SPIRITUALITY IN COUNSELLING:

ASSISTING COUNSELLORS AND THE DEPRESSED

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ABSTRACT

This study qualitatively explored the views of six people who use spirituality in their counselling work with the depressed. These findings were compared to the counselling literature on spirituality and a theoretical framework developed for this research. There are indications that spirituality in counselling is helpful in alleviating depression, as seen through the literature and through the reports from participants. However, this was more strongly supported in the literature than with the participants. Empowerment, belonging and universal sacredness emerged as helpful conceptualisations for counsellors who wish to incorporate spirituality in their work with depressed clients. In addition, spirituality assisted the counsellors personally and enhanced their practice. Increased counsellor awareness of their spiritual beliefs and values in counselling was found beneficial to counsellors working with depressed clients. This helps counsellors to become less vulnerable to imposing their views on the client, which can reduce their ability to help. The research demonstrated that a healthy spirituality might reduce vulnerability to depression while conditions that create vulnerability to depression may also reduce spirituality's capacity to enhance meaning and purpose in life. The depressed also suffer from powerlessness, isolation, and devaluation that can be alleviated through spirituality in counselling. This study further identified that in certain circumstances spirituality was not helpful and that some barriers existed for counsellors in using it in their work. On balance, the study found encouragement to integrate spirituality into counselling work for depression.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Until recently, the counselling literature has generally ignored spirituality. A goal of this research project is to increase the awareness of the use of spirituality in counselling and its relationship with assisting counsellors and the depressed. This chapter begins with a discussion about academic, professional and personal reasons for choosing this topic. It then presents the general approach to this study and ends with an outline of the structure of the thesis.

Research Rationale

Counselling and Spirituality

There is growing re-awareness in society of the potential benefits of spirituality and this is beginning to be felt in counselling (O'Hara, 1997, pp. 26-28). There is also a growing recognition about the importance of culture and a few writers in counselling state that spirituality plays an important role in understanding culture (Lukoff, Lu & Turner, 1998, pp. 23-25). Feminists have highlighted the ways gender plays an important role in counselling and that patriarchal structures may impose a spiritual view upon men and women that is destructive to their social and personal lives (Elkins, 1995, pp.88-89; Spretnak, 1990, p. 6). There is evidence that the indigenous populations of New Zealand, Canada and the United States have become active politically and socially in recovering spiritual traditions lost during Western colonisation because it is central to their well-being and identity (Durie, 1995, pp.2-3; Ywahoo, 1989, pp. 278-279). Western societies are also increasingly multicultural due to global demographic changes, putting pressure on counsellors to be cross-culturally competent in their work (Ishiyama, 1989, p.43; Lee, 1996, pp.199-200).

These changes in Western society are likely to influence the counselling field. They may encourage some counsellors to consider spiritual aspects related to gender, culture and worldview as important to client well-being (Fukuyama, 1990, pp. 7-9; Myers, Speight, Highlen, Cox, Reynolds, Adams & Hanley, 1991, p. 54; Sue, 1991, p. 300; Sue & Sue, 1990, p.24).

For counsellors seeking to achieve familiarity with spirituality, they may be helped by clarifying that spirituality is linked to gender, culture, and worldview and that it affects client well-being (Everts & Agee, 1994, p. 298; Fukuyama & Sevig, 1997, p. 238; Morell, 1996, pp.306-307). Their efforts can be facilitated by some of the counselling literature that has begun to connect spirituality to well-being (Lukoff, et al., 1998, pp. 41-42; Speight, Myers, Cox & Highlen, 1991, pp. 32-33; Starhawk, 1990, pp. 23-24). Training in the counselling field is also beginning to encourage greater spiritual awareness for counsellors (Ingersoll, 1997, pp. 224-225; O'Hara, 1997, p. 7). This movement creates a more favourable environment for counsellors to strengthen their knowledge about spirituality and to apply it to personal and social factors affecting client well-being.

Counselling, Spirituality and Depression

The literature generally argues that spirituality is a positive influence on well-being. Within this literature, some authors describe the potential of spirituality in counselling to alleviate many mental health problems (Chandler, Holden & Kolander, 1992, p. 171; Sermabeikian, 1994, p. 182). Some of this counselling literature also provides recognition about its potential to assist the depressed (Koenig, George, Peterson, 1998, p. 536; Westgate, 1996, p. 33). However, this portion of the literature is still relatively small compared with the more general material on spirituality improving client well-being within counselling, which in turn, is overshadowed by broader discussions of spirituality. There is limited research regarding spirituality in counselling in relation to depression and more studies are needed to clarify if there is a connection between a lack of spirituality and depression.

The topic of depression is important to investigate because it is recognised as one of the more common mental health problems affecting all age groups (Cicchetti & Toth, 1998). There is also evidence of a widespread increase in the number of people afflicted today with depression in the Western world and that women have significantly higher rates of depressive symptoms than men (Ciccehetti & Toth, 1998, p. 224; Westgate, 1996, p. 26). International attention is now being paid to the prevalence of this mental health problem and the need to understand and effectively treat it. This attention has reached the United Kingdom in the form of a five-year campaign to improve public attitudes, professional service, and reduce client stigma regarding depression (Paykel, Tylee, Wright, Priest, Rix & Hart, 1997, p. 59). There is now a serious effort on the part of the medical establishment to acknowledge and address the widespread incidence of depression. Counsellors need to work in conjunction with the medical establishment and can contribute their own non-medical approaches to helping the depressed. This thesis will explore a non-medical approach of treating depression through the use of spirituality in counselling by investigating two questions. These are (1) does spirituality in counselling assist the depressed and (2) how can spirituality's potential be understood and conceptualised in counselling to assist counsellors in their work with the depressed?

Professional Reasons for Research

Professionally, I have worked as a social worker and counsellor in the mental health field for most of my career. As a result, I identify with concerns about social and economic inequities common in social work and advocacy for counselling services in mental health. I have also worked with depressed clients over the years and have been excited by many who have found a way to recover from their depression that improve their lives but also felt my own loss when working with a few people who have not survived their ordeals. My impression is that depression is a very common problem that confronts most counsellors in their practice and frequently is part of other difficulties such as suicidal behaviour, addiction, poverty, abuse, physical health problems, and poor social adjustment. Many of my professional experiences also include cross-cultural work as a counsellor with a European background working with First Nation people in Canada and Maori in New Zealand. This work has made me

more aware of the power of the dominant Western culture to devalue and constrain indigenous people. It is also my belief that the high rates of depression and suicide with First Nation people in Canada are related to a loss of traditional culture, which includes traditional spiritual beliefs and values. There are similar beliefs being expressed in the New Zealand counselling field at the Lower Hutt Family Centre (Tapping, 1993, pp. 33-35).

As a European Canadian coming back to New Zealand to study after having worked here for three years in the early 1980s, I am aware that there are increased efforts in both countries by indigenous people to recover their spiritual beliefs and values. They have a spiritual connection with the land, culture and ancestry (Bishop & Glynn, 1992, p. 33; Hart, 1995, pp. 64-72; Lee & Armstrong, 1995, pp. 442-443). This connection shows itself by indigenous struggles in Canada to protect or regain their sacred lands and a continuing effort by the Maori of New Zealand to achieve a cultural renaissance. These efforts are considered sacred by those involved and a sign that colonisation and cultural domination have not extinguished Canadian First Nation and Maori spirituality. Their actions are valuable in strengthening indigenous spirituality but they are also concrete examples for Europeans about a way of seeing the world. This way of seeing the world as ancient, sacred and healing was commonly understood by Europeans several hundred years ago and has not been entirely lost either through the passage of time (Gimbutas, 1989, pp. 68-69; Keller, 1990, pp. 41-45; Spretnak, 1989, p. 73). It is a worldview that this researcher believes is valuable in protecting the health of the planet and integrating a spiritual wisdom from our collective history.

Personalising this Research

Completing this research is an important step in my spiritual journey. This journey is about raising my own awareness about living in a committed and caring manner with others and myself and a belief that my sense of community responsibility and support for political emancipation of all people are increased by spiritual maturity. Completing this research also enables me to appreciate that there are many ways to understand spirituality in people's lives through empowerment, belonging, and

sacredness. This knowledge is important to apply usefully and creatively in my work without imposing my views on others. The current study seeks to explore how personal spiritual experiences can be transforming and inspiring. My spiritual experiences suggest that when we develop a close relationship with elements within us or between our environments and ourselves that unusual knowledge may arise. This knowledge seems based on an intuitive knowing about the world that was previously unavailable to the person and has somehow arisen through changes in the relationships. There can be a spiritual essence associated with this intuitive knowing that encourages a valuing of these relationships and activates a connective energy. This energy enhances an awareness of sacredness, belonging, and power in others and myself. This awareness allows me to appreciate my Celtic identity and spiritual connection with nature. Valuing these relationships has encouraged a belief in a spiritual interconnection to all things and vitalised an interest in traditional indigenous knowledge, cross-cultural awareness and holistic science. Many aspects to these areas of study have supported and provided explanations about a universal presence that unites all things. My personal experiences have also encouraged an acceptance and integration of my vulnerability and identity as a physically disabled man as they are part of what is sacred and sustaining in a spiritual journey. The suppression of these things seems enticing as it permits me to avoid painful memories but my experience suggests that rejection of them leads to alienation and depression. As indicated, my self-knowledge has clearly influenced the direction of this thesis and provided an important reference point when investigating the importance of spirituality in counselling.

Broader Meaning and Purpose in Spiritual Journeying

One of my strengths is a strong interest and passion for the subject of spirituality arising out of my own professional and personal experiences. Furthermore, investigating the literature was a way to broaden knowledge about spirituality that could potentially confirm some of my own personal experiences. Establishing research questions to explore counselling, spirituality, and depression was grounding and relevant to my cross-cultural counselling career and a necessary step on my own journey. Reviewing the literature has rewarded me by increasing my understanding of

many spiritual paths and heightened my appreciation of how these different paths potentially impact the depressed. The literature has validated the importance of my spiritual path but tempered it with the knowledge that there are many other paths as well. Understanding and respecting the spiritual paths of others is an essential part of the process of engaging the unknown and can reveal important elements of commonality, difference and connection between people.

The General Approach to this Study

The literature identified many spiritual paths to consider in this study and raised the possibility that several spiritual views would be identified in the fieldwork. This meant that it was possible to acquire rich data when exploring spirituality's potential to assist the depressed in counselling and how this could be conceptualised to assist counsellors in their work with the depressed. Accordingly, the research study investigated a range of beliefs and values associated with spirituality, identified how they were linked to depression and clarified the nature of spiritual counselling with the depressed. A content analysis of the interviews was used to provide knowledge about participants' beliefs, values and practices related to the study. This study adopted an inclusive, holistic and integrative view whereby people's inner and outer worlds were valued and considered interactive in developing and shaping their perception of reality. The study explored the possibility that well-being is strengthened by wholeness and unity while factors contributing to personal and social fragmentation and division are problematic for health. My own story is not written into the findings although my view has been influential in all steps of the research process.

Obtaining participant knowledge for this research was achieved by conducting semi-structured interviews with New Zealand respondents with counselling experience and work with depressed clients. The participants represented diverse views given that two participants were influenced by feminist spirituality, three were associated with Christian spirituality in their counselling and a sixth participant integrated Maori and Christian spiritual beliefs in his work with Maori people. Conducting interviews with

participants having diverse spiritual views provided an opportunity to achieve the aims of this research. There were several areas explored with the six participants. These areas included their understanding of spirituality, the relationship between their personal experiences and spirituality, identifying causes of depression and needs of the depressed, the potential of spirituality within counselling to assist the depressed, and how spirituality could assist the counsellor in his or her work with the depressed. The knowledge acquired from the interviews was then linked to the literature and theory for evaluation.

The Structure of this Thesis

This section presents the societal influences on counselling and suggests some spiritual aspects connected to these influences. The rationale for this study also includes that spirituality is part of well-being and may have a role in counselling to alleviate depression. The introduction also outlines the professional and personal justification for my research. These aspects provide some insight to my ongoing interest in the topic of spirituality and the value of this research to my personal and professional development.

Chapter Two of this research provides an overview of medical-scientific, humanistic, and socio-political influences in counselling. These influences highlight some of the beliefs and assumptions that counsellors may adopt in their practices, counselling perspectives and approaches. These three positions are described and briefly evaluated to establish a basis for their potential influences within counselling. There are also many counselling themes commonly confronting counsellors in their work that are clarified in this chapter. These themes provide more understanding about areas that may be of concern to counsellors in their work. This chapter then proceeds to describe and theorise about depression and clarifies spirituality's relationship with politics, humanism and indigenous groups. These links help to consider the connection of counselling to spirituality and depression

Chapter Three builds upon the understanding of counselling, spirituality, and depression in the previous chapter by exploring the literature for spiritual counselling approaches. This provides continuity with the counselling perspectives from the previous chapter by reviewing beliefs and assumptions in spiritual counselling approaches that could be influenced by these broader perspectives. Three spiritual counselling approaches are described in this study and these are transpersonal, earth-based and liberationist. These approaches also identify ways of understanding spirituality that are useful in providing some insight into the comments made by the participants. They also allow for further exploration about themes to be addressed and issues that may arise in counselling regarding spirituality and depression. This section begins to outline the interactive relationship between spirituality and depression and conceptualisations of spirituality and depression that may benefit counsellors in their work. The final section of this chapter draws upon the counselling literature in Chapters Two and Three to develop a theoretical framework to be used in this research. The framework includes ecofeminism, optimal, rank, and new science theories with a primary emphasis on ecofeminism. However, together these four components are fairly congruent and strengthen one another when applied to this study.

Chapter Four describes the research process. In this section, the theory and counselling literature and my beliefs are applied to develop a research methodology. The methodology also includes personal and professional knowledge, cross-cultural counselling skills and qualitative research methods. The result is an emphasis on exploratory research that incorporates the identified sources of knowledge by holistic and interactive processes and is sensitive to gender, culture and worldview. Chapter Four also documents the research sample, and the process of engaging the participants through the development of the interview questions and pilot interview. There is also discussion about the data collection in terms of political and ethical considerations, approaches to conducting interviews, and confidentiality. The final part of this chapter includes the analysis of the data and conclusions.

The data from the interviews are covered in Chapters Five, Six, and Seven. Chapter Five as the first chapter that presents the research data outlines an understanding of the participants' counselling world. This is done by first introducing the participants

collectively in order to gain an overview of them as a group. This highlights some of the personal and professional influences on their counselling, and insights into counselling and depression. These include the use of spirituality in counselling, knowledge about the depressed, and their views on the significance of inclusiveness, self-determination, diversity and connection in counselling are also offered.

Chapter Six broadly clarifies the participants' views about counselling, spirituality and depression. This includes the participants' spiritual perspectives, views on the causes of depression, evaluations of spirituality's capacity to assist people in general and in particular the capacity of spirituality to assist the depressed in counselling. The participants also clarify some limitations of spirituality to assist the depressed.

Chapter Seven provides an opportunity to see more clearly the impact of the participants' counselling philosophies and knowledge on their work. Each of the participants outlines their approach and counselling styles, skills and techniques that they might use. This provides valuable knowledge about practices in terms of this research and opportunities to begin thinking of the next chapter where theory, counselling literature and practices are compared.

Finally, Chapter Eight draws upon all the previous information to provide a discussion and make conclusions. This is a summary and evaluation of the research in terms of spirituality's potential in counselling to alleviate the depressed and the development of an understanding and conceptualisation of spirituality and counselling to assist counsellors in their work with the depressed. This section also includes research limitations, future research possibilities and an overall summary and conclusions.

CHAPTER 2
COUNSELLING LITERATURE

Introduction

Chapter Two explores literature informing spirituality's potential to assist the depressed client and how counsellors might use spirituality in working with the depressed. This chapter contributes to answering these two questions by providing background on the theoretical influences and themes in counselling. Firstly, the use of the term counselling in this study is clarified. Then theoretical influences based on the medical-scientific, humanistic, and socio-political perspectives in counselling are outlined. Counsellors may also be confronted with many issues in counselling that are addressed through various themes. The counselling themes include valuing diversity and connection, self, identity and connection, multicultural issues and minority groups, empowerment and belonging. Exploring the various perspectives and themes in counselling provides insight into possible theoretical, philosophical and methodological assumptions that counsellors may hold and how these may influence counsellors in their response to my research questions. The chapter then introduces the relevance that counselling has to depression and spirituality. Depression is discussed and theories about causes and help useful in counselling are introduced. The chapter ends with a clarification of spirituality to sacredness and the links of spirituality to politics, humanism and indigenous groups.

Clarifying Counselling and Counselling Perspectives

Defining Counselling Generically

The term counselling is used in this research to describe a therapeutic relationship between a professional helper working with his/her client(s). The goal of the professional helper is to use their knowledge in a therapeutic relationship with clients

to improve their well-being. This assistance may involve accepting, managing, or resolving problems identified by the helper and/or client that are perceived to be creating immediate or long-term difficulties for them. This definition is broad and therefore includes a number of different professionals who may engage in counselling and use a variety of practices and techniques in these therapeutic relationships. The common element amongst these professionals is in using their personal and professional knowledge, which may include therapy training to help the client. There are many disciplines representing a variety of understandings about what constitutes counselling today (O'Hara, 1997, pp. 9-10). This may help explain that therapeutic work could involve individuals, couples, families, and groups with professionals who may have a range of titles such as psychotherapist, pastoral counsellor, psychiatric nurse, psychologist, psychiatrist, clinical social worker, case worker, and school counsellor. Depending on their training and beliefs, these individuals may draw upon activities such as psychotherapy, self-help, support and perhaps even education as part of the counselling process. This situation suggests that individuals who engage in counselling are likely to represent a variety of ways of understanding and applying their counselling work.

This research adopts a generic definition of counselling. The term counsellor is considered to reflect a variety of trained professionals whose primary job is to therapeutically assist clients in these relationships. I recognise that this general definition of counselling may be considered too broad for therapists that would distinguish counselling from psychotherapy and psychology. The research aims to develop an understanding of spirituality's potential for helping depressed clients and counsellors and this definition allows for a range of participants to be included in the study. However, given that there may be diversity in participant views, it will be helpful to clarify and evaluate some of the possible influences on the participants, which can be linked to philosophical and methodological approaches in counselling work. These possible influences may be linked to counselling philosophies that can be better understood by outlining three areas prevalent within counselling today. Reviewing these areas may also provide some insight into the assumptions behind the participant responses to the research questions. The following then is a discussion and evaluation of the medical-scientific, humanistic, and socio-political perspectives,

which potentially are influential in the counselling field and possibly relevant to the participants.

Medical-Scientific Perspective

The literature derived from the medical model has influenced the counselling field for many years. O'Hara (1995) states the model draws from medical and biological influences and tends to reflect a scientific and behavioural orientation in counselling practice. The scientific method prevalent in the medical model regards reality as obeying laws that are generalizable and can be used to predict findings developed by scientific measurement and observation. The scientific method tends to investigate small sections of reality and believes that by studying the patterns in these small segments that generalisations can be made to the existence of patterns in the larger world. This has been described as reductionism. She contends that the scientific process also involves a belief that human bias can be eliminated by being impersonal and by objectifying and quantifying data and that greater reliability is achieved by avoiding subjective and complex subjects (O'Hara, 1995, pp. 43-45).

There is significant criticism that the scientific method and classification system is de-contextualized and defines human behaviour as mechanical. It tends to diminish the role of social factors, such as poverty, in affecting peoples' personal lives and may disregard the importance of knowledge gained from religious, political, ethnic, gender and cultural groups (Gergen, 1994, pp.413-414; O'Hara, 1995, p. 48; Wakefield, 1996, pp. 651). For example, according to Durie (1989), there is a tendency in Western science not to account for the influence of cultural aspects. He says Maori beliefs perceive reality as holistic with all elements including spirit as interconnected rather than separating matter from non-matter. The Western scientific tendency to reduce and separate elements for study eliminates the essence gained from view of and understanding about the collective and interconnected parts of the whole (Durie, 1989, pp. 14-16).

