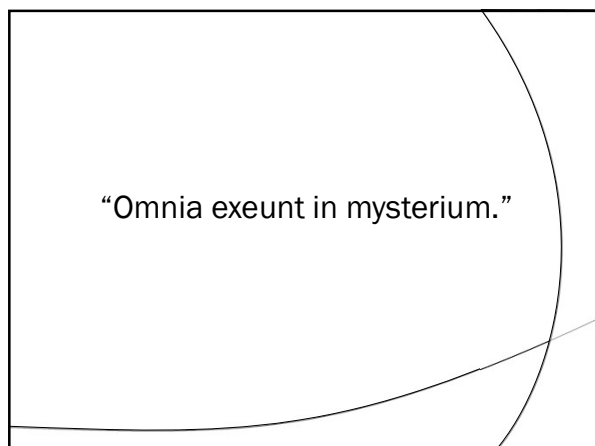
“When you were a child did your parents raise you with a specific religious belief?”

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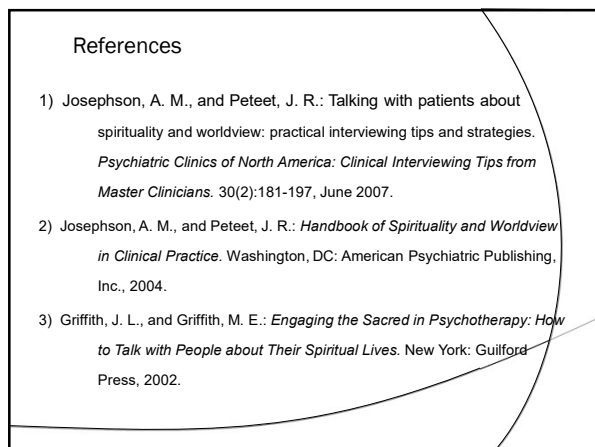
“In particular he (a medieval alchemist) approached matter with a passionate conviction that it held a mystery, a ‘mysterium magnum’ the nature of which was different in quality and in essence from its material container.”

A. McGlashan,
Savage and Beautiful Country

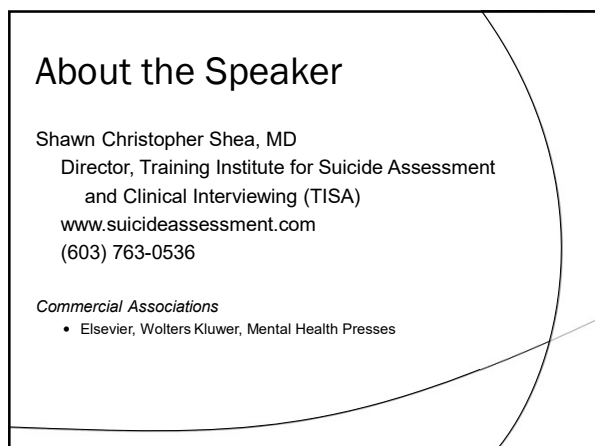
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