The medical model and its scientific method contribute to this research and may influence research respondents' perceptions regarding this study. The concept of

science is an important means of understanding and objectivity contributes its part in understanding reality. The weakness of this perspective is belief that a single objective truth about reality is obtainable through scientific investigation. This study will argue in Chapter Three for a more holistic science that perceives many truths through multiple realities. However there is value in recognising that Western science has been a forerunner to holistic science. The philosophy behind the medical model is also important to mental health counsellors. Based on this philosophy, standards of practice and professional bodies are established (O'Hara, 1995, p. 43). Counsellors also benefit from manuals such as the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) and its most current version (DSM-IV) that arise out of the model. These manuals are widely used as reference for diagnosis and treatment in mental health problems (O'Hara, 1997, pp. 14-19; Wakefield, 1996, p. 646). The DSM classification system helps counsellors establish objective diagnostic criteria for a number of mental disorders including depression and most recently the DSM-IV has included religious and spiritual problems to the list (Cicchetti & Toth, 1998, p. 222; Lukoff et al., 1998, p 22). The medical-scientific perspective does provide counselling with an understanding that enhances our ability to help.

Humanistic Perspective

The literature derived from the humanist or subjectivist perspective is very influential in counselling. This view stresses a belief in the inner world and a person's capacity to obtain a transcendental reality. The counselling focus is on gaining an insider's view of the subjective world of the individual (O'Hara, 1995, pp.48-49; O'Hara, 1997, pp.11-12). Humanism challenges psychological problems as diseases and assistance extends past repairing the individual to promoting growth, wellness and education. Knowledge is considered personal and enduring answers of reality are believed to be deep within the individual. Examples of humanistic counselling include gestalt, hypnotherapy, Jungian psychology and transpersonal therapy (Enns, 1994, p. 127; O'Hara, 1997, p. 14).

Humanistic psychology literature has been criticised for having a strong trend towards individualism that separates the individual from being significantly influenced by

interactions with the larger world. This separation is viewed as unrealistic and prevents awareness that social and political factors can impact on our personal lives. Mindell (1996, pp.68-69) states that politics, social activism, and ecology has remained separate from individually oriented therapeutic work because of these dislocations. Another criticism by Bulhan (1988, p. 254) is that humanistic counselling maintains the status quo rather than helping people to become independent and critical thinkers so that they can become empowered to change their oppressive conditions. Feminists have added that humanism's limitations in counselling include a tendency to reformulate social issues ideologically so that political analysis and action can be avoided (Morell, 1996, p. 306). Literature based on feminist theory has argued that the personal and the political are linked and patriarchal rules and cultural models have shaped the lives of women. Some feminists state these conditions have influenced the counselling field. Given the criticism of excessive individualism, counselling may be vulnerable to reduced awareness of non-Western cultures, being gender biased and racist (Ivey, 1995, p. 54; Mindell, 1996, p. 69; Paterson & Trathen, 1994, p. 91-92).

There are number of criticisms of the humanistic approach in counselling in the literature. Despite this, O'Hara says the humanist position strives to respect individual values of truth, freedom and development (1997, p. 12, p. 27). Its strength lies in its recognition of our unique internal world and the possibilities of personal change and self-actualisation and counselling by connecting and working with our internal world. According to her, there is also evidence that individuals have become more interested in personal self-care and that healing is possible by being more interconnected with mind, body and spirit. It is important to be familiar with the humanistic perspective, given its dominance in counselling. This study is likely to draw out personal reflections and participant familiarity with working with clients' inner worlds when responding to the research questions.

Socio-political Perspective

A significant part of the criticism directed towards humanism comes from its neglect of the socio- political influences in counselling literature. This perspective is noted for

its political awareness and high regard for valuing multiple views. Within counselling, psychological pain can result from cultural and political forces that marginalise segments of society and encourage individuals and groups to adopt self-images that are negative. The socio-political view encourages the counsellor to acknowledge the contribution of history, class, gender, race, ethnicity and language and to work within the client's understanding of his or her world (Adams, 1996, p. 205; O'Hara, 1997, pp. 12-13; Snyder, 1996, p. 658; Strand, 1997, p. 325).

There has been criticism of the postmodern element within the socio-political view. Postmodernism is an umbrella term for a range of views that move beyond modernism by rejecting its view that knowledge can be objective and verified to lead to a single universal truth (Flaskas, 1994, p. 144). The criticism of it is based on their perspective that rejects a single objective truth in favour of the validity of all views. If, as some humanists criticise, all views are valid then any counselling approach has only relative value and thereby relativism undermines counsellors' efforts for clarity and coherence in their efforts to help clients (O'Hara, 1997, pp. 17-18; Smith, 1994, p. 407). A few humanists have criticised postmodern views as minimising the unique human personal concerns and rejecting the value of subjectivity, intuitiveness and aesthetic qualities that reflect our internal world (Gibney, 1996, p.173; Patterson, 1994, p. 33). Feminist writers such as Paterson and Trathen (1994, p.92) state that if all positions are valid then it discounts an objective reality distinct from our constructed meaning. They argue this reality can exert oppressive power and it is unjust to many segments in society. Some have said these objective elements include a male bias toward knowledge and language that favours the rational over irrational and language over emotions (Flaskas, 1994, p. 143; Larner, 1994, p. 13; Sanders, 1998, p. 116). Critiques of the postmodern also argue that its emphasis on relativism leaves no compelling reasons to see our connection with one another or rationale for collective liberating and principled activities to challenge oppression in society (Paterson & Trathen, 1994, p. 91; Sanders, 1998, p.114).

Implications of Counselling Perspectives on Counsellors

The previous discussion has described and evaluated three primary philosophical influences in counselling. Each of these positions is useful in understanding the counselling field and some of the primary influences and assumptions that may shape participants' perceptions about spirituality's potential to help the depressed and how they understand and conceptualise its value in their work. These counselling influences also suggest that this research can draw from the medical model, humanism and the socio-political to understand the contribution made by one's subjective, objective and interactive worlds in shaping or understanding reality. These three views also provide a sense of the various assumptions the counsellors' may utilise in understanding and working with various counselling themes. These themes will now be explored in the following section.

Addressing Themes Relevant to Counselling

There are several themes in the literature that confront counsellors in their work with clients that are very important to consider when exploring the use of spirituality with the depressed in counselling. The themes addressed in this section include diversity in connection, self and identity in relation to connection, multiculturalism and minority groups, and empowerment and belonging.

Valuing Diversity and Connection

The previous discussion about counselling perspectives suggests that diversity is important but has limitations if it does not establish the means for connection with one another. Therefore, both diversity and connection are important together to respect client views and finding a means of being committed to one another. Diversity and connection in counselling literature are also important given that current research still suggests that no one counselling approach has been proven to be any more effective beyond listening and caring (Seligman, 1995, p. 965). This could suggest to practitioners that there is no ground for feeling their counselling perspective is any

more useful than another. As indicated earlier by O'Hara (1997), this kind of diversity of truths is unsettling for practitioners. However, if practitioners are able to identify their values and beliefs, then they are able to articulate their counselling preferences by linking them passionately and intelligently without assuming that their views will fit everyone (Gergen, 1994, p.415). For example, it has been said by Anderson that within clinical social work that principles of social justice, cultural sensitivity and respect for differences are important to consider when dealing with the person in context (1997, p. 14). A connection can be made that these principles that integrate the context are also relevant to many marginalised people who do not receive counselling help. As indicated earlier, feminist literature in fact encourages emotional connection and caring that within counselling translates into well-being linked to valuing an integrated sense of relatedness that includes self, others and community and not imposing one's view on the client (Paterson & Trathen, 1994, p. 97). Diversity and connection in counselling can be opportunities for clarifying one's value-based counselling practices and acknowledging that one's practice is not necessarily acceptable to all people.

Self, Identity and Connection

A fundamental aspect for counsellors in understanding diversity and connection relates to our assumptions about who we are and what we identify with in our world (Myers et al., 1991, pp.54-57; Sue, 1991, p. 300). This process reflects our human discovery and views about self and identity. As indicated earlier by Mindell (1996), counselling has tended to see self and identity in terms of individuals separated from the world. However, there are writers in counselling who suggest that well-being for some people is also linked to collective associations. The following paragraphs point out through the literature that counsellor awareness of the client's view of self and identity is important. One's sense of self and identity leads to the clients' capacity to connect in their world, highlights areas of potential vulnerability and reduced well-being and may clarify important spiritual areas of clients (Reed, 1992, pp 351-354). The section also recognises that development beyond individual identity is prevalent and has therapeutic value in counselling.

Smith (1994, pp. 408-410) says a feminist critique of individualism provides an understanding about the self that encourages greater personal growth. He states that a self that is connected with others and free of gender stereotypes is less isolated, provides a more positive environment of sharing and connection and creates conditions where the self can develop an expanded view of identity. This expanded identity is an important aspect of growth and affiliation with others. Several authors have similarly discussed the importance of recognising the self as having expanded beyond individualism into a collective self and that the collective sense of self is more prevalent in the world (Hoare, 1991; Myers, et al., 1991; Samson, 1989). These authors suggest that the social and economic influences in the Western world encourage self-contained individualism while a collective identity is more common in non-Western societies (Sampson, 1988, p. 18). Hoare (1991, p.46) states that an expanded self that includes others within its identity holds more promise for cooperation and harmony by promoting greater concern for others and community commitments. It is apparent from these authors that one's identity development is not only individualised but may include collective aspects, which can create opportunities for growth through connection. Writers have also argued that individualism has also brought truth and freedom and a deeper understanding of self, which also contributes to societal development (Gergen, 1994, p. 415; O'Hara, 1997, p. 12). Counsellor awareness of cultural differences in self and identity development is important because it affects their ability to understand clients' sense of meaning and purpose in life (Sampson, 1998, p. 21).

The capacity of the self to identify with one's broader world has been extended to the natural environment in ecofeminist literature. Writers suggest that we have a human capacity to identify with the plants, animals, and landscapes on earth and this capacity is important to our well-being (Donaldson, 1996, p. 197). For example, an individual whose identity extends to the natural environment may have their well-being impacted negatively with the decline in plant and animal species in the world today (Christ, 1989, p. 314). Ecofeminists have also argued that patriarchy, excessive individualism and dualism separate us from the larger world by a perception of reality that favours male images and qualities, which is disconnected from others and divides life into matter and non-matter. The belief system that follows from these perceptions of reality encourages hierarchy, divisions, and conflict. This results in difficulties in

our relationships between men, women and nature by favouring men over women, rationality over irrationality and matter over spirit (Griffin, 1990, p. 87; Hera, 1995, pp. 39-40; King, 1989, p. 19). According to Macy (1989), patriarchal dualistic beliefs foster a false sense of separation and vulnerability for individuals by blocking their natural connection with one another and with nature. These blocks blunt the capacity for the self and one's identity to expand their boundaries and connect. This reduces the individual sense of belonging and participation in something bigger. She believes that challenging the divisions and fragmentation within patriarchal dualism can awaken an ecological self that is capable of identifying with the world around them and this connection is empowering (Macy, 1989, pp. 202-204). Ecofeminism highlights that our most fundamental beliefs regarding gender and nature are significant in terms of the quality of our relationships and our potential opportunities for growth. It is through these potential connections that a greater sense of belonging and partnership is achieved, which reduces alienation and competitive divisions.

Multicultural Issues and Minority Groups

The role of beliefs is important when discussing self, identity and connection. Political, economic and cultural factors are also pivotal in shaping our beliefs. As Western societies become increasingly multicultural, counsellors are exposed to many views that may be different than their own. Some writers also indicate that understanding culture is vital in comprehending diversity in client spirituality and illness and utilising opportunities for connection (Luckoff, et al., 1998, p. 24; Myers et al., 1991, p. 55). Other writers indicate that there is a need for sensitivity to political and economic factors in addressing concerns in a client worldview and that these factors have a bearing on client well-being (Hoare, 1991, p.48, p.51; Klerman, 1994, p. 44). The following section discusses these areas relevant to counselling.

There is significant debate within the counselling field on what constitutes acceptable counselling practice when addressing the needs of culture and minority groups. The debate focuses upon the counsellors' ability to adequately address these areas. Some writers believe that all counselling is cross-cultural and therefore most counsellors are required to address culture on a regular basis. They say what is important is a counsellor providing universal attitudes of respect, genuineness and empathy with

clients (Patterson, 1996, pp. 229-230). Others state counsellors require culture-specific knowledge to work effectively with clients' need (Nwachuku & Ivey, 1991, p. 106). These authors say that when working with clients, our needs are shaped by culture in terms of values, qualities, helping styles and means of solving problems. A third group that addresses multiculturalism in counselling encourages counsellors to develop multicultural awareness and provide a flexible work style (McFadden, 1996, p. 235; Pedersen, 1996, p. 236). All of these arguments suggest an ongoing need for counsellors to be self-aware about their biases and to strive for a high level of cross-cultural competence in their work, while recognising their work may not be universally applicable. These requirements may now be necessary for counsellors given that multicultural counselling is an unavoidable fact in most large urban areas. The multicultural counsellor is likely then to need a high level of self-awareness, flexibility and enhanced multicultural skills (Lee, 1996, p. 187; Richardson & Molinaro, 1996, p. 238).

The counselling literature suggests that many non-Western cultures have not been well served in counselling. This view is based on a belief that counselling is not isolated from social-political influences and society and that minority groups have under-utilised counselling services (Sue and Sue, 1990, p. 6). Sue and Sue argue that counsellors have not been recognising fully client suffering due to poverty, racism, prejudice, and discrimination and counselling has maintained false stereotypes, ethnocentric bias, and promoted a universal definition based on Western beliefs of what is healthy and normal. These beliefs have tended to portray minority groups as underdeveloped, deficient and encouraged them to adjust to the dominant beliefs and accept economic inequities (Smith, 1991, pp. 181-183; Sue & Sue, 1990, pp. 7-20, p. 24). A few writers state that the counselling field's focus of adjustment and compromise acts as a social control for oppressed groups in society. This leaves unchallenged a Eurocentric view favouring individualism, a materialism that benefits an elite society, and a devaluing of the role of spirituality in one's life (Bulhan, 1988, pp. 255-256; Tapping, 1993, p. 30). Counsellors can assist clients to resist many of the views in society that could challenge well-being by helping to enhance their sense of empowerment and belonging.

Empowerment and Belonging

The literature indicates that power and belonging are both important factors impacting well-being. These two factors are relevant within counselling and in regard to helping the depressed. Gutierrez (1995) believes powerlessness creates and perpetuates social problems because power is needed to control one's life. Without power, there is increased vulnerability because external conditions are directing one's life. It has been argued that the solution to powerlessness begins by developing critical consciousness of a capacity to determine our own life. Taking action to alter conditions in our personal, interpersonal and political life will improve our situation and enhances this capacity (Gutierrez, 1995, pp.229-236). Several writers in counselling describe a psychology of liberation, which addresses action in relation to empowerment as transforming oppressive conditions within the individual and their social environment (Bulhan, 1988, pp. 256-260; Ivey, 1995, p. p.53; Myers & Speight, 1994, p.110). Liberating psychology highlights the personal-environmental transformations based on the belief that humans are social, interdependent and interconnected with others. Therefore, political, social and personal factors are intertwined and collective conditions do impact individuals on a personal basis and individuals can impact upon society. Bulhan (1988) explains that liberation is about individual and collective actions that remove oppressive conditions at a personal and societal level and that change at only one level is incomplete. It is essential for individuals and groups in society to be self-determining in order to liberate themselves and help others to do the same. Individuals are also able to identify, commit and organise with others through their social capacities and these actions strengthen their sense of belonging. Therefore, empowerment and belonging are linked and mutually reinforcing. Individuals and groups need to be able to claim their own histories, define their own problems, and seek their own means and solutions to these problems to achieve a sense of empowerment and belonging (Bulhan, 1988, pp. 260-269).

Empowerment and belonging are important in counselling and their comprehensive liberating potential is a challenge to the field. According to Ivey (1995, p. 56), counselling has been influenced by hierarchical and patriarchal concepts and primarily focuses on individuals. The counselling field also tends to regard empowerment and belonging in more individualistic terms. Therefore, counselling

can regard issues of power and belonging that are restricted to personal and family connections and is less self-critical of its influence and gender bias in regard to these factors. The idea of collective power and more expansive belonging is less likely to be developed in clients where the critical consciousness process is individualised, hierarchical, and patriarchal. Sampson (1988) adds that self-contained individualism also undermines the counsellor's capacity to utilise and validate empowerment and belonging derived from our cultural affiliations (Sampson, 1988, p.17). As indicated earlier, given the domination of Western culture and its influence upon counselling, many other cultural groups do not adhere to the individualistic orientation in counselling (Sue & Sue, 1990, p. 11). Therefore, liberation and increased self-determination that is individually focused is limited. It does not include a client's collectivist orientation or assist them in the maintenance and recovery of their cultural heritage lost through domination by Western culture. Liberation counselling in its most comprehensive form blends individual and collective change to empower and strengthen belonging for the client. It may involve exploring the internal and external world of the clients for influences relevant to gender, politics, and social, cultural and spiritual conditions (Ivey, 1995, pp. 53-57).

In the previous sections of this chapter, three counselling perspectives and relevant themes were presented and evaluated. This review provided an understanding about philosophies, beliefs and issues that may arise from counselling and some indication about possible influences on participants in the study. This review sets the stage for insight into participant perspectives and greater clarity about their perceptions of spirituality's potential in counselling. Given that this research study is focused upon the potential of spirituality in relation to helping the depressed the next two sections will also explore these concepts. The first section involves developing an understanding of depression, which will help in clarifying what theoretical aspects need to be addressed in the study. It also contributes to the development of a theoretical framework and further exploration of the research questions, which are outlined in the next chapter.

Describing and Theorising about Depression

Understanding Depression and Implications for Helping the Depressed

In general, people identified as depressed have lost external inputs (e.g., relationships) or internal positive dimensions of self-experience that maintain a positive feeling about the self (Gilbert, 1992a, p. 9). Ciccetti and Toth (1998, p. 221) state that depressive disorders are heterogeneous conditions that result from a variety of pathways and one needs to investigate biological, psychological and social systems together rather than isolating single factors like cognitive, affective, interpersonal and biological components. These authors suggest that depression can co-occur with other serious mental disorders. These include substance abuse, anxiety disorders, schizophrenia and suicide and that individuals who are depressed impact on individuals and families associated with them. Mental health practitioners are challenged in counselling to help the depressed client by working to alleviate the symptoms. This may include identifying the type of depression and the most suitable therapeutic options. A medical practitioner more often does a formal diagnosis of depression. To identify depression type or make a diagnosis, practitioners will often refer to diagnostic manuals to help them. The most common and current manual used today is the North American produced DSM-IV manual. It helps the counsellor in identifying depression according to categories of mood disturbance, syndromes and disorders (Ciccetti & Toth, 1998, p. 222).

Current literature provides the practitioner with significant biopsychosocial details about depression. For example, in early childhood, girls are more likely than boys to experience depression and it continues to be more common with women into the senior years (Hood Morris, 1996, p. 441). An explanation of this gender difference says hood Morris (1996) is that in terms of power and status, women are less favoured. She believes as women age the youth orientation in society, reduced income, limitations in mobility, loss through death of friends and spouses are problems. Although it is a problem for both genders, it appears particularly so for women (Hood Morris, 1996, p. 442-446). Despite the stronger association of

depression with women, loneliness is considered an important ingredient in depression and when this factor is investigated, men have a higher incidence of loneliness than women (McWhirter, 1990, pp.417-418). Some research also indicates that men express depression differently than women and that women are more willing to seek counselling assistance than men (Wiseman, Guttfreund, & Lurie, 1995, pp. 232-233). These differences in help-seeking, loneliness, and patterns of personal expression suggest that a number of factors contribute to who is identified as depressed. It also indicates that careful investigation is needed when linking depression to gender and whether men are less vulnerable to depression than women.

The incidence of depression is also related to broad societal changes and these changes are affecting some segments of society more than others. For example, there has been a six-fold increase in the diagnosis of depression amongst young people since the 1950s (Nolan & Crawford, 1997, p. 290). Mental health problems associated with depression are known to be greater amongst groups in society that are disempowered due to factors such as race, gender, and socio-economic class (Brink, 1993, p. 382; Morell, 1996, p. 306). Depression has also been linked to abrupt societal losses due to political and economic upheaval in society (Klerman, 1994, p.44). The breakdown in cultural belief systems, particularly through the domination of another culture such as with indigenous peoples' worldviews being replaced by Western cultural views, seems to induce more depression (Gilbert, 1992b, p.4). It has also been argued that the concept of depression is not universally recognised cross-culturally and that the concept may reflect beliefs about people more commonly found in Western cultures (Gergen, 1994, p. 414; White & Marsella, 1982, p.19). These findings indicate that depression is being investigated on many fronts and that there can be diverse views about who is depressed, causes of that depression, and potential connections made to factors of biology, gender, age, political, economical and cultural. The implication of this breadth of factors, views and causes about depression suggest the possibility that the participants may understand depression in a variety of ways.

Theories for Helping the Depressed in Counselling

Depression is a common problem seen by most counsellors in the mental health field and the goal of counselling those who are depressed is to develop and facilitate both internal and external conditions that strengthen worth and self-determination. In understanding depression, a comprehensive view is required to obtain a multi-causal sense about its origins. The potential origins of depression, as indicated earlier, may involve a range of factors in society and within the individual that interact and combine to cause depression. An interactive and biopsychosocial approach is proposed by some writers as a suitable means to capture the multi-causal nature of depression (Ciccetti & Toth, 1998; Gilbert, 1992b; Vasile, Samson, Bemporad, Bloomingdale, Creasey, Fenton, Gudeman & Schildkraut, 1987). The biopsychosocial approach has much in common with what is referred to as being holistic (Hood Morris, 1996, p. 441) and is also similar to an ecological view (Maton, 1989, p. 729). These approaches all indicate that no one factor is identified as a main contributor to depression and that treatment, accordingly, involves assisting a person in all areas of life.

Assistance to the depressed in counselling, in reference to the literature, will also vary according to the training and theoretical orientation of the counsellor. This is also likely to be relevant with the exploration of participant training in this research. According to Klerman, a biological psychiatrist may look to chemical deficiencies within a person, the psychodynamic therapist may look to early parent-child attachment and childhood development, and the feminist counsellor may look for issues of power differentials and oppression (1994, pp. 4-5). Cognitive-behavioural and interpersonal counselling are the most common approaches with the depressed. The help they offer is investigating the individual's thinking processes and relationships so that thinking, behaviour and actions can be altered. These changes are designed to improve self-esteem and improve their living environment by resolving complex conflicts, reducing isolating behaviours and releasing negative feelings. There is general agreement amongst several writers that the overall intent of these changes is to reduce one's depression (Gilbert, 1992a, p.19, p.147; Klerman, 1994, pp. 37-38; McWhirter, 1990, pp.419-420). There are many other counselling

approaches that could be used alongside the cognitive and interpersonal in helping the depressed. These include those associated with disease, personality, power and belonging, attachment and early childhood development, archetypes and mentality (Gilbert, 1992a, p.144-147; 1992b p. 4, p. 112, pp.319-322, pp.352-353).

Sometimes counsellors will decide counselling for a depressed client is not suitable. Common problems with depression are poor concentration, low energy and perhaps an increased risk to harm oneself or others. If one or more of these things become significant, a counsellor may decide that safety issues or physiological improvements are needed before counselling can be considered viable (Klerman, 1994, pp. 37-38). Very often in these circumstances the primary assistance is with antidepressant medication (Paykel, et al., 1997, p. 59) and possibly hospital admissions for stabilisation (Koenig, George & Peterson, 1998, p. 536) before counselling re-starts or begins. In treating the depressed, through counselling or otherwise, priority is usually given to the most severely depressed, as they are considered at the greatest risk of self-harm. Bio-medical help for the most severely depressed to avoid self-harm is important but this may overlook a relevant issue. Current research indicates that even those who are mildly depressed are at a similar risk to the more severely depressed to commit suicide and that their depressed condition is just as persistent as those more seriously affected (Kender & Gardner, 1998, p. 175).

In summary, several writers suggest that depression is a complex problem requiring an appreciation for the multi-causal and interactive nature of the factors that contribute to it. Counsellors are also dealing with helping or alleviating a condition that, if not properly treated, has potentially severe consequences to the client and their families. There are no easy answers to helping the depressed and helping is likely to require investigating many issues in the person's internal and external world. It is also evident that counsellors need to be aware of and address possible issues to do with empowerment and belonging that arise from contextual factors all of which I am interested in exploring in this research.

The previous sections have highlighted that counselling perspectives and themes in counselling all contribute to our perceptions and how we understand problems in counselling. The section in the literature on depression has also pointed out that there

are many ways to understand and treat depression. By implication, this may point out the importance of beliefs and values in shaping our understanding about spirituality and its potential to help the depressed and assist counsellors in their work. Within these broad terms, the counselling literature has also pointed to our philosophical assumptions, culture, contextual factors and identity in understanding a diversity of beliefs and values. Therefore the following discussion on spirituality will begin with an exploration of the relationship of counselling to an inclusive view of the sacred, spirituality and politics, humanism and spirituality and Indigenous spirituality and connection to New Zealand. This section begins with a general understanding of spirituality in terms of the sacredness that may include a diversity of spiritual views.

Spirituality and its Association to Beliefs and Values

An Inclusive View of the Sacred

There are many definitions that can be used to describe or define spirituality. It is a concept that many consider touches all aspects of our life and provides it with purpose, meaning and value (Aponte, 1998, p. 37; Everts & Agee, 1994, p. 292). Spirituality is often referred to in the literature as the sacred or divine (Witmer & Sweeney, 1992, p. 141). It will be clarified in this research in terms of providing an inclusive understanding that may give it potential value in counselling. In this context, some spiritual literature describes the sacred as being a belief in a transcendent or immanent source, energy or creation (Bristow-Braitman, 1995 p. 414; Chandler, Holden & Kolander, 1992, pp. 169-170; Morell, 1996, p.307). However, using terms such as transcendent and immanent requires discussion as they may have implications in terms of how they are understood by some spiritual traditions. Some authors suggest that transcendence beliefs postulate a spirit life separate from the physical world and which is located in the metaphysical otherworld. They add that transcendent spiritual beliefs are often associated with Christianity and a belief in a higher male God (King, 1989, pp.20-21; Lachapelle, 1989, p.158). Immanent spiritual beliefs are clarified by other writers as non-dualistic in that there are no separations from the physical and non-physical worlds and often are associated with people who

have a close attachment to the land. The earth and all things in it whether human, non-human, visible or non-visible are interconnected as one by a life-force (Meadows, 1996, pp.43-58; p. 247; Starhawk, 1989a, pp.175-177). Immanent spirituality is about all things in the everyday world as interconnected, sacred, and living whereas transcendent spirituality implies a model of perfection in the other world that acts as a guide on how to transform the everyday into becoming more like this sacred otherworld.

The immanent orientation that all things are sacred, connected, and alive situates this belief in common with a number of cultural traditions. These cultural traditions describe immanence as a pervasive life-force found on the earth that gives all things an equal inherent value and that these things are all sustained by Mother Earth (Adair & Howell, 1989, pp.219-222; Spretnak, 1989, p.130; Starhawk, 1989a, p.175). The term "earth-based spirituality" has been used to personify a connection to a number of immanent traditions that identify the earth as a living, life-promoting being. Earth-based spirituality has much in common with the beliefs of the ancients, indigenous and feminists with a spiritual ecological connection (Abbott, 1990, p.36; Allen, 1989, pp.25-27; Meadows, 1996, p. XI; pp. 317-320). Ecofeminist theory describes immanence as non-dualistic in terms of a union between the physical, non-physical and integrating the earth, women, emotion and nature as being equally as sacred as the otherworld, men, humanity and rationality. The literature derived from ecofeminist theory, which is discussed in more depth in Chapter Three, is critical of the Christian patriarchal God reflected in transcendent spirituality. This is because it separates and locates the divine as being a distant male presence above the earth. This perspective devalues the sacredness of nature, women, and subjectivity on earth and promotes a non-earthly distant male image above others as the only divinity (Christ, 1989, p.314; King, 1989, pp.18-20; Merchant, 1990, p.100; Spretnak, 1990). The implication of this literature is that spirituality has the potential for interconnection and worth in our world but philosophical views, culture and gender may inhibit the full capacity of this connection.

Spirituality and Politics

An inclusive spiritual view in counselling involves an understanding that maximises our capacity for connection, belonging and empowerment. In order to do this, there has also been a need to link spirituality to a socio-political perspective. The literature from this perspective identifies that power and inequalities are negatively affecting individuals and groups in society by reducing quality of life in our personal, relational and social worlds. It is also argued that these political arguments are complemented by spirituality. Both political and spiritual liberationist philosophies are committed to freedom and empowerment by enhancing self-determination and self-identity for all. A socio-spiritual perspective considers consciousness raising and social action to have political and spiritual implications (Morell, 1996, pp. 309-311). These implications extend to the cultural context to include identity and self-determination related to gender, race, and power (Adams, 1995, p. 202; Ivey, 1995, p. 66). Morell, based on his socio-spiritual view, believes that political equality, empowerment and self-determination are enhanced by spirituality. This belief is based on an awareness that we are all united and sacred through our connection to a spiritual source or energy. This connection confirms our equality and commitment to one another in the process of becoming fulfilled to oneself and to a larger sacred system. Morell views this kind of connection as supported and developed by a spiritual dimension (1996, p. 307).

The liberation nature of spirituality is an inclusive perspective by combining ingredients of equality and self-determination. A spiritual sense of equality and self-determination leads to evolving toward both diversity and connection. Acceptance and support of this evolving process is based on respecting differences and upholding sacred equality by building on our connection. Myers and Speight, (1994, pp.109-110) argue that political liberation benefits from spirituality by encouraging an evolving diversity. For these authors, the liberating struggle includes becoming aware that we have become alienated from our spiritual nature and this fragments and divides us. If we are able to overcome this alienation and connect with our spiritual essence then we are freer to discover our uniqueness and cultural identities. Myers and Speight (1994) believe the discovery process heightens our awareness that our differences are part of what connects us to others through sharing the same spiritual essence that has given us the sustenance to be different and yet part of something

larger, evolving and unifying. Connecting with our own spiritual essence reduces the more problematic aspects of a divisive and fragmenting alienation to self and others through vulnerability and competition and blocking out our unifying bond with all things. The problem of disconnection to the larger world is also something that can be felt in our personal lives and an awareness of the spiritual essence within may provide opportunities to reduce division and fragmentation.

Humanism and Spirituality

There is an opportunity by linking spirituality to our subjective life that greater connection can also be established within, which can positively affect the individual and their interactions with others. In this regard, the literature from a humanistic perspective, with its emphasis on subjectivity has long regarded our inner spiritual life as very important. According to the literature from the humanistic tradition, an inner subjective spiritual world has been frequently referred to in the literature as transpersonal experiences and beliefs. The transpersonal is regarded by many writers as having a capacity to stretch the individual's sense of internal or external boundaries by connecting to phenomena or an understanding of a sacred or divine nature (Grof & Bennett, 1992, pp. 120-150; Walsh & Vaughan, 1993, pp. 3-16). These connections have been described as links to the soul (Elkins, 1995, p. 78; Fenn & Capps, 1995, p.2), an inherent spiritual core (Chandler, Holden, & Kolander, 1992, pp. 168-169), the global community (Witmer & Sweeney, p.140), and the paranormal (Grof, & Bennett, 1992, p. 135). The traditional humanistic belief in the spiritual has led to valuing mind, body, and spirit connection and that these connections can be developed through the practice of prayer, introspection and meditation (Witmer & Sweeney, 1992, p. 140-141). Individuals are also believed to go through periods of more intense and spontaneous connections to the spiritual through maturity. This is understood as a natural process of spiritual emergence that brings with it an increase in growth, potentialities and enhanced worth, meaning, purpose and hope (Chandler, et al., 1992, pp. 168-175; Haase, Britt, Coward, Leidy, & Penn, 1992, p. 145; Ishiyama, 1989, p. 42; Reed, 1992, p. 354).

Indigenous Spirituality and Connections to New Zealand

The healing and spiritual traditions within non-European indigenous societies are centuries old and in many cases still relatively congruent with its distant past (Vontress, 1991, p. 242). Many of these societies also share common beliefs with ancient and indigenous people of Northern Europe (Meadows, 1996, pp.252-253). However, there are also important variations racially and culturally to be considered amongst indigenous people when trying to understand their worldview (Vontress, 1991, p.249). The common indigenous themes most often described include holistic and balanced relationships with people, nature and the spirit world (Turbott, 1996, p. 726). These worlds are alive and interact with people to give them strength, guidance and communion with ancestors and spirit entities (Mindell, 1996, p.73; Park, 1996, p. 322). Relationships with nature and the spirit world are described as humanity's oldest and longest-lasting healing tradition (Walsh, 1994, p. 7; Watson, 1994, p. 33). Belonging and connecting in a responsible, sharing manner with all things, including ancestors, the land, the mountains and rivers, sky, earth, seasons, in the past, present, and future describes the global and holistic aspects of indigenous spirituality (Tapping, 1990, p. 44). The Maori, for example, are the indigenous people in New Zealand or Aotearoa, which translates as "the land of the long white cloud" (Lee & Armstrong, 1995, pp. 442-444). Given their traditional beliefs that spirit is in all things, Maori mental health is holistic and its position is often associated in mainstream thinking as holistic wellness (Durie, 1989, pp.19-20; 1995, pp.70-75). Given colonisation of New Zealand by European people with Christian beliefs, Christianity has also found its way today into some Maori spirituality. For example, the Ratana Movement and Ratana Church, which was founded eighty years ago by Tahupotiki Wiremu Ratana, a Maori visionary and prophet, blended traditional Maori practices with Christian practices and a belief in a greater God. The mixing of cultural practices is still present with the Ratana Church today in New Zealand (Raurati, 1992, pp. 148-150). Despite Maori spirituality having been influenced by Christianity, it still remains embedded in their culture and unique rituals and beliefs. Therefore Maori, as an indigenous people, still remain distinct and cannot be viewed as being assimilated into Christianity or described as exactly the same as any other indigenous people in the world (Everts & Agee, 1995, p.294).

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a review of the literature on counselling that suggests alleviating depression and assisting counsellors in this work can be considered in terms of subjective, relational and contextual factors. It suggests that an inclusive view of spirituality that includes subjective, relational, and objective elements offer greater possibilities for connection that can positively affect well-being. The next chapter will outline spirituality and depression more directly in counselling and it will begin to develop spiritual counselling approaches and a theoretical framework to continue exploring the potential value of spirituality.

CHAPTER 3

COUNSELLING APPROACHES AND THEORY

Introduction

In this chapter, three spiritual counselling approaches derived from the literature are explored to provide insight into their potential in helping the depressed and assisting counsellors in their work with them. Three spiritual counselling approaches are proposed from humanist, and socio-political literature. They are transpersonal, earth-based and liberationist spiritual approaches. I am interested in evaluating the strengths of these approaches in terms of their potential to address counselling themes and issues that arise from spirituality and depression in counselling. These approaches are also likely to clarify areas to consider in forming my research questions with the participants. Once this chapter explores the spiritual counselling approaches, and themes and issues related to spirituality and depression, a theoretical framework can be developed. The theoretical framework is made up of four components that are to be used in proceeding with this research and they help me to begin forming a research methodology in the next chapter. To begin forming a theoretical framework, this section refers to the main points in the previous chapter that are linked to the three spiritual counselling approaches.

Exploring the Literature for Spiritual Counselling Approaches

Introduction

The previous chapter identified that an inclusive reality in counselling consists of subjective, relational, and objective worlds (Flaskas, 1994, p. 143). This view was developed through appreciating the contribution of three counselling perspectives and themes that may confront counsellors at work. The exploration of medical, humanistic

and socio-political perspectives and themes presents an opportunity to translate the influences from these areas into spiritual counselling approaches. These influences will be reflected in a review of transpersonal, earth-based and liberationist spiritual approaches. Once these counselling approaches are presented, they can be considered collectively to represent a more inclusive spiritual approach by acknowledging that spirituality can potentially arise from our subjective, relational and objective worlds. It also follows from the previous chapter that an inclusive spiritual counselling approach is eclectic and tends to embrace the many different ways in counselling of understanding and working with depression and spirituality.

The organisation of this section of the chapter into spiritual counselling approaches is useful to this study in providing a diversity of views. However, it is recognised that counsellors are likely to hold many views and utilise many approaches in their practice. Therefore, they are not likely to be confined to any one of the counselling approaches (O'Hara, 1997, p. 10). Having said this, the literature on spiritual counselling comes from humanistic, indigenous, ecofeminist and socio-political writers. They provide a basis to shape their views into spiritual counselling approaches that identify various beliefs and values. Their views are presented and summarised in this research as transpersonal, earth-based, and liberationist approaches. Absent from these views is the influence from the medical-scientific perspective. There is little medical scientific literature about spirituality in counselling given the difficulties in quantifying this subject (Aponte, 1998, p.38). However, modern science does contribute by valuing the importance of an objective reality shaping our perceptions. The value of a scientific view based on more recent thinking in physics and biological sciences will be presented and integrated later in the chapter in the section on developing a theoretical framework.

Three Spiritual Counselling Approaches

Transpersonal Approach

Transpersonal counselling is closely associated with a humanistic perspective. Transpersonal counsellors are no different than other counsellors in that they do the

kind of things most counsellors do. For example, they may help clients get through emotional difficulties that result from divorce, retirement, bereavement, or job loss. However, the transpersonal counsellor understands that these things may bring out transpersonal concerns and they will help the client to explore these transpersonal dimensions within themselves. These counsellors perceive that assisting the client in this way is useful because important meaning can come out of these difficulties (Smith, 1995, p. 412) and greater personal balance and holistic wellness can be achieved (Chandler, et al., & 1992, p. 168; Whitmer & Sweeney, 1992, p. 140). The transpersonal counsellor is oriented to the client's subjective world and the various psychological connections that can be made to spirituality (Aponte, 1998, p. 37; Ishiyama, 1989, p.48; Smith, 1995, p. 402). These connections may include identifying and interpreting archetypal images (Grof & Bennett, 1992, p. 123; Sermabeikian, 1994, pp. 179-180) and rediscovering and reconnecting with lost parts of self, culture and nature (Elkins, 1995, p. 78; Moore, 1996, p. xix).

Transpersonal or spiritual experiences are valued because of a belief that they raise individual awareness about a divine presence. The spiritual nature of transpersonal counselling is based on a belief that the exploration of the individual's internal deep psyche is beneficial. By exploration, spiritual phenomena can be uncovered, experienced and benefit the client by consciously integrating and expressing one's spiritual nature (Murphy, 1993, p. 172; Westgate, 1996, p. 33). The transpersonal counsellor may focus on individual spiritual or cosmic dimensions as both are relevant in promoting consciousness development (Hunter, 1994, p. 86) and recovering essential spiritual parts of our selves (Fenn & Capps, 1995, p. 12; Gibney, 1996, p. 189; Lane, 1992, p. 57). Grof and Grof (1995) describe divine experiences as everyday or ecstatic in nature and simply experiencing them can remove painful barriers and transform individuals (pp. 48-49, p. 190). Transpersonalists also argue that experiencing a divine presence expands our identity by connecting us to more things in our physical and non-physical world (Mack, 1993, pp. xi-xii, p. 3). This spiritual counselling approach is able to connect with our relational and objective world but does so primarily through what arises out of intra-psychic processes. This distinguishes it from the earth-based counselling view presented next. Earth-based counselling places more emphasis on balance in our inner and outer worlds and strongly reinforces our spiritual connection to the earth.

Earth-Based Spiritual Approach

Earth-based spiritual counselling is based on a belief in the existence of a web of life on earth that is spiritual, holistic, ecological and interconnecting. The web of life is believed to operate according to principles of balance, harmony and renewal. Individuals can attune themselves to the forces in the life-web by sensitising themselves to the seasons, cycles of nature, spirit elements and working cooperatively with human, animal, and plant life (Meadows, 1996, p. 247; Starhawk, 1989b, p. 175). Increasing sensitivity to the web of life raises awareness of a life-force power that is integrative and unifies by validating one's sense of connecting with potentially all of creation (Brock, 1989, p. 241). Wanting to preserve and protect the earth ecologically orients earth-based spiritual counselling to respecting Mother Earth and all things created and nurtured by it. This approach also views a healthy planet as increasing in diversity while all parts remain fundamentally unified as one (Allen, 1989, pp. 25-27). Conceptually, the life-force connection is understood as an immanent power and is a centrally bridging concept with many other cultures past and present that adhere to immanent beliefs. Earth-based spiritual counselling respects the knowing associated with relationships, women and traditional indigenous societies (Paterson & Trathen, 1994, p. 97). These connections also encourage counsellors to develop a partnership attitude and to celebrate and/or respect a multitude of cultural symbols, deities, Gods and Goddesses (Donaldson, 1996, p. 1995, pp. 201-202; Heliotrope, 1997, p. 47; Pere, 1991, pp. 3-6).

Earth-based spirituality is not distinct from other counselling approaches in terms of the nature of counselling problems. However, it is very sensitive to living holistically, ecologically and harmoniously with all things. It is able to appreciate ritual to consciously or unconsciously tap into the life-force that has the power to heal and heighten a sense of belonging. Nature, in particular, operates as a sacred body that guides by example a lifestyle of appreciating differences within an inclusive evolving earth-body (Christ, 1990, pp. 65-26; Gimbutas, 1989, p. 63). In this view, people are simultaneously different and the same with all things.

There are various counselling traditions that can be broadly considered as earth-based. Many of these traditions arise from indigenous people from North and South America, ancients and pagans from Europe and those associated with Eastern philosophical beliefs. They are described in ecofeminist literature because of their common affinity to a spiritual interconnection with the land (Donaldson, 1996, p. 197; Diamond & Orenstein, 1990, p.xiii; Macy, 1989, p. 204; Mariechild, 1987, p19; Starhawk, 1989a, p.180). Ecofeminism is not a monolithic configuration but has many feminist branches. These can be politically described as liberal, cultural, radical and socialist (Spretnak, 1990, pp.3-14). Despite these differences, ecofeminist spiritual counselling emphasises culturally inclusive, ecological, and non-patriarchal views about the equality and sacredness of all things on earth.

Some counsellors from both the women's movement and the mytho-poetic men's movement have adopted archetypal counselling. These groups find that in archetypal counselling, archetypes can be inspirational and provide a sense of unity and sacredness. Jung describes archetypes as primordial images, myths and evolutionary symbols that reside in our collective unconscious and are inborn and universal ways of knowing (Enns, 1994, pp. 127-128; Estes, 1992 p.9; Zimmerman, 1990, p.148). The mytho-poetic counsellors tend to identify with male warrior archetypes while ecofeminists look to connecting with female archetypes and pre-patriarchal deities and Goddesses in ancient Europe (Enns, 1994, pp. 128-130; Abbott, 1989, p.36). Women's spirituality identified through archetypal counselling and ecofeminism is more fully outlined in the literature than men's spirituality. Counsellors associated with ecofeminism and archetypal spirituality tend to view spiritual power in broader terms. For them, archetypal counselling may include a male Christian God but it would define spirituality in more diverse forms and practices. Many of these counsellors consider the Christian God as one of many spiritual images while a female spiritual power and Goddess is considered equal to a male God. Women may also be encouraged to create or claim their own spirituality within and/or outside organised religion (Adair, 1989, p.220-221).

Indigenous spiritual counselling as earth-based has many culture-specific archetypes and rituals in Western and non-Western societies that are present today. These archetypes and rituals can be traced to the ancient past and have survived and remain

relevant today through the continuation of cultural beliefs (Donaldson, 1996, p.197, pp. 201-202; Enns, 1994, p.129). The spiritual strength and relevance of these beliefs is further reinforced through the communal connection to the land, ancestors, community and the spirit world (Durie, 1989, pp.19-20; Hart, 1995, pp.69-72; Lee & Armstrong, 1995, p. 441; Tapping, 1990, p. 44).

Liberationist Spiritual Approach

Socio-political counsellors share qualities with practitioners who are described in the literature as socio-spiritual (Morell, 1996 p. 306), optimal (Myers & Speight, 1994 p. 101), psychological liberation (Ivey, 1995, p. 53; Starhawk, 1990, p.23) or emphasise integrationism (Mindell, 1996, p. 67) and contextualism (Reed, 1992, p. 349). The term liberation is used here as an overriding term to capture a common view within these groups. This view suggests that an individual's inner and outer world are interactive elements in shaping a person's reality. This interactive reality constitutes both individual and collective conditions as impacting upon an individual's inner and outer life (Bulhan, 1988, p. 275). The psychological aspects of liberation are about identifying our responsibilities to one another and bringing about communal healing and change (Starhawk, 1990, p.23). A liberating approach to the external world may focus on social, political, and cultural factors. These factors are critiqued to challenge economic inequities, establish conditions of social justice and political and cultural equality. Individuals or groups are supported in raising consciousness that the external world can empower or oppress people (Merchant, 1990, p. 103; Mindell, 1996, p. 69). Other liberating views can identify that these external conditions subjugate the inner world and liberation means transforming oneself in order to create change in the external world (King, 1990, p.114; Starhawk, 1989b, p. 14-15).

The development of critical awareness to take individual and collective action that will alter the distribution of power and control is important in liberation. This awareness focuses action strategies on redistributing power more equally and maximising self-determination (Gutierrez, 1995, p. 229). Spiritual and political concerns strongly overlap in liberation counselling. The liberating perspective works to break down what it considers is a false separation between the client's inner world with cultural/contextual factors in the world (Morell, 1996, pp.307-308). Raising

awareness of our interconnection to one another at all levels begins to highlight that liberating action is simultaneously spiritual and political and that action affects people individually and collectively (Starhawk, 1989b, pp.24-25). Similarly, it is argued that to take no action means that structural inequalities and cultural devaluation believed existent in society will oppress people individually and collectively (Ivey, 1995, pp. 53-54).

Liberation spirituality is not a specific religious view but according to Morell (1996) it is a human-oriented belief in a central energy or principal "Spirit, Creator, God, Goddess, Divinity, Living Force, Life, Love" (p. 307). Liberation spiritual counselling is premised on the belief that we are all unified by this spiritual source and it is not separated but embedded in our way of living. Therefore one's gender, sexual preference, physical and emotional abilities, and socio-economic status are part of our spirituality which may be flourishing due to liberation conditions or devalued and marginalised by oppressive conditions (Bulhan, 1988, pp. 262-263; Ivey, 1995, 66). It has also been argued that oppressive conditions include a secular and dualistic Western world, which alienates people from being aware of their own inherent spiritual essence that is linked to the physical and non-physical world (Myers et al., 1991, p. 58; Tapping, 1993, pp. 30-31). Self-determination is also central to cultural and spiritual liberation but respect for differences and the right of other groups to determine their path for themselves is important, otherwise power can lead to domination (Bulhan, 1988, p. 255; Starhawk, 1989b, p. 77). Balancing determination for all is part of the spiritual message of unity within diversity that encourages an inclusive self-determination and partnership.

Themes in Relation to Counselling, Depression and Spirituality

In the previous section, three spiritual counselling approaches were proposed that together reflect the importance of the subject, the context and the interactions between them. Each spiritual view makes its own contribution in regard to a more inclusive understanding about assisting the depressed and helping the counsellors working with

them. These views also introduced the importance of cultural inclusiveness, self-determination, diversity and connection within counselling as being enhanced by spirituality. Spirituality, in fact, through unifying and connecting, potentially encourages a greater commitment and sense of belonging with one another and this sense of belonging and commitment includes protecting and valuing ecology for some counsellors and clients. The next section will investigate further within counselling the themes related to spirituality and depression and spirituality's potential connection to depression. This is done through a discussion of spiritual potentials. This potential includes under the headings of spiritual loss and oppression linked to depression and spirituality's place in the community to overcome depression. Spirituality is also explored in terms of reducing depression through its capacity to provide purpose, meaning and value in our life and an awareness of spirituality as unifying our being, by connecting our inner world to our external existence. This section begins with identifying how depression may be associated with contextual conditions that reduce our spiritual life.

Spiritual Loss and Oppression Linked to Depression

Conditions within society relevant to power, value, and self-determination impact upon people's well-being. Morell (1996, pp. 306) suggests that disempowered groups such as women, people of colour, unemployed and underemployed people, and poor people are more commonly represented as having psychological and substance abuse problems. In particular, substance abuse is in many cases associated with depression (Cicchetti & Toth, 1996, p.222). Counselling rarely addresses these aspects during treatment. This corresponds with a tendency within counselling not to link family and cultural issues of sexism with women who are diagnosed as depressed (Ivey, 1995, p. 54). Ivey states that liberationists consider that historical and oppressive social conditions are frequently not recognised in therapy and this includes invalidating spirituality, which is embedded in these conditions (1995, p. 60-66). Spirituality represents a person's belief system, which is linked to identity, empowerment and life purpose (Evert & Agee, 1994, p. 298) therefore these things can come under threat by cultural domination from colonisation. For example, the spirituality of Maori in New Zealand is part of one's genealogy, ancestral connection, cultural values and heritage.

One New Zealand writer considers that the belief systems associated with these factors have been reduced in Western society by cultural domination and that there is a connection with this and the high rates of mental health problems of suicide, hospital admissions, incarceration and emotional loss (Tapping 1993, p. 34). Another New Zealand writer claims that the holistic nature of Maori spirituality links it to all aspects of their culture. Therefore, Maori depression is not easily separated from the quality of their spirituality and without spirituality Maori are less healthy and more prone to illness and misfortune (Durie, 1995, pp. 68-71).

As Cicchetti and Toff (1996, pp. 234-235) have pointed out earlier, factors linked to depression include the effectiveness of one's cultural belief system. This invariably includes spirituality for some. The literature presented here suggests that loss due to colonisation and domination impacts one's beliefs system and creates greater vulnerability to depression. Part of this loss is spiritual and spirituality is part of the solution for reducing depression, therefore, spirituality and depression have important interactive qualities for counsellors to consider in helping the depressed client.

Connecting Spirituality to Community and Social Support in Overcoming Depression

Societies that promote individualism make it difficult for people to find attachment to something larger than themselves. A spiritual community can assist depressed people who have lost emotional attachment and withdrawn from social contacts by renewing connectedness to others (Westgate, 1996, p. 31; Witmer & Sweeney, 1992, p. 141). However, spiritual communities can also express belonging in an arrogant and exclusive manner to exclude or dislike others (Rappaport & Simpkins, 1991, p. 46). In either case, the loss of emotional attachment and reduced social support is strongly associated with depression. Spirituality may enhance living and sharing with others and promotes social support. For example, regular churchgoers are often less depressed and a spiritual community contributes to positive mental health (Westgate, 1996, pp. 31-32). Some cross-cultural research also suggests that seeking the help of a spiritual healer seems to enhance social support (Hohmann, Richeport, Marriott, Canino, Rubio-Stipec & Bird, 1990, p. 334). Social support is also significantly

improved if people have a strong sense of community and this is even greater if it includes a spiritual dimension.

Social spiritual support from a person's sense of the community can be achieved by means of community narratives. Narratives involve the telling of stories about a person's community. Community stories provide public education, healing and empowerment by transferring knowledge about one's sense of belonging and identity to a particular community. This knowledge is given in the form of communicating beliefs, attitudes and behaviours that inspire and give leadership (Rappaport & Simkins, 1991, pp. 29- 35, p. 46). These authors indicate that in Western culture that our sense of community from our extended families and small towns has broken down. The development of beliefs that establishes a sense of roots and cultural history or allows people to be part of something can replace this loss. The sharing between people within these belief systems can help people form new communities (Rappaport & Simkins, 1991, p.29, p.46; Saleeby, 1994, p.354). These gatherings can provide healing and empowerment from spiritual and psychological belonging and may overcome the depressive conditions of isolation, separation and loneliness in modern living (Rappaport & Simkins 1991, p. 46; Saleeby, 1994, pp. 355-356).

Storytelling is recognised as a counselling method to discover and reclaim one's past. Stories, myths, and rituals validate a person's world (Saleeby, 1994, p. 352-355). This strengthens identity and connects with others and awakens cultural potentials. In the counselling field, storytelling is frequently used to release meanings held in our internal world into our external world. This externalising process then allows beliefs, values and issues to be examined, evaluated and most importantly validated. If these stories are not working for clients then they can be potentially changed. If clients are able to create new stories and subsequent meaning for themselves that are more helpful in meeting their needs, then they are more likely to enhance their well-being. The counselling literature on narrative therapy describes improving well-being by altering externalised stories, known as re-authoring, so that new action can take place based on these re-authored stories (O'Hanlon, 1994, pp. 25-26). Storytelling within counselling has the potential to engage clients' personal and community life and facilitate connection that reaffirms spirituality and reduces depression. Storytelling is

also likely to be useful in this research to provide more depth in understanding participants' beliefs and values.

Spiritual Purpose, Meaning and Values in Relation to Depression

It is evident that a person's beliefs have a part to play in understanding that person's spirituality and if they may be vulnerable to depression. Brink (1993, p. 381, p. 384) says people need clinical help with their depression when it starts to interfere with occupational, domestic, academic and recreational activities and that these human behaviours are all related to values. He categorises values as having ultimate, utilitarian, and ulterior relevance and all decisions are based upon perceptions of value. He believes our actions reflect an attempt to express our values or to safeguard against the threat to our values (Brink, 1993, pp. 384-387). Furthermore, he states that ultimate values reflects an intrinsic spiritual dimension of life and are available to those who are committed to a quest to find their intrinsic value. He considers that depression, unlike any other mental disorder, is the absence of all relevant forms of value, which are needed to guide, protect self-esteem or shield the individual from their vulnerabilities. Therefore, according to this writer, spirituality is a central, fundamental aspect in counselling practice to relieving depression, while depression itself is a call to awaken or renew one's ultimate values (Brink, 1993, pp. 387-389).

Purpose and meaning are also regarded as lacking with the depressed while spirituality is positively related to providing a sense of meaning and purpose in life and can increase one's resiliency to hardship (Westgate, 1996, p. 29). Aponte (1998, p. 37, p.58) also believes that spirituality contributes meaning, purpose, and value in people's lives and that counselling can be a venue to explore one's ultimate meaning that profoundly affects a person's everyday functioning. Sermabeikian (1994, p. 181-182), for example, states that spirituality gives courage, strength and determination to deal with painful emotions associated with grief, loss and alienation. Spirituality is also considered a resource for inspiration and meaning that mediates depression (Hood Morris, 1996, p. 444; Landis, 1996. P. 218).

The practitioners' spiritual beliefs also significantly impact on their work with clients by allowing them to competently engage the topic of spirituality and in enhancing their counselling abilities and connection with the client (Anderson & Worthen, 1997, p.11; Sermabeikian, 1994, p.182; West, 1997, p. 300). This suggests an interactive quality between client and counsellor about their spirituality and its potential in counselling regarding depression. The topic can be understood more clearly by compartmentalising it but, in reality, it may actually flow between client and counsellors. In summary, purpose, meaning, and value are important qualities to have in reducing depression and these qualities are enhanced by spirituality. They benefit depressed clients and the ability of the counsellor to assist them.

Universal Principles in our Inner World

Archetypes represented as primary symbols and images for people have been influential in suggesting elements of unity in our reality. Carl Jung identified archetypes as part of our psychological inheritance that potentially unifies through their capacity to reveal a universal knowing and interconnectedness to all things. He said a universal knowing was contained within our collective unconscious and that we can experience connection to all things by a causal link described as synchronicity. Many of Jung's concepts have now become influential in counselling (Kheel, 1990 p. 132; Mindell, 1996, p. 74; Semabeikian, 1994, pp. 179-180). However there is debate about the meaning attributed to phenomena arising from the collective unconscious. It has been criticised as culturally biased by liberationists and sexist by feminists (Bulhan, 1988, pp. 74-76; Enns, 1994, p. 128). Some people in the feminist movement have adopted archetypal counselling because it identifies human pain and symptoms as the struggle of the psyche to develop wholeness rather than reflecting pathology. Cultural feminism has revised Jungian principles to be consistent with feminist ideals of egalitarianism and a close spiritual identification with pre-patriarchal archetypes, goddess images and ancestral heritages (Enns, 1994, pp.127-128). Archetypal counselling is potentially beneficial by re-valuing male and female qualities, reducing inner fragmentation, sensitising one about respecting earth, and deriving cultural and spiritual views from connecting with ancient primary images (Enns, 1994, pp.131-132). Archetypal connections have also been described as spiritual experiences or

part of a process of spiritual emergence by other authors. These authors suggest that there is a strong correlation with their appearance and healing or improvement in one's well-being (Grof & Grof, 1995, pp. 48-49; West, 1997, pp. 291-292). As identified within ecofeminist and humanistic perspectives, archetypes have meaning in many cultural traditions and sensitise people to a spiritual presence in the world.

According to Gilbert (1992b, pp. 325-326), Jung's work has been valuable for establishing belonging and purpose by helping individuals to find meaning and purpose in their life that may include eliminating blocks to relieving their depression. The unifying principles within archetypal counselling have important potential for strengthening spirituality and reducing depression. Depression has been associated with destructive behaviour, poor academic performance, social withdrawal, and substance abuse while spirituality has been found to integrate aspects of the self and reduce the negative moods associated with the depressive behaviours (Fehring, Bennan & Keller, 1987, p. 391). Depression can also cause people to turn inward and to be confronted with spiritual questions such as the purpose of living and the possibility of dying. Some writers have described this turning inward as a dark journey of the self and soul. The journey results from a need to connect with some spiritual essence through mystery and ordeal and can lead paradoxically to a greater unity with self and others (Elkins, 1995, p. 81; Fenn & Capps, 1995, pp.2-5; Hale, 1992, p. 87). It is evident that depression, although a serious mental health problem, can act as a catalyst for self-exploration, greater adaptation, and provide opportunities to experience the sacred that can be transformative (Ritter & O'Neill, 1989, p. 12; Shildkraut, Hirshfeld & Murphy, 1994 pp. 483-487).

Counselling Issues Relevant to Depression and Spirituality

Counsellors dealing with depression can find spirituality is a definite issue that may need confronting with the client and which can be an ally in helping the depressed. This position is strengthened by a sense that spirituality has a capacity to integrate and unify that is particularly helpful with the depressed. Accordingly, counsellors may need to look at a theoretical basis to further validate this position regarding

spirituality's value. However, before reaching this theoretical position, counsellors also need to be aware of specific issues related to spirituality in counselling that can impact the depressed. These include immanence and transcendence in relation to connection, development and sacredness; ethics, standards and competence; spiritual emergencies and spiritual distress, and secular society's influence on spirituality in counselling.

Immanence and Transcendence in Relation to Connection, Development and Sacredness

There are differences between immanent and transcendent beliefs in regard to life-force and otherworld Christian connotations, however the term transcendence is frequently used in the transpersonal and humanistic literature in a way that is not specifically Christian. It can also refer more generally to a sacred dimension or simply movement and expansion within spiritual development. It can also be regarded as an increased psychic dimensional awareness (Van de Castle, 1994, pp. 405-439) or an experiential link with a transpersonal realm that inspires and illuminates (Westgate, 1996, p. 33). In these situations, transcendence can be described as simply connecting with something sacred within and/or beyond the self (Chandler et al., 1992, p. 169). Transcendence in these terms, like immanence, places value on connecting to a more holistic or non-dualistic sense of spirituality (Anderson & Worthen, 1997, p. 4).

Transcendence, within a holistic sense, is believed to have important value in association to helping the depressed in counselling. Self-transcendence is associated with expanding identity and spiritual experiences that are healing and frequently have a positive impact on well-being (Coward & Reed, 1996, p. 275; Reed, 1991, p. 64). Westgate (1996, p. 31) says that spirituality in counselling decreases depression and that transcendent experiences in particular could reduce depression. Transcendence also reflects the capacity to connect and build relationships and important evolutionary and spiritual aspects for the individual (Philips, 1996, p. 89) and to strengthen the client-counsellor relationship (Landis, 1996, p. 229). According to Bynum, transcendent experiences are also healing through their mind-body connections and have a capacity to reverse the suppressed immune response common

with the depressed. He further adds that the capacity to heal through spiritually oriented rituals, ordeals and dreaming was recognised by the ancients and is now being recognised within some medical circles (Bynum, 1993, pp. 219-221). The positive impact of the spiritual on health and helping the depressed is an aspect that some counsellors utilise in emphasising mind-body connections, rhythms, movement, vibration and imagery (Watson, 1994, pp. 41-42). Holistic spirituality also can validate counsellors who believe that the physical and non-physical are not isolated from one another (Park, 1996, p. 322).

Ethics, Standards, and Competence

It is important for counsellors to identify their own personal worldviews in their practice. Most writers suggest it is essential for counsellor awareness and development of their own spirituality to proceed alongside their practice (Ingersoll, 1997, p. 226; Myers et al., 1991, p. 60; Turbott, 1996, p. 723). This awareness is important in being able to avoid imposing one's belief on the client (Turbott, 1996, p. 723). It is also essential for counsellors to develop competency with spiritual issues to help clients who have needs in this area (Semabeikian, 1994, pp. 181-182). There is a natural and historical relationship between spirituality and counselling because both often focus on helping others to find meaning, wholeness, and fulfilment and individuals during crisis are frequently concerned about spiritual and religious matters (Fukuyama & Sevig, 1997, pp. 234-235).

Despite some common ground in the aims of counselling and spirituality there are some barriers to the use of spirituality in counselling. There are indications that raising spiritual issues in counselling supervision is frequently not well received due to bias from counsellors' supervisors against engaging in such topics in counselling (West, 1997, p. 306). The most powerful counselling associations also remain primarily influenced by a quantitative and Western scientific belief system when regulating practice standards, training and dispensing of credentials (O'Hara, 1997, pp. 14-15). The Western scientific influence within counselling does not lend itself easily to investigate the uncertainties of some subjective views and the value-orientation associated with spirituality (Adams, 1995, p. 205; Aponte, 1998, p. 38).

Prest and Keller add to this view by suggesting that hierarchy, boundaries, rules, and patterns of interactions in counselling can be objectively studied and quantified while subjective constructs such as spiritual power, psychic energy and divine influences are harder to observe and measure (1993, p. 139).

The evidence in the literature thus far indicates that it may be important for counsellors to become familiar with spirituality in their practices given its potential benefit to depressed clients. It is also important for regulating bodies to exist that advocate for clients' care and rights. The regulating bodies are needed as history indicates that counselling has contributed to reducing client power, leaving them more vulnerable to abuse (O'Hara, 1997, p.16). The present regulating and clinical bodies are dominated by the medical scientific view while the humanist and liberationist perspectives are inadequately represented (O'Hara, 1997, pp. 18-19). However, according to Adams, even here there is some room for shifting as the "new science" is gaining more acceptance in counselling and is more able to address spiritual matters, (1995, pp. 204-205). These viewpoints suggest that there is an ethical need to incorporate an understanding of spirituality in counselling and that regulating bodies may have an opportunity to embrace spirituality through current changes in the scientific field.

Spiritual Emergencies and Spiritual Distress

The DSM-IV now includes a category for religious and spiritual problems. These problems may reflect a loss of faith, adjustment difficulties and questioning of spiritual values (Fukuyama & Sevig, 1997, p. 233) which correspond to some difficulties within depression. It follows from the previous discussions that some individuals who suffer from psychological distress and mental illness may also be in need of spiritual care. Excessive individualism, social divisions, and materialism in society can exacerbate their difficulties by leading to alienation, moral apathy, and spiritual bankruptcy (Westgate, 1996, p.27, p.31). Indeed, some literature suggests that depression is linked to a spiritual crisis (Turbott, 1996, p. 724) and with older adults the symptoms of depression are synonymous with spiritual distress (Hood Morris, 1996, pp. 441-444). Emergent spiritual experiences can also be profound and

overwhelming for someone who has suppressed their spirituality or who has been through a spiritually precipitating situation. For example, spiritual awakening can become overwhelming after a near death or mystical experiences (Chandler et al., 1992, pp.169-172). As a result, individuals can feel disoriented or preoccupied from fear and resistance to what is unfolding. These situations can take on a crisis quality and are known as spiritual emergencies (Lukoff et al., 1998, p. 22-23). Despite these cautionary aspects for counsellors to consider, spiritual emergencies/distresses are considered a part of spiritual emergence and can be transformational (Grof & Grof, 1995, pp. 37-41; Walsh, 1994, p. 14) and may alleviate serious depressive disorders (Watson, 1994, p. 22). The research suggests that there is positive potential in a crisis or emergency when spiritual questions arise with them. There may also be grounds to consider aspects of depression to be linked to spiritual problems. Counselling perspectives that do not isolate depression from spirituality but consider them as interacting and affected by all relationships may strengthen counsellors' understanding of distress due to emerging spirituality or to an injured spirituality (Nolan & Crawford, 1997, pp. 289-293; Reed, 1992, p.352).

Secular Society's Influence on Spirituality in Counselling

There is some resistance to spirituality in counselling due to a perception of it being viewed as synonymous with religion (Prest & Keller, 1993, p. 139). Yet the meaning of the term spirituality in the current literature usually includes religion but within a larger understanding of the sacred. According to Sermabeikian (1994, p. 180), although spirituality is expressed in religion, philosophy and culture, it transcends ideologies, rituals, dogma and institutions. Spirituality pertains to individuals' association with value, meaning, experience, knowledge, belonging and relatedness. These aspects may be covered by religion but are broad enough that personal and cultural factors distinct from religion can be included without entering into a debate over the existence of God or some other entity (Bristow-Braitman, 1995, p. 414). Religion can also be described as a system of practices and beliefs within a social group, whereas spirituality is more about finding meaning (Dyson, Cobb & Forman, 1997, p1184; Goddard, 1995, pp.809-810). According to some writers, religious and spiritual dimensions of culture are among the most important factors that structure

human experiences, beliefs, values, behaviour and illness patterns (Lukoff et al., 1998, p.24; Turbott (1996, p. 721). However, secularising influences in western society mean that counsellors tend to ignore both religion and spirituality in their practice. Adams (1995, p. 201) states that spirituality may be the most unexamined issue of diversity in counselling and that the religious orientation of clients is as important as race, ethnicity, social class, culture and gender.

In considering the value of spirituality to counselling, counsellors also need to be aware of their spiritual views and if there are problematic aspects of these views within counselling. Dyson et al (1996, p.1184) suggest that religious beliefs can have negative affects on health if they are strongly associated with producing guilt. Others suggest spiritual belief systems strengthen and support family systems but may also contribute to the development or maintenance of presenting problems by producing rigid or excessively moral worldviews (Prest & Keller, 1993, p. 137; Sermabeikian, 1994, p. 181). Ingersoll believes there can be a dependence on spiritual ideas as toxic faith suggesting that religious addiction can replace personal responsibility and self-determination. He says spirituality is usually often linked to positive growth but some groups display unhealthy pseudo-spiritual paths through cults and mind control experiences, and may require individuals to surrender themselves to a leader (1997, p. 230). Philosophically, counselling may regard spiritual concepts of surrender and trust in a higher power as developing passivity and avoidance of self-responsibility by inhibiting autonomy and choice. Dualistic thinking within some spiritual traditions also categorises beliefs and actions as being good/ bad or right/wrong and this can inhibit integration of self. Finally, without cross-cultural awareness counsellors are not fully competent to understand religious beliefs and practices with the culturally different client. They need concrete training and support to understand spirituality and their own spiritual development to limit imposing their cultural views on the client (Fukuyama & Sevig, 1997, pp. 238-239).

Developing a Theoretical Framework

The counselling literature in Chapters Two and Three of this study has formed the basis for developing a theoretical framework. The framework integrates the insights gained from the three counselling perspectives and the three spiritual counselling approaches. Highlighting the importance of counselling themes and issues, also draws my attention to the importance of culture, gender, political economy, and ecology in this research. The scientific, humanistic, and ecofeminist literature also creates some optimism that it is possible to identify through research the potential of spirituality to assist the depressed and help counsellors in their work with them.

The direction of the theoretical framework is to value the knowledge from gender, cultural diversity, spiritual views developed from our connection to the environment and a social-emotional understanding of depression. The theoretical framework is also designed to support the belief that our perceptions of reality are shaped by our subjective, inter-subjective and objective life. The framework values knowledge that arises within relationships and that part of this knowledge raises our awareness of our interconnection to one another. Therefore, it is possible to perceive ourselves as belonging and interdependent within a larger spiritual community where we can appreciate being committed to oneself, others, and ecology.

The primary theoretical basis to support this research is ecofeminist. In this section, the literature outlines this theory's potential to be sensitive to an inclusive, comprehensive and integrative spiritual view. Ecofeminism will be explained and it will also be identified for its support and congruence with the other three parts of the framework. This means that it will be presented on its own but will also be used in reference when optimal, rank theory and new science are discussed and added to the framework. The other three parts of the framework are included as they complement ecofeminism. Optimal theory is relevant to a spiritual identity development and liberating counselling. Rank theory is added to the framework as it identifies factors such as power and worth in relation to well-being and depression. New science highlights the importance of how the science of physics supports many of the holistic

and interconnected views in this study. The section begins now with an exploration of the importance of ecofeminist theory to this study.

Ecofeminist Theory

Ecofeminist theory is inclusive and comprehensive. Writers with this view address the importance of the interdependence of subjective, inter-subjective and objective worlds to reality (Flaskas, 1994, p. 143; King, 1990, p. 114, p. 116; Macy, 1989, p. 206). The theory values embedded and egalitarian relationships and posits that patriarchal hierarchy and domination is divisive and fragmenting with self and others. Ecofeminism promotes ecological and human connection within all diversity (Hera, 1995, p. 31). The issue of internal and external domination and submission is central to the issue of power. The power to define and determine one's life is liberating while conditions that reduce power and choice for self and others are considered oppressive. The liberation from oppressive conditions extends to the domination or destruction of land and traditional cultures associated with the land (Adair & Howel, 1989, pp. 220-221; Starhawk, 1990, pp. 73-75). Ecofeminism identifies that empowerment is possible through individual and collective action and by a spiritual connection with the land (Paterson & Trathen, 1994, p. 97; Starhawk, 1989 b, pp. 14-16). The inclusive nature of feminist theory means that it links with and utilises several other theories applicable to the study. Optimal, new science theory, and rank theory all overlap with ecofeminism and are presented as part of the framework because of their support to it in relation to this research.

Optimal Theory

Optimal theory outlines an awareness of spiritual reality where it is possible for unity to exist within human diversity and for there to be harmony in differences (Myers, & Speight, 1994, p. 101; Speight, et al., 1991, p. 31). Optimal means a set of conditions that yield peace, love, harmony, and holistic well-being. Optimal theory also uses the concept of worldview to understand diversity by linking an individual's attitudes, values and opinions that determine behaviour (Myers et al., 1991, p.56; Sue, 1991, p.

300). The theory is a basis for understanding diversity regarding race, gender, class, and ethnicity while still adhering to a spiritually unifying principle. Optimal theory posits that power and worth are internal, intrinsic and unconditional. The self is a multidimensional spiritual being united with matter and connected to all of life. Purpose and meaning increase when people see themselves as unique spiritual beings connected to all of life. The unifying principle as matter-spirit unity is validated by spiritual development (Myers, & Speight, 1994, p. 111). Self-knowledge is the basis of all knowledge and is a significant part of spiritual development. Spiritual development assists individuals in coming to know themselves as spiritually material beings (Myers et al., 1991, p. 57). Our fundamental spiritual unity encourages respect for diversity as essential and a recognition of our spiritual uniqueness.

Myers and Speight (1994, p. 105) suggest the Western worldview is sub-optimal by leading to dichotomous thinking where individuals and things become separated and alienated from one another. This worldview also fragments and divides the self and others by externalising power, worth, and responsibility. There is a power imbalance leading to "power over" which creates oppressors or power elite groups and the oppressed or minority groups (Myers et al., 1991, p. 56). Individuals are also vulnerable in these sub-optimal conditions by creating external criteria for worth and esteem. In the sub-optimal worldview, people are valued by what they have achieved and acquired materially in their life rather than for who and what they are. These conditions devalue self and others and establish a need to be better than others, which is the basis for racism, heterosexism, sexism, and ageism in society (Myers et. al., 1991, pp. 54-57). Myers et al. (1991, p. 56) suggest oppression occurs whenever power is externalised while liberation validates the intrinsic value of people and empowers and reduces individual reliance on external criteria for worth. In optimal theory, liberation is a struggle to regain our original connection with an immanent spiritual force and recover or establish our own identities through a universal connection and interdependence (Myers & Speight, 1994, p. 109; Speight et al., 1991, pp. 29-31). The importance placed on a spiritual essence as part of our subjective knowing, self-determination and removal of alienation from nature, patriarchal hierarchy and dualistic conditions are important themes in an optimal worldview. These themes are also significantly developed within ecofeminism (Adair & Howl, 1989, pp. 221-222, p. 226; King, 1989, p. 19; Paterson & Trathen, 1994, p. 97;

Spretnak, 1989, pp. 127-128). Optimal theory's contribution to the framework is in clarifying the capacity of people's spiritual essence to liberate and challenge alienation by developing our spiritual identity and connecting to others. (Myers & Speight, 1994, p. 105; Myers et al., pp. 56-57). It is distinguished from ecofeminism by suggesting that all conditions that externalise value and worth are oppressive because they encourage the formation of worldviews that limit growth and connection. As will be demonstrated in the next section, enhancing our capacity to value and belong reduces depression.

Rank Theory

The concepts of power and belonging have been closely linked to outcomes influencing depression. The feeling of power to achieve goals, to influence relationships and determine one's life reduces incidences of depression. A sense of belonging with individuals and groups that share values and provide support is also significant in reducing the incidence of depression. The loss of conditions associated with power and belonging increase the likelihood of depression (Gilbert, 1992b, p. 471-473). Social ranking theory suggests that individuals consider themselves as a lower rank than others by perceptions of having less status and viewing themselves in an involuntary subordinate position. These self-perceptions are related to conditions such as social power, dominance, status, prestige, authority and not being able to control one's social place (Gilbert, 1992b pp. 147-151). The perception of being outside rather than inside valued groups also reduces a sense of belonging. Being an outsider can result in persecution, reduce access to resources and create a sense of being different and alone (Gilbert, 1992b, pp. 180-181).

A sense of power and connection with others provides important value and worth for individuals because positive social conditions are valued by people (Gilbert, 1992a, p.19). Culture plays an important part in belonging by establishing meaning in our social relationships. Cultures also have sources of power through social-economic systems, religions, traditions and families. If one cultural group exerts power over another this can result in emotional harm and casualties to that group (Gilbert, 1992b, pp. 476-477). According to Gilbert (1992a, pp. 147-148), both internal and external

environments can put down, dominate, devalue and neglect. What is observed in relation to depression is low self-esteem, poor self-valuing, shame, guilt, disappointment, and envy and these are interconnected to a social understanding of our power, control, and relative standing in relationship with others (Gilbert, 1992a, p.148). Isolating and devaluing conditions create greater vulnerability to depression and depressed individuals often described feeling different, alone, powerless and are frequently self-critical and self-devaluing (Gilbert, 1992b, p. 153). Ecofeminist literature has also identified that alienation and division result from devaluing, excluding and subjugating conditions (Griffin, 1990, p. 95; Macy, 1989, p. 204). It is also striking that social rank theory's link of vulnerability to depression to lack of power and isolation (Gilbert, 1992a, pp. 147-148; 1992b, pp. 471-473) is also supported by ecofeminist writers in this study (King, 1989, p. 19; Plaskow & Christ, 1989, p. 273). However, rank theory does not directly address the issue of patriarchy or political and economic societal conditions in contributing to negative self-images that increase vulnerability to depression. These links make it possible to reaffirm in spiritual oriented literature that spirituality improves well-being by enhancing power and belonging, which in turn reduces depression (Brink, 1993, p.46; Hood Morris, 1996, p. 444; Ivey, 1995, p. 54, p. 66; Westgate, 1996,pp. 28-32).

New Science

The medical scientific perspective presented in Chapter Two historically suggested a more mechanistic cause and effect relationship with reality that separates facts from values and spirituality from counselling (Adams, 1995, p. p.201, Turbott, 1996, p. 720). However, the perspective has started to reduce these divisions due to scientific developments, which began at the end of the 19th century (Dennis, 1995, p. 37). These changes have encouraged a more inclusive scientific view and this process has been accelerated recently by influences from modern physics. These developments suggest the possibility of people having a pervasive consciousness beyond their physical body and that matter and non-matter are interactive (Wendler, 1996, pp. 837-838). The most recent changes within the scientific view are organised under the term "new science" and they represent a potential for linking spirituality to counselling (Adams, 1995, p. 204). As these changes become more incorporated into the medical

perspective there is more possibility that holistic, systemic and spiritual thinking in counselling will be considered less in conflict with a rational scientific view (Adams, 1995, p. 207, Dennis, 1995, p. 34). There is also evidence that many social scientists are now acknowledging the possibilities for bringing together some discoveries in the new science into their fields (Patterson, 1998, pp.288-289).

The science prevalent in psychology has been primarily Newtonian, which gives little room for ideas about the connections and awareness between mind and matter (Dennis, 1995, p. 34). There is pressure for the psychological field to change given new scientific evidence from many places that affirm the holistic, non-reductionist view and suggest the mechanistic view in counselling is incomplete (O'Hara, 1997, p. 27). This alternative view has been recognised for some time in the ecofeminist literature. It frequently refers to the contribution by new science in raising awareness about scientific evidence, our connection to one another, and the inseparability of matter and non-matter (Spretnak, 1989, p. 129; Swimme, 1989, p. 19). Quantum theory has also broken away from Newtonian thinking by postulating that the observer cannot be separated from the observed (Patterson, 1996, pp. 288-289). Modern science is now speculating about a world unified into a complete whole. This is similar to the physicist, David Bohm's "one world,"or biologist, Rupert Sheldrake's "morphogenetic field" (Grof & Bennett, 1992, pp. 9-11) and a self-organising principal in systems theory (Rhee, 1997, pp. 211-212; Wilber, 1993, p. 221). Field theory is part of the new science that posits the existence of a unified web of relations interconnected into one (Park, 1996, p.322). Field theory is described as a field-like atmosphere influencing all levels of experience, including relationships, group interaction and the entire world (Mindell, 1996, pp. 72-74).

The conception in new science fits well with indigenous peoples, modern psychology and Eastern spiritual traditions. Indigenous people often understand the natural environment as a living and influential being (Park, 1996, p.320). It has been called the "anthropic principle in scientific circles" (Fabel, 1994, p.308). Eastern spiritual traditions and Western physics and systems theory also recognise the environment as a unified field of forces (Patterson, 1996, p. 289; Rhee, 1997, p. 212). These perspectives have also been described as earth-based spirituality of ancient European, ecofeminist and indigenous people of America (Donaldson, 1996, pp.197-202).

Recognising interconnectedness is familiar to family therapists, and interpersonal therapists who are relational and systemic in approach. Jung's concepts of synchronicity and collective unconscious were forerunners in psychological circles to a universal and shared connection in physical and psychological realms (Mindell, 1996, p. 74). These non-dualistic scientific perspectives are now more commonplace in society giving greater credibility within counselling to approaches that involve connecting mind, body and spirit as one (O'Hara, 1997, p.27). New science strongly endorses the ecofeminist connection to many cultural traditions that have traditionally been closed to the land and valued an immanent spiritual force. It does not identify or explain, as do the other theories, inequality and hierarchy within its relational and systemic understanding. It is also a relatively recent perspective in scientific thinking and therefore its position needs to be further substantiated through research in order to become more persuasive. Nonetheless, new science is giving renewed vigour to some of the spiritually oriented counselling perspectives that have existed in the field for some time.

Conclusion

This chapter has summarised the literature that identifies the potential of spirituality to assist the depressed in counselling and help counsellors in their work with the depressed. It has also clarified that some spiritual practices are not helpful and that there is a bias within counselling against the use of spirituality. It has also identified the transpersonal, earth-based and liberationists spiritual counselling approaches that together provide a very broad understanding of spirituality within counselling perspectives that may provide insight into my research questions and fieldwork with the participants. This chapter has also developed a theoretical framework that will support this research. This framework is needed with regard to developing the research methodology and to assist in interpreting the research findings. The next chapter will explore the application of the theory in developing the research methodology.

CHAPTER 4
THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Introduction

The first chapter of this study introduced my two research questions and the justification for this research. An important part of this justification is my personal and professional interest as someone developing their own spirituality and as someone who has worked in the counselling field. Therefore the research process in this chapter furthers my own spiritual development and my own professional interest in helping the depressed in counselling. The last two chapters have begun to explore through the literature, spirituality's role in alleviating depression and how to understand its potential to help counsellors who may consider using spirituality in their work with the depressed. These literature review chapters have identified that spirituality can enhance well-being and that well-being is linked to empowerment and belonging, which reduces depression. This same literature provides an opportunity to consider that spirituality that improves well-being by enhancing empowerment and belonging is likely to alleviate depression (Brink, 1993, p. 46; Gilbert, 1992b, pp. 471-473; Hood Morris, 1996, p. 444; Ivey, 1995, p. 54; Westgate, 1996, pp. 28-32).

The literature has also outlined various counselling perspectives and approaches and identified a number of the assumptions, beliefs and values that may shape counsellors' perceptions of what constitute spirituality, empowerment, and belonging in counselling (Aponte, 1998, p.38; Everts & Agee, 1994, p. 292). The literature has also helped to raise awareness about themes and issues that could arise in counselling that affect spirituality, empowerment and belonging (Ingersoll, 1997, pp.229-230; Luckoff, et al., 1998, pp 22-24; Myers et al., 1991, pp.55-56; O'Hara, 1996, pp. 11-13; Sue & Sue, 1990, p. 7). The knowledge from the literature sources may help counsellors in their work with the depressed by clarifying some of the influences on their own counselling assumptions and views. This in turn leads to an awareness of themes and issues they need to address when considering the use of spirituality to help

the depressed. It also provides a basis to begin reflecting with participants, who use spirituality in counselling work with the depressed, if their views and concerns about helping the depressed correspond to the literature. The literature also draws attention to developing a research methodology to enable me to compare participant and literature findings in this study.

This chapter outlines the research process that was developed from the literature on counselling, depression and spirituality and qualitative research. It includes applying the theoretical framework and counselling literature to research, linking personal beliefs to counselling and research, identifying the overlap between cross-cultural counselling and qualitative research, choosing a qualitative method, identifying a research sample, preparations to meet participants, data collection, analysis, and conclusions. This chapter begins by clarifying the usefulness of the theoretical framework and counselling literature to the research process.

Applying the Literature and Theory to Research

The counselling literature indicates that the topic of spirituality holds some fascination and its precise definition and meaning has been historically debated (Hannah & Shank, 1995, p. 53). This research reflects my own fascination with spirituality and my efforts through the literature and theory to contribute to the philosophical debates on the subject. The view expressed in my study is not intentionally offering any definitive answers to meaning and definitions of spirituality. Rather, it reflects my need to explore the topic widely and to shape the material usefully into providing insight into my two research questions. The research process also reflects my own development as a researcher. I can embrace my own values and beliefs in this research as part of the method and still appreciate that there are many researchers who for the same reasons would adopt different methods. Therefore the theoretical framework and counselling literature that influences the research method recognises that this is not "the method" and that there are many possible methods that could have been used (Bell & Newby, 1976, p. 37).

As indicated in Chapter Three, the ecofeminist, optimal, rank and new science theories are the main contributors to the theoretical framework. These four components in the framework are relevant to the exploration of counselling, spirituality, and depression. They broadly point out the importance of gender, culture and worldview to counselling, spirituality and depression in this study (King, 1989, p. 19; Luckoff et al., 1998, p. 24; Myers et al., 1991, p. 54; Sue, 1991, p. 300). The framework is interactive and holistic in nature. It suggests that our subjective world, a relational world and an objective world, are interactive with one another, influential in shaping our perceptions of reality and can be usefully understood in counselling (Flaskas, 1994, p. 143; Mindell, 1996, pp. 72-76). The general direction of the framework and literature is to suggest that empowerment and belonging are crucial to this study. Empowerment and belonging are considered related to spirituality and the enhancement of spirituality reduces depression (Gilbert, 1992b, pp. 471-473; Hood Morris, 1996, p. 444). The theory and literature indicate that one's spiritual essence and self-determined identity development, interconnection to self, others and the world, egalitarianism and social justice can improve empowerment and belonging (Eisler, 1990, p. 3; Myers & Speight, 1994, pp.107-109; Patterson, 1998, pp. 288-289; Reed, 1992, pp. 350-351;). These conditions are often described as liberating or transformational in the literature (Myers & Speight, 1994, pp.107-109). The framework and literature also indicate those conditions in our internal or external world that increase hierarchy, dominance, isolation and devaluation which reduce well-being (King, 1989, p. 19; Myers et al., p.56). These conditions, which reduce our well-being, decrease our spiritual life and may increase our vulnerability to depression (Reed, 1992, pp.352-353; Westgate, 1996, pp. 28-32). They are often described as oppressive and devaluing in the literature (Ivey, 1995, pp. 59-61; Myers & Speight, 1994, pp.107-109).

The counselling literature and theoretical framework influence the research process. The sources generally suggest it may be useful to understand the participants' views about spiritual conditions in terms of identifying specific conditions that are potentially liberating or oppressive and any connection these have to one's well-being and vulnerability to depression. The counselling literature also encourages exploring participants' spiritual views in counselling through their counselling perspectives and approaches to assisting the depressed clients. This adds depth to understanding

internal and external aspects affecting the depressed and how to assist them through spirituality. The theoretical framework supports the counselling literature to consider subjective, relational and objective realities in this research. It strengthens a sense of looking at a variety of ways that spirituality may alleviate depression in counselling and many ways to consider it assisting counsellors working with the depressed. The framework also shapes the exploratory nature of this research by suggesting that spirituality's potential can be considered in terms of empowerment and belonging in clients' inner and external worlds. It also points out that gender, culture diversity and worldview, identity development, connection and spiritual issues further clarify an understanding about empowerment and belonging.

The theoretical framework also addresses factors important in counselling. The Western scientific view has been a divisive factor for many counsellors because it has tended to devalue many of the intuitive and non-rational elements that counsellors consider important in understanding their clients. Yet Western science has unmistakably influenced the counselling field (Adams, 1995, pp.204-205; Dennis, 1995, p. 34. The use of ecofeminist theory in this framework provides a means to critique the dualistic and reductionist tendencies in Western science. It also is able to include a dynamic objective element that interacts with other elements to shape our perceptions of reality (Adams, 1995, p. 205; Flaskas, 1994, p. 143; Jayaratne & Stewart, 1991, p.99; Paterson & Trathen, 1994, p. 97). This provides an opportunity to acknowledge the contribution of an objective element of reality that may influence our well-being. The inclusion of new science in the framework is congruent with an ecofeminist perspective view by providing recognition of science's contribution in the form of a holistic and non-dualistic view compatible to spirituality (Adams, 1995, p. 205; Griffin, 1989, p. 10; Spretnak 1989, p. 129). The combined influence from ecofeminism and new science supports the notion that on a spiritual dimension the participants and I may be mutually influencing in this study. The ecofeminist notion of sacredness of all things also supports a research method that favours equality in relationship between participant and myself (Donaldson, 1996, p. 195, p. 198, p. 203; Jayaratne & Stewart, 1991, p.84).

The ecofeminist component is appropriate for this research in the counselling field. Women make up the largest client group for counsellors. They can be victimised by

male models of counselling that impose a traditional social role for women and may ignore contextual contributors to women's depression (Enns, 1994, p.131; Ivey, 1995, p. 54; Wastell, 1996, pp. 576-579). Therefore, the issue of gender is a significant consideration with any of the comments made by the participants.

Linking Personal Beliefs to Counselling and Research

My own spiritual experiences and developing spirituality motivate me to pursue this research topic in relation to the depressed. I have a strong sense that spirituality can be used in a powerful and strengthening way in helping the depressed. The literature cautions, however, that although counsellors' spirituality can be beneficial in the counselling context they must be aware of their own spirituality and its influence on practice. Not to develop one's awareness of one's own beliefs runs the risk of unwittingly imposing views on clients (Myers et al., 1991, p.60). This may also be problematic for counsellors who narrowly define spirituality and feel their beliefs need to be adopted by the client to ensure health (Evert & Agee, 1995, pp.292-293). Generally, the literature supports the notion that spirituality in counselling can benefit the client (Brink, 1993), however, the topic of spirituality has generally been ignored in counselling literature (Adams, 1996). Silence on the subject may result from ambiguities of the subject and positivist influences that stress quantification and measurement in research but the resulting omission is neither impartial nor inconsequential. Benland (1988) argues that spirituality has been bypassed because it is difficult to quantify and define. However, for her, it is an essential human factor that pervades all activities. To ignore the spiritual dimension is to be dismissive of the human condition while engaging spirituality provides an opportunity to enhance partnership and empowerment (Benland, 1988, p. 464).

Investigating the participants' use of spirituality in counselling with the depressed is likely to be an enriching and fruitful exercise when the process is exploratory and embraces holistic causality and interrelatedness. It provides an opportunity to bring together subjective knowledge, political and cultural contexts, worldviews and social relationships as equally contributing to the whole picture. Bringing together all of

these aspects into one methodology is more holistic and is well suited to a qualitative process.

Qualitative research has the capacity to emphasise in-depth knowledge and multiple views rather than quantifying and confining oneself to strict definitions and isolating specific factors from one another. Further to this, some writers have recently acknowledged the importance of spirituality in the counselling field and its relationship with the depressed. Turbott (1996, p.724) says it needs to be included in counsellor training and it may have research potential by understanding the relationship of spiritual crisis to depression. Westgate (1996) has provided a wider scope on the subject by detailing several spiritual concepts that are linked to depression. She strongly supports the use of spirituality in counselling and warns that when the helping professions deny the existence of a spiritual force they fail to account for how non-physical things like values and ideas affect the physical world (Westgate, 1996, p. 33). These authors add support to research about the potential in counselling of spiritual dimensions to assist the depressed. The literature also clarifies the importance of my own spiritual development in enhancing this research as long as the beliefs stemming from it are not imposed on others.

Cross-Cultural Counselling and Qualitative Research

According to Merchant and Dupuy (1996, pp. 537-538), many cross-cultural counselling practices share similar assumptions and methodologies with qualitative research. Qualitative research highlights non-linear causality and inter-relatedness of environmental, social and individual conditions by emphasising the context. It also values the interpersonal relationship and the subjective experience of both the participant and researcher. Cross-cultural counselling emphasise an awareness of one's own assumptions, values, and biases, understanding the worldview of the culturally different client, and development of appropriate interventions and strategies. Inherent in each perspective is a reduction in power differentials between the researcher/counsellor and participant/client. Both traditions recognise systemic and circular influences that reduce isolation and compartmentalisation. Ongoing data

collection, analysis and review are favoured for comprehensiveness. Feedback from the individuals participating in the study that adds to validity was invited at all stages whether it is qualitative research or cross-cultural counselling. For feedback to occur, trust is an essential ingredient in the relationships. Trust requires an empathetic and interactive listener whose focus is client or participant centred and someone with cultural knowledge and sensitivity about racism, discrimination, oppression, and stereotypes (Merchant & Dupuy, 1996, pp. 538-539; Myers et al., 1991, p. 54-55). Overall, the skills required to be a competent cross-cultural counsellor also provide an understanding and perspective that can prepare an individual for qualitative research.

Choosing A Qualitative Method

Personal Style

Given the complexity and elusive nature of spirituality and based on my counselling experience, a comprehensive and open-ended research method is the most viable choice for myself. It has the potential to capture some of the complexity, uniqueness, and varied truths by conducting in-depth interviews. Thoughts of finding a broader truth by exploring the potential diversity therefore indicate my preference for the inductive model. The construction of generalisations is taken from grounded theory within the inductive model where broader patterns are developed from the analysis of the research data. This is in contrast to the deductive model where theory is constructed in advance of the research and then test through the research (Babbie, 1989, pp. 52-53). This research enters the debate about quantitative and qualitative research by favouring a qualitative study that encourages exploration, openness and relationship building. This strengthens my ability to interpret meaning from subjective, political and experiential qualities in my research. The research literature links these strengths to the qualitative research process (Foddy, 1993, p. 126; Jayaratne & Stewart, 1991, pp. 86-87; Sarantakos, 1993, p. 214).

My part, as field theory suggests, is also inseparable. Therefore, my interest in holistic and integrated understanding and promoting egalitarianism and social justice

is a definite influence. Given literature on depression that says no one theory or perspective is complete in explaining this problem (Cicchetti & Toth, 1998, p.221), a multiplicity of influences is beneficial for better understanding. These influences and conditions then set the stage for developing a qualitative method.

Even though the essence of the research is the open-ended style, I am still guided by some broad principles. These include efforts to obtain an integrative picture of all components as being a unique part and yet still part of the whole. The relationship between the parts and whole is also not value-free in human terms. It is important in conducting interviews and in terms of data collected to favour relationships that encourage social justice, equality, self-determination, respect for the personal, and sensitivity towards individual core values and beliefs. These are my own values and beliefs and guiding framework. The view is not specifically materialist, feminist or even humanist yet is inclusive of these traditions. These traditions contribute to the perspective and are blended in as part of a systemic whole that affect all levels of the research. It is called an orientational qualitative inquiry by being clear about the theoretical framework being used but perhaps more neutral than an ideological inquiry by bringing together a range of worldviews (Patton, 1990, pp. 85-87).

Qualitative Research

Patton (1990, pp. 40-41) has outlined several themes relevant to qualitative research. These themes include naturalistic inquiry, systemic holism, personal contact, unique case orientation, empathic neutrality, and design flexibility. Together the themes encourage discovery, uniqueness, person-environment connections, a flexible blend of the objective and subjective and, finally, pragmatism about utilising these qualities as needed. Patton says that the researcher's goal is to understand the world in all its complexity not proving something or promoting personal agendas. Excesses of either objective or subjective elements can reduce the strength of the study. What is needed is not either/or reliance on the subjective or objective but a merging and interactivity of these two into the whole picture. Patton also says neutrality and empathetic personal contact create a more holistic and natural inquiry for the researcher. Empathy is important in communicating interest and understanding while neutrality encourages

acceptance of what people say and do during data collection rather than cold detachment. Together these qualities facilitate rapport during research and disciplines the researcher to be non-judgmental and open (Patton, 1990, p. 58).

Identifying a Research Sample

I interviewed a small sample of participants with counselling experience and with a range of views on spirituality in counselling the depressed. The preference was to choose participants who like myself felt positive about the potential of spirituality in counselling the depressed. This was also a purposeful sample (Patton, 1990, p. 169) in that I hoped to include humanist, liberationist, feminist and indigenous perspectives from the sample. This meant it was an intense sample but it does not represent an extreme position within the counselling field given the breadth of views (Patton, 1990, p. 171). My goal was to provide a comprehensive look at various spiritual understandings impacting on working with the depressed. The literature suggests, which coincides with my understanding, that the most common tradition in counselling is humanist (O'Hara, 1997). The humanist position provides a glimpse of the rich inner world of individuals in relation to inquiry (O'Hara, 1995) that might tap into the personal dimensions of spirituality. Including other perspectives therefore is more likely to increase the sense of what constitutes the spiritual. My expectation was that a Maori participant potentially provides some insight into holistic spirituality associated with an indigenous perspective (Tapping, 1990, p. 44) and a relationship with the spiritual and natural world (Bishop & Glynn, 1992, p. 133; Meadows, 1996, p. 247). By selecting a participant with a feminist perspective, an opportunity existed to explore the importance of gender, patriarchy, connection and immanence (Christ, 1989, p. 314; Griffin, 1990, p. 95) to counselling the depressed. As indicated in Chapter Three, a counsellor with a liberationist view could potentially clarify the socio-political links to worth, power and depression (Bulhan, 1988 pp.264-265; Ivey, 1995,p.55).

In obtaining a small sample of spiritually oriented participants who use spirituality in their counselling work with the depressed, I used a snowball or chain sampling

method. It meant locating information-rich informants who would know who I should talk to as possible participants for my research. By asking a number of people who else may be potential candidates the snowball list of names grew bigger (Patton, 1990, p. 176). A few staff at the School of Social Policy and Social Work, Massey University, provided direct assistance about suitable names. Having worked in this area several years ago I was also familiar with some other practitioners who were potentially suitable. From this approach, I created a list of approximately a dozen names of suitable candidates. Once the list of names was drawn up, I reflected upon them to achieve some balance and diversity regarding their, training, gender, known counselling perspectives and client profiles. With these factors in mind, I was able to decide upon several potential candidates to ask by telephone if they were interested in participating in the project. From these initial telephone calls, two declined while six others agreed to receive by mail an information letter telling them the details of the research. After sending six letters, five participants agreed to be involved while one declined. Following discussions with my academic advisers, I added another two names to my list in order to complete a pilot interview and to replace a candidate that declined. I was successful in enlisting both these people for an interview.

Preparing To Meet the Participants

Direct contact with research participants signifies a critical shift in the research. The literature review was complete, and approval had been received from the Human Ethics Committee of Massey University. The next stage of the research was preparing to conduct the interviews.

Interview Questions

An important part of preparing for the interviews was crafting the questions. I completed several drafts of possible questions from self-reflection and feedback from advisers. I developed six questions, some of which were open-ended and others referenced to literature. This was intended to minimise researcher impositions and to

encourage discussion while still reflecting knowledge gained by the literature review. This blend of question styles also adds strength to the question format by being able to compare the answers from open-ended questions with focused questions. A study design using a combination of methodologies known as methodological triangulation strengthens the validity of the research by generating rich and potentially diverse data from the same phenomenon (Merchant & Dupuy, 1996, p. 540). Given that a participant's time is limited, structuring through a standard but open-style format for each person made good use of what time was available. The approach also took into account that I would have only one interview with each individual. A single interview format also generally suited the participants who were willing to be part of the research but still had concerns about the time demands. Some consistency was attempted by asking each person the same questions and in the same order during interviews. Patton has described this as standardising open-ended interviews (Patton, 1990, p. 284).

The wording of the questions about participants' spiritual beliefs and their work with the depressed was constructed to be respectful, non-demanding and open-ended to enhance the responses according to the needs of the participants [see interview questions enclosed in Appendix 1]. This approach is reflected in the freer and more open-ended questioning style of qualitative research (Patton, 1990, p. 296). The intention of the sequence of questions was to understand the participant's background, the primary client groups served, and the participant's perspective about spirituality within counselling and helping the depressed. Once this was achieved, more focused questions arising in the literature about the subject were presented. It has been described as a within-method triangulation by employing more than one strategy within the question format to examine data (Denzin, 1989, p. 159). This potentially brought in new information and gave both researcher and participants a chance to review what had been previously discussed. This approach, however, does presuppose on my part that participants think along the lines presented and represents some shaping of the discussion (Patton, 1990, p. 304). The final question asked was about any limitations in their perspective giving the participant on opportunity to critique their own views. At this point, I gave them the opportunity to add anything they felt had not been covered.

The question format provided a focus for discussion by active listening, reflecting back comments and acknowledging recognition of what was being said. The questions encouraged self-reflection and storytelling. It also raised my curiosity and interest and generated a greater willingness by me to share in appropriate self-disclosing. These things deepened understanding, and encouraged more rapport and trust (Merchant & Dupuy, 1996, p. 540). Each interview had this aspect to it but yet each remained distinct. Efforts were made to be sensitive toward each individual's concern for ritual, process, time constraints, emotional needs and a level of self-disclosure. Attention to these things typifies what is described as a culturally skilled counsellor concern for respecting clients' belief systems (Merchant & Dupuy, 1996, p. 539). For example, if the question format or a particular question is not suitable or unclear then it needs to be changed to reflect the participant's needs. It is important to note that one participant preferred only to use the questions as an initial guideline to describe their experiences and views related to the research topic. This participant then came back to the questions at the end of the interview to review whether all of the necessary areas had been covered.

Pilot Interview

The pilot interview was the first step in conducting the interviews and assessing the usefulness of the interview questions. It also meant I could test the recording technology and become more familiar with working under time constraints. The order of the questions and the concept of community values proved confusing for the participant therefore changing the order of questions and referring to community involvement improved the flow and clarity. Overall, the pilot interview went very well and confirmed the usefulness of the research questions. The specific questions clarified important distinctions in the value of spirituality in the counselling process to the counsellor and to the client. The questions identified that spirituality may help the counsellor personally and enhanced their practice while the client may understand or benefit differently from spirituality. The format of the interviews based on the set of questions designed for the research also revealed that it was feasible to gain substantial and useful information within a single one to two-hour interview. The relevance of the research topic was also validated by the pilot interview given the

participant's enthusiasm and appreciation for being interviewed about this research topic. The pilot interview also encouraged me to see that counsellors may indeed have a potentially sophisticated understanding about counsellor and client spirituality and that both of these aspects are likely to be rich source of data to investigate in regard to their impact on the depressed client.

Data Collection

Political and Ethical Considerations

There were several political and ethical aspects considered for this research. These considerations were contained in the submission to the Human Ethics Committee. An effort was made to encourage but not pressure counsellors' participation and obtain informed consent. Telephone calls were made to initiate the research followed by sending possible participants an information sheet with more details. The information sheet stressed confidentiality, reciprocity by way of sharing research results, the right to withdraw and/or edit their part in the thesis, and utilisation of ethical and safe practices (see information sheet enclosed in Appendix 2). If they agreed to be involved with the project, a consent form was completed to protect both participant and researcher (see consent form enclosed in Appendix 3). Cultural sensitivity is also an important principle behind this project. I was raised in Canada and it could be argued that this distinguishes me culturally from all of the participants. Further to this, one of the participants is culturally and ethnically different than myself. Therefore, a discussion was held with a member of the Inter-ethnic Research Committee that added knowledge about respectful and appropriate content and procedure for my study. In particular, this discussion highlighted the importance of not making too many assumptions when working with someone who is culturally different and being sensitive during the interview process to cues about respectful research conduct. Finally, the research sample was selected to gain insight into humanist, feminist, liberationist and indigenous perspectives. However, it was not assumed that any one individual would be a representative for a particular perspective or expected that they would speak for anyone but themselves. It was hoped that through the sample each

individual would provide some insight into at least one of the perspectives. It was also anticipated given the complexity of any individual that insight into more than one and perhaps all of the perspectives would be found within an individual participant.

Conducting the Interviews

Given that the participants were employed and/or very active in community projects, their time constraints were all also respected by conducting the interviews in either their workplace or home. This also added to the participants' comfort and capacity to control the interviews. Some of the participants found it more convenient and comfortable being interviewed in their homes while for others it was their workplace. The interview questions were designed to minimise intrusion by asking the minimum number of questions and emphasised that participants answer them in a manner most comfortable to them. During the interviews, an effort was made to engage participants in conversation to establish rapport and give ongoing feedback about their comments. This was important given that all of the participants made strong efforts to be helpful and constructive toward my aims of the study. At the end of each interview, I disclosed on a personal level his interests in this subject and reinforced his commitment to this research. This was important given that each participant had just spent significant time disclosing important and often personal beliefs and experiences related to this research topic.

Confidentiality

Seven interviews were taped by myself and transcribed by another person. A transcriptionist was hired for the latter job due to my physical limitations. To ensure confidentiality the transcriptionist signed an oath of confidentiality. No names were written on the tape covers and names of individuals or agencies in the transcribed text were deleted. The data from the tapes were stored on a disk and text copies made of each interview. Once I received the transcripts from the tapes an extra text copy was made of one of the interviews. This text copy was given to one of the participants to fulfil the request made by that participant at the time of the interview. All of the

relevant research materials were also stored in a locked filing cabinet in my private home. Once the data collation and initial analysis was done, the information that pertained to each participant was discussed with each of them for their final editing [see letter to participants requesting feedback enclosed in Appendix 4]. When the participants provided their edited comments to me, these were noted and incorporated in to the study. Their comments were generally supportive and encouraging. One participant stated that she did not identify herself primarily with counselling and that a few of her comments needed to be altered. Making the necessary alterations from the feedback was very important before moving onto the next stage of the research. Once the data collection was completed, a summary of the research findings along with their taped interview was sent back to the individual participants. I am retaining the transcripts in safe storage for five years.

Analysis

Data collection and analysis in qualitative research is an ongoing flow of activity throughout the research project. The validity is also enhanced by requesting participants' feedback in the process, as indicated by Merchant & Dupuy, (1996, p. 540). Data analysis included linking the taped material with the literature, my personal and professional experience, and from participant feedback. Each interview represents a unique part that is interrelated with the other interviews and these are interconnected to me. The analysis in broad terms is systemic and holistic. Individual interviews were also analysed holistically linking each answer to all the other answers within the same interview.

Given the experience of the counsellors interviewed, there was a wide range of views. The challenge was to acknowledge and promote this diversity, find common ground between them and, where possible, make connections. The answers to each question provided a general framework in which to break the material down to more manageable sections. From there, preliminary themes and issues and specific quotes related to the research were established after a general reading of all the participants' transcripts. The next step was to take this information and organise it into several

headings under three main sections. The sections comprise the counsellors personal, professional and cultural world, their view on the research topic and their counselling practice as it relates to spirituality and depression. The texts from the six interviews were broken down into parts and attached to the headings under the three main sections. This made it possible to analyse and compare each participant's comments with one another in reference to the headings. Then each participant's transcript was recompiled to analyse each of the participants' comments individually in reference to specific headings within the three sections. Once the data was analysed and compared in this manner, a clearer picture emerged about the views of the participants and commonality and differences amongst them. It also became more apparent that many of the comments, stories and examples provided by the participants were highly relevant and could easily be used in any one of the three sections. Therefore, decisions were made to place a relevant comment in a particular section for overall balance in the thesis even though they could have been utilised in another section. There were also some participants' comments that were open to interpretation. Therefore, I contacted each of the participants again to seek greater clarity on some of these comments. One of the participants also used a number of Maori terms unfamiliar to me. I ensured that the meaning of any terms included in the thesis were congruent with the participant's intentions by checking with the participant and utilising the cross-cultural knowledge of his advisers.

Conclusion

Ecofeminist, optimal, rank and new science theories and counselling literature have influenced the research methodology. They emphasised the importance of considering empowerment and belonging widely. This is in terms of conditions that are potentially oppressive and liberating in relation to spirituality and their relationship with helping depressed clients and counsellors in their work with them. The literature sources identified in this study, point to a research methodology that emphasises integrative, holistic and interactive processes and these processes are compatible with many of the skills needed for counselling as well as qualitative research. The research sample aimed to provide insight into humanistic, feminist, liberationist and indigenous

counselling perspectives and that these perspectives may lead to a better understanding of their spiritual counselling approaches. The research data included a pilot interview and interviews with six participants with counselling experience. Their experience includes the use of spirituality in their practice with the depressed. The primary research tool was in-depth interviews with these participants using a set of questions designed to gain specific information and encourage open discussions. Concerns with confidentiality and being respectful and sensitive to the participants were central to the interview process. In the next section of this thesis, the interviews are reported in detail. They are an interesting, personal and revealing part of the research. They provide findings that are then compared to the literature sources for the research results and conclusions. The results and conclusions were made available to all of the participants at the completion of the study.

The next chapter begins the exploration of the views related to this research. Each of the six participants are identified collectively in terms of professional background and training and then given individual names to protect their confidentiality. By assigning a name to each participant it is then possible to follow his or her views throughout the next three chapters. This includes following their views about the counselling field, the depressed, the use of spirituality in counselling to help the depressed and a description of their practices in relation to my research questions. Their comments clarify their counselling perspectives, approaches with the depressed and identified important themes and issues. The knowledge gained from the participants provides a means of comparing it with the literature to conduct a discussion of this research study and suggest future research.

CHAPTER 5

BACKGROUNDS AND INFLUENCES

Introduction

This next section of the thesis presents the findings from six interviews conducted with people who do counselling work. The participants' views from these interviews will be outlined throughout the next three chapters. These views are based solely on their reports to me. This chapter familiarises the reader with each participant's counselling world by profiling their backgrounds and developing a sense of their counselling orientation through various influences, stories and insights about the depressed. The names of the participants have been changed to protect their privacy.

The chapter begins by describing in collective terms the participants' academic and professional backgrounds. They will be then presented individually by name in order to follow their views throughout the section. This chapter outlines the participants' professional background, influences in their counselling, knowledge and experience in counselling with the depressed, initial evaluations of the counselling field and spirituality, the importance of inclusiveness, self-determination diversity and connection and conclusions.

Establishing Participants' Professional Backgrounds

Academic and Community Training

The participants have said that their academic training has been an essential part of their abilities and orientations as counselling practitioners. All of the participants have significant academic training within New Zealand's university environment with the exception of one participant who graduated from a university in Europe. In reference to specific academic fields, two participants were trained in psychology, another two

in social work and two others have degrees related to theology, counselling and Maori studies. These degrees include two with doctorates, one with a master and three with undergraduate degrees.

The participants have extensive community training and have participated in various seminars, workshops and presentations through employment situations or by their affiliations to professional groups. Some of them are also recognised in the community for their theological training. For example, within this group one is an Anglican minister, another a Catholic nun, and a third person an elder at the Ratana Church and Marae. A fourth person has been involved with performing earth-centred neo-pagan rituals and blessings.

The participants valued their training and provided various descriptions of its importance to their role as counsellors. One participant said his broad academic training and professional career as a social worker helped him in understanding and working with individuals and families. Another person said his doctoral degree in psychology gave him three years of clinical training and counselling internship, which strengthened his clinical assessment and counselling skills. Another participant indicated that her academic studies helped understand cultural and gender issues related to bereavement and that working directly alongside experienced counsellors was very beneficial in developing counselling skills. Two participants found that their academic training in counselling and theology complemented each other and they felt that spiritual and psychological concepts were both needed in the counselling field. One participant felt his training in relation to counselling was a holistic life process related to upbringing, cultural beliefs and exposure and recovery of Maori models of practice. This life approach was important within counselling to offer Maori clients validation for their identities and to connect with one another.

Professional and Community Affiliations

Counsellor training that is relevant to the counsellors and their peers are enhanced by their ongoing affiliations to professional bodies and community groups. The professional associations can help counsellors in their practice by offering further

professional development, establishing ethical standards and practices and strengthening professional beliefs and values. There are several regulating bodies and professional associations in New Zealand that set standards and guidelines for counselling practices and the participants discussed some of these. For example, two participants were affiliated to the New Zealand Association of Counsellors, one to the New Zealand Association of Social Workers and another to the New Zealand College of Clinical Psychologists. They indicated their connection here was important. One of these three participants indicated she has not sought approval from Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC), which is one of several governmental regulating bodies in New Zealand. This participant felt this regulating body would be confining or limiting since it did not recognise the validity of some counselling practices.

Counsellor affiliation to community groups can create opportunities for counsellors to express their concerns and support for specific needs, issues and groups within the community. Community affiliation for counsellors is a concrete means for them to fulfil their commitment and responsibilities to community and to share their abilities and cooperate with others on important community projects. Three participants expressed strong interests in community activism and a willingness to actively support agencies and groups in connection with women's issues, ecology, poverty, and housing and social policy development. Three participants expressed that a sense of support and community involvement was found through their affiliations to an organised religion and one of the three said this association was also interconnected with his activities on a Marae.

Work Experience and Areas of Expertise

These participants have substantial work experience that has brought valuable knowledge to this research topic. They are each described briefly below as an introduction to their area of work and their interests and abilities as counsellors.

The first participant, who has a private practice, has been involved with several institutions, governmental and non-governmental agencies in front-line and managerial capacities and has practised for over 45 years. In his lengthy career, this

participant has worked with Maori and Pakeha families and individuals in several parts of New Zealand. His long work experience provides an invaluable look at the changes and development within counselling over this period.

The second participant describes herself as primarily a community worker. She is involved in group work with women with eating disorders. The community work, which involves counselling skills, is passionately focused on supporting women and various other groups perceived as devalued or marginalised in society. She draws on cultural, political economic, and ecofeminist perspectives in her counselling work.

The third participant, who also has a private practice, has had lengthy formal training in counselling and psychological assessment. Although this participant's client-group can self-refer, fifty percent of the referrals come from the family courts. The participant's counselling work is intertwined with psychological assessment, diagnosis, therapy plans, and report writing and the client group is primarily individual adults and couples and their backgrounds are equally divided between Pakeha and Maori families. This participant's counselling perspective provides insight into a practice that may integrate some of the demands and expectations coming from the family court system and families in legal conflict.

The fourth participant works in a larger medical field within a team consisting entirely of Maori. This participant works with Maori of any age with a mental health problem. Clients can self-refer or are referred to their team by other community agencies or from within the medical institution. Given the work setting is part of a medical institution, he may also co-work with non-Maori medical specialists to integrate Maori perspectives with non-Maori medical views. This participant provides an important perspective as a Maori person working only with other Maori and is someone who can provide some insight into an indigenous view of spirituality, counselling, depression and working within a medical model.

The fifth participant works in a multicultural community-based team. The team counsels Maori, Samoan, and Pakeha individuals and families and has a philosophy that counsellors' values and beliefs should match that of the client. This participant therefore works primarily with Pakeha families and integrates traditional counselling

approaches with contextual factors such as culture, gender and socio-economic status. In conjunction with the team, this participant has developed a counselling perspective for helping the disadvantaged and poor and creating gender and cultural equity.

The sixth participant operates out of her home and counsels women mostly in their middle to senior years. Clients come to this person on a volunteer basis having heard of this practitioner by "word of mouth" or are referred by other practitioners. This counsellor has worked for several years to integrate counselling with an inclusive spiritual view that arises out of the Christian tradition. She offers a view about counselling and the divine which focuses on the importance of women journeying spiritually to become stronger within themselves so that taking responsibility for themselves and challenging oppression is more viable.

Identifying Influences in Counselling

The previous information begins to help us understand some of the training, affiliations and work experiences that have shaped the participants' views and beliefs. Conversations with them, as the interviews progressed, included stories about themselves, situations, and self-reflections that further contribute to the reader's understanding of their backgrounds. These stories added depth about participant views and beliefs that were linked to their personal experiences of childhood, adulthood, friendship, relationships with peers and family and cultural traditions. These stories also reflect the participants' spontaneous expressions that were uncovered in completing the interview process and are included here as an important step for the reader to begin to understand the worldview of each participant. To maintain a personal quality to the research, the participants will be referred to by name that has been changed from their real names to protect anonymity.

The participants recounted stories, experiences, childhood memories and significant personal events in responding to my research questions and in our discussions about their backgrounds. They provide insight into valued influences in their lives that are

likely to have influenced their counselling work. These areas are outlined in the following section.

Stories of Spiritual Experience and Friendship

A participant, John, told two stories that were related to his counselling. The first story involved a spiritual experience as a teenager, when as a young man he went on a retreat with a church group. During this time, John had a personal experience that was spiritual and which profoundly affected him by allowing him to commit himself to a belief in God and to Christian teachings. These beliefs have continued to influence him throughout his life. The second story is about a friendship that first began when he enrolled in university fifty years ago. The strength and mutual respect each had for the other within this friendship is indicative of it lasting until the other person died approximately ten years ago. Both men were able to support the other in linking their theological views to counselling and both frequently shared reading material and interests in Rogerian counselling throughout these years. John's comments suggest that his personal life was very influential in the direction he took in his counselling career.

The Good Samaritan Story

Another participant, Mike, says his Christian views are a fundamental part of him and that they have encouraged him to take on a career of helping others. However, he says these Christian views have not always integrated well with his formal training on skills and rational objective knowledge. He recounts a story that would arise on more than one occasion with his peers when he was in his professional training. His story suggests that in professional training the orientation was on acquiring sophisticated skills to be able to effectively help others. He felt that the willingness and means to care for others has a long tradition and is not always complicated. He makes this point in the following comments:

I mean even in my training, I used to get a bit of a hard time. I would say well "I was a human being before I was a clinical psychologist." They always thought I was just being cute but they could never quite find the hole in my argument. If you see somebody lying in the street bleeding, you know, don't reflect in an empathic way, "you look like you're hurting," you pick them up, clean them up and take them somewhere to help. It's the Good Samaritan Parable thing I guess. Just apply that.

A third participant, Eric, is very concerned in his counselling with helping the poor and oppressed in society. He believes there are long biblical traditions that guide one to fight for the poor and oppressed. As did Mike, Eric refers to the Good Samaritan story in support of this position. However, Eric feels this biblical text is about material poverty and that the Good Samaritan was really an individual who reached out and identified with the powerless and those in society devalued for their race and culture rather than those in authority in society. Eric's comments suggest that the Bible provides him with guidance and direction in counselling through these and that, as a text, the Bible needs to be critically evaluated when ascertaining what message is being delivered:

You get things like "blessed are the poor", which Luke says and Matthew changes it to "blessed are the poor in spirit." I think it is literally "blessed are the poor, blessed are those who are hungry," and he identified with those people … The way he told the stories which are often not told in a socio-political context that they are really offensive people in authority, like a Good Samaritan was talking about racism and also about power. These are really powerful people who walk past this body and some despised person from another culture shows the way of God, the caring way.

Attachment to the Earth

Another participant, Sarah, describes her interests and identification in her early childhood with magical things, animals and nature that is still present today. She says these attachments have continued in her adulthood through her being drawn to cultural stories, beliefs and a spirituality that gives reverence to the earth, nature and

the unknown. Given her Pakeha upbringing, she has found that much of her worldview is supported through her knowledge of ancient European culture, which encourages a belief of living in harmony with all things and treating the earth as sacred. However, she has found that adopting and reformulating old Pagan beliefs frequently places her in conflict with modern society's emphasis on rational thinking. Sarah has also found that Christianity frequently devalues Paganism. Her knowledge of this area suggests that Christians have claimed Pagan rituals and symbols as their own and that prejudice against traditional earth-based healers who were most often women still persists today. In adopting neo-pagan beliefs, Sarah is a strong advocate in valuing the power of nature to heal and in reclaiming the power of women and the earth's healing capacity in helping others.

Cultural Heritage and Counselling Perspectives

A fifth participant, Thomas, says that being Maori with his own cultural beliefs and values is interconnected to understanding all aspects of his life. Counselling Maori for this participant is a process of supporting and helping them through these beliefs and values. For Thomas, his views have been acquired from experiences throughout his whole life. He says his Maori upbringing and family connection, activities on the Marae and regular attendance at church have all contributed to who he is and his faith in others and himself. Thomas believes that to separate any of these aspects out as being more influential in his counselling runs counter to his holistic perspective. He resists separating one element from another in his counselling work even though this seems to be a common practice by other health specialists.

Self-Reflections

Another participant, Margo, found that in preparing to participate in this study, distant memories were activated about herself that related to recovering from depression. She felt these personal reflections were very important because she could be more sensitive and understanding of client pain and struggles to recover from depression. Her personal journey through depression also raised her awareness about what helped

her and what held her back from recovering. For Margo, successfully working through depression has taught her that it is possible to do this without medication and that internal spiritual resources exist that can help in the recovering process. Her counselling training also helps her to recognise that her means of recovering from depression are not necessarily going to be the same for other people. She now believes her own personal journey and counselling knowledge are very intertwined in her counselling perspective and approach. Margo recounts this personal story of journeying through depression and successfully recovering:

> When I was a young person I was on valium when I was in depression. And so I went through that experience and that it was not helpful that just, that I just didn't deal with what I needed to do and so by flushing them down the loo and really taking hold of this in myself and finding out where it was coming from. It was a great gift for me, but I need to also be careful about that too because what suits one person doesn't suit another ... I am coming from my strong belief that in recognising my own responsibility and working together with this higher power, which I believe is God, and believing through my faith a power that I can engage and call upon and believe ... I can come through to wholeness and healing and have done so.

The above comments by the participants indicate these experiences, beliefs and values are influential and are likely to affect their counselling work. The subject of spirituality connected to religion also arises and with it differences begin to emerge in the participants' understanding of spirituality. The participants begin to raise the potential for conflict and debate about spirituality's connection to religion. Controversy in the relationship between these two areas become more evident in other sections of the findings and is discussed as an important consideration in the final chapter of the study.

Knowledge and Experience in Counselling the Depressed

Training, personal experiences, standards of acceptable professional practice and a variety of contextual factors influence the participants' counselling work. All of the participants expressed opinions that their experience has taught them about being

sensitive to client needs and that obstacles exist both inside and beyond counselling that potentially can harm or inhibit clients from achieving optimal conditions to enhance well-being. Some participants believe their counselling practices must include ongoing education to continue to assist the depressed and that the power of depression to debilitate counsellor and client should not be underestimated. The participants also provide important observations and insights about the needs of the depressed in their personal accounts. This section outlines their insight developed through their work of helping the depressed.

Insights in Counselling and Working with the Depressed

All of the participants except one perceive themselves as experienced counsellors. They had no difficulty in referring to counselling work that they had done with the depressed. Their experience seems to have encouraged them as counsellors to be concerned about what best to offer clients who are depressed to help them and to take seriously the addressing of their issues and problems. The participants' views result from their willingness to persevere in the counselling relationships, taking emotional risks and adopting a trial and error process during their work. These efforts heightened their awareness of their work and its potential to be improved upon. Their heightened awareness has led many to believe that it is important to listen carefully to the client and not to impose one's view and to never underestimate the potential severity of depression and the length of time required to work through it. It was also apparent that some participants felt they could not help everyone and that some clients would not get better despite all their efforts. In the worst cases, participants were aware that they might be confronted with the fact that a client they had worked with could commit suicide. These themes are discussed in the following paragraphs.

John feels that depression is one of the most pervasive and unrecognised phenomena existing in modern society and that it is important to distinguish between massive depression from ordinary depression that many people have. He believes that in his own practice he has not always been able to fully appreciate the difficulties confronting the depressed and that it has been hard to keep up with all the medical

advancements in the health field related to depression. He describes the ongoing need to remain current with therapeutic advancements:

> I think I have not respected the difficulties that people with depression have got. I underestimate the difficulties they have got. Because there is always a lot to be learned, I'm not sure that I've always kept up with new knowledge that has become available to assist people. It's a continuous battle to do this.

Despite these difficulties, John also says that going through depression yourself can provide a counsellor with some insight into helping others. He says "there is a certain humanness about depression and this humanness can be used to help you and others."

Eric provides a self-critique about his work with the depressed that is similar to John's in that it reflects the importance of being sensitive and respectful toward the depressed persons. He has learned this through trial and error. He says "I've made mistakes to pull in the things that I thought were good for them which clearly weren't at their stage in life and it is not a good thing to do." Eric also believes depression is very common and the counsellor is not immune to its impact. He says the challenge for the counsellor is not to underestimate the significance of depression and realise that in counselling some are more prone to it and the counsellor may need to be open and vulnerable themselves in order to help the depressed client. In this regard he says "I think if you work as a therapist you've got to be very sensitive to people. To be sensitive to this and to respond to people you of course open yourself up, so you're more vulnerable yourself." Eric also indicates that listening to the client is central so that a counsellor does not impose his or her views about what is needed on the client. Ultimately, the counsellor must face that depression is a very serious mental health problem. He explains in the following:

> Well, I mean depression is a really hard thing. Depression is something that I feel is an extraordinarily debilitating and dangerous sort of state to get into, even though I said, as before, it's a healthy reaction to terrible circumstances. I never feel sort of omnipotent in relation to depression...I never underestimate it, so I never feel I've got all the answers to it. I've studied it and watched and worked with people with it and I have a fair handle of some of the roots around it.

Sarah says having a name for what you are feeling can be helpful. From the client's point of view, she believes the name depression can help in understanding their difficulties and can be a reference point when coming to terms with their feelings. There is also medical help and medication if needed for the depressed. However, Sarah feels medication can be overused or can block the individual from getting to underlying issues that may be contributing to depression. Sarah also believes that the client's internal world can be very difficult for them when they are depressed. She says that depressed people seem lost, confused, and like they have some sort of black hole or gap inside them. At the same time, these descriptions are incomplete for her as even the term "black" can have negative connotations that devalue its positive value to the individual. Sarah suggests that blackness does not have to be negative and that the depressed must be encouraged to find their own way of telling their story and identifying for themselves what they need to create positive change.

In Thomas's experience, regardless of culture, depressed people tend to find that events in their daily life become magnified. He notices that events normally accepted and understood by the depressed become distorted for them. For him, the depressed client needs help to get through these difficulties and to be reassured that they are not alone in their struggle to get more balance back in their life.

In the above comments, it is evident that the participants take seriously their work with the depressed. What is clearer to me is the emotional quality in their views about helping the depressed and the difficulties confronting counsellors trying to do this work. They strongly point to the need of counsellors to take care of their own emotional health, not to underestimate the impact of depression on clients, and to understand the complexity involved in dealing with causes and therapy associated with depression.

Evaluating Counselling and the Use of Spirituality

Several of the participants have expressed concerns that the counselling field needs to become more self-critical to see that depression can be symptomatic of difficulties at many levels for a person. These concerns expressed by the participants suggest that counsellors within the field need greater awareness that depression is not only linked to personal difficulties but can be interpersonally and contextually related. Dealing with depression is considered complex, therefore participants feel that counsellors need to be aware that they do not necessarily have all the answers in helping the depressed. Some of the participants' comments also suggest that counsellors operate in reference to a number of beliefs and values that have important implications for introducing spirituality into counselling. This section begins by clarifying the term counselling and the implications of using the term "spiritual" within counselling.

Describing Conditions in the Counselling Field

The following participants identified potential problems associated with counselling the depressed. They include the need to confront the complexities in counselling the depressed by team efforts, counsellors ensuring their views are not imposed on clients particularly in cross-cultural situations, and the importance of recognising social factors influencing counselling and the depressed.

John feels that some counsellors assume they can provide everything for a person or a family. He says that depression is a multi-causal problem and that counselling is not an end in itself but is part of a larger process of people getting well. He believes that counselling practitioners must work alongside many other practitioners from other fields in their work in helping the depressed. However, even in some of these other fields, counsellors are confronted by limitations. He says substantial progress has been made in treating depression within health sciences and that advancement in pharmacology today can assist the depressed and prevent hospitalisation. However, he feels that the social factors related to depression have not been sufficiently investigated and developed which limits counsellors' options.

Sarah says that in counselling it is important to recognise diversity within people in terms of their needs and means of solving their problems. She feels that what works for one person may not for someone else. Sarah indicates that in her experience some counsellors can impose their views including their spirituality on the client. She also believes that counselling as practised by some can be patronising, hierarchical and can exert power over clients. However, she believes that by people speaking up for themselves it has changed the way professionals are beginning to relate to their clients. She cites the medical field, for example, where the all-knowing remote expert is giving way with some doctors who now accept that women want their general practitioner to provide open and respectful communication and work in partnership with them.

In Eric's view, counselling is an exercise in working with one's beliefs and values and structures in society, therefore, the best service to clients occurs when counsellors comprehensively address factors that impact the beliefs, values and structures in the client's world. His counselling philosophy is that the counsellor's culture should match that of the client to insure intimate understanding of values and beliefs. Therefore, as an example, a Pacific Island counsellor should counsel a Pacific Island client. He points out that this view is contrary to his formal psychological training. This training suggested that counselling is a technical and professional process where a generic pool of skills is developed that could be applied to clients of all cultures. He also feels his training did not help him address structural factors such as poverty and prejudice. Eric is also critical of the counselling field's inability to provide leadership in changing oppressive conditions in society. He cites that changes in the counselling field about dealing with abused clients came only after the women's movement and other social movements in society that raised awareness that those abused were being held responsible for their abuse rather than holding the perpetrators accountable. He says that a counselling process that suggests individuals are responsible for their own abuse leaves clients feeling negative and unworthy about themselves. Eric states that it was only after social movements were able to apply political pressure to this subject that the helping profession became more active in taking the blame away from the victims of abuse. He believes there is little evidence that a supportive perspective

toward the abused arose within the counselling field until it became more acceptable within the community to accept the stories of the abused as being valid.

The above views indicate that counselling the depressed is challenging work because of its connection to beliefs and values. Counsellors are encouraged based on the participants' views to develop awareness about social and cultural influences on counselling and their work. They also point out that this awareness is essential in order not to impose their beliefs and values on the client. This section begins to identify the balancing act for counsellors of helping through their beliefs and values without imposing them on the client.

Clarifying the Counselling Process and Spirituality

There are two themes identified in the next section. The first is about defining or distinguishing counselling work from other therapeutic activities and the other is the difficulties of dealing with spirituality in counselling because of the controversy surrounding spirituality's connection to religion. Both of these themes identified by these participants indicate the uncertainties and difficulties helpers may have when trying to clarify with peers and clients what they do and what they mean by the concepts they use.

John suggests counselling can be understood as a generic activity, which can be viewed as a particular process distinct from psychotherapy. He says counselling is the work in the present and at the interpersonal level whereas psychotherapy investigates in-depth things that are intra-personal. For John, counselling has to do with a person's history and it has to do with the various forms of difficulty that people have experienced. He says various disciplines such as social work, psychology, and psychiatry provides counselling in conjunction with other kinds of treatment. For example, a psychiatrist will use some counselling but will broadly be concerned with the medical diagnosis of a psychiatric nature that will then guide them in their subsequent treatment plans. Mike also makes a distinction between psychotherapy and counselling. He says that counselling generally has a lot of process work involved with it. For Mike, process work means working with elements in the present that are

affecting one's relationships and he might use Rogerian, Gestalt and family therapy techniques to do this. A significant part of Mike's training in psychology draws upon a medical model perspective where psychological assessment and diagnosing psychopathology are emphasised. Despite this, Mike says the distinction between the functions of a psychologist and counsellor are more academic than real in the actual practice.

John says the definitions one provides in counselling to the term spiritual can be problematic given its association for some to spirit, organised religion and ethics. In John's view, everyone is a spiritual being and everyone has spirit but that these two concepts can be understood differently. He says his Marxist friends would say they have spirit but are not believers in spiritualism. They are more likely to describe themselves as having a very organised personal and ethical belief system. John also feels that people can have a transcendent experience in a secular group and not use the term religion to describe it. He accepts that other people may describe these experiences in non-religious terms. John also senses that in modern times the word religion has come to be defined more narrowly. He believes that many of the things associated with spirituality today were described in an earlier period as religion. He says there is some resistance now in society of associating one's spirituality to religion because the latter has been unfairly judged as intolerant. Given the resulting divisions, John finds discussions about spirituality, religion and ethics can be quite confusing or easily misunderstood by groups within society. Therefore, he suggests that the notion of respecting people's worldviews is important when working with belief systems that may be understood as spiritual or as an ethical framework. He explains his position:

> I quickly came to recognise that the word religion can mean many things. It can mean institutionally organised, Christian religion or institutionally organised Muslim, Islamic religion or alternatively it could mean the worldview held by a person who calls themselves non-religious. And there is nothing more vigorous than a person who says they are a rationalist. They are highly organised and they have an ethical view. It's just as clearly laid out as a religious position but it's not got an institutional form, unless they belong to the rationalist society, but it is a personal worldview. But I quickly realised that people had personal worldviews that were just as religious that didn't have a title called religion associated with them.

Eric, similarly to John, says that others can understand the term spiritual as ethical beliefs. He also feels some people reject spirituality because of their negative feelings towards the church and the notion of God which, he feels, can be justified. For Eric, his spirituality is about a transcendental energy, life source or God that he uses consciously through prayer and services. But he knows others who are in this energy without calling upon it or call it something else. There are still others who say prayers and might be considered spiritual leaders in the church community but can be very prejudiced and excluding, for example, towards gays in the church. Eric says conducting prayers or calling something spiritual does not guarantee attitudes of caring and acceptance toward others. He believes what is important is what you do in your daily life to help others and having life-affirming values associated with your beliefs and not making judgements about others as to whether they are abiding by spiritual practices or not.

This is an interesting section about struggling with the terms counselling and spirituality in the helping process. These participants clearly indicate that there are various ways of understanding these two concepts. The difficulties with the meaning of these two concepts are also partially resolved in this section. The resolutions seems to be that actual practice is much richer in meaning and therefore counselling and spirituality need substantially more clarification in meaning when helping people. The other important consideration is that the more these concepts are clarified the stronger the counsellor can be separating counsellor meaning from client meaning and being able to find common ground between them. Often common ground according to the participants involves identifying and respecting people's worldview and focusing on life-affirming values in association to these beliefs.

Implications of Associating Spirituality to Counselling

The participants begin to comment upon the re-emergence of spirituality in society and implication of counselling. There are potential strengths and weaknesses according to them about spirituality's re-emergence and links to counselling.

John feels that the word spirituality has re-emerged in modern society within and outside organised religion and that there is greater interest with spirit and spiritual things. He believes that spirituality's link to beliefs and ethics gives it a natural association to counselling as this field involves talking about beliefs and views and is frequently oriented to spiritual concerns. Given spirituality's re-emergence, he also feels that spirituality can be helpful and more acceptable to many people today. As John indicated earlier, spirituality in counselling can become problematic if the counsellor is not aware that the term today broadly encompasses spirit, religion and ethical frameworks. He believes the critical aspect is that the counsellor's sense of what is spiritual is not imposed on the client.

Sarah and Mike both express concern that spirituality can be used within counselling in a way that could permit someone to assume a role as a spiritual or magical person with exceptional powers to heal or solve other people's problems. The counsellor is then in a role that creates a greater power differential with the client by claiming to be a spiritual expert. This situation has the potential of getting in the way of counselling if the counsellor lets their own needs to be seen as special or begins to consider themselves more important than their clients. Mike and Sarah argue that spiritually all people are equal and no one is closer to a sacred dimension or more sacred than another person.

Margo says that counsellors must respect the spiritual path of the client and encourage a connection with one's divine dimension. She feels counsellors often push clients through their grieving stages which can do violence to them rather than letting them process grief in their own way. They often encourage paths that move from dependence to interdependence but excludes an inner reliance on a divine dimension. She believes that the divine dimension is very spiritual and capable of guiding that person to determine their own standards and goals in life based on what is right for them. Margo says this is an internal compass and is important to clients given that societal power can influence individuals to go against setting their own goals or clients begin to feel inadequate because they have been unable to meet or measure up to societal expectations. She adds that clients that find their own path in life may first

need to express their anger and frustration and stop turning it in on themselves before they are able to move out of depression and begin to perceive that inner strength.

Eric says that traditional counselling that is offered to most people is de-contextualized and secular. According to him, this means that spirituality and structural, socio-political, gender, cultural, and family systems are not incorporated into counselling. These omissions mean that clients cannot be validated in these areas of their lives if they are not given an opportunity to evaluate the impact of the socio-spiritual on their personal and family life. He says that many of the poor still have to survive tough conditions and being supported in their spiritual lives and raising their awareness about the personal impact from societal oppression can help them to feel empowered and less self-blaming.

The participants feel that spirituality needs to be carefully integrated into counselling because of power differentials between counsellor and client and diversity in client spiritual beliefs. They also indicate that based on beliefs and practices in counselling that contextual and internal spiritual dimensions of reality would not be addressed. Their views suggest that there are some counselling perspectives that create barriers to integrating spirituality in counselling.

Participants Identify Inclusiveness, Self-determination, Diversity and Connection

The participants indicate sensitivity to inclusiveness, self-determination, diversity and connection within counselling. This sensitivity is expressed in the following ways. These are concerns about the traditional influences in religion, differences between Christian religion and Christian teachings, excessive emphasis on diversity in post-structuralism, limitations of the medical model, lack of Maori services, the importance of cross-cultural awareness, and the effect of fragmenting and divisive societal conditions on clients. They are outlined in the sub sections below that begin with concerns about fundamentalism.

Concerns about Fundamentalism

Margo feels that fundamentalist beliefs originating from the traditional church can be destructive when applied in counselling. She says fundamentalism is excluding in that it promotes its understanding and perception of truth as the only acceptable position. Therefore, when this belief system is prominent in counselling it can impose itself on the client's world by not respecting alternative views that might be held by the client. Margo also feels that fundamentalism adopts a rigid view about forgiveness that can be destructive within a counselling context. She provides us with insight into her views in the next comment:

> My problem with the Fundamentalist is that I actually do find it abusive because it is imposing...making people believe something that is imposed by a higher, human power that says you know, if you don't forgive the person who raped you God won't forgive you. You know that sort of premature forgiveness, I have big problems with that.

Debating the Connection of Spirituality to Organised Religion

John discusses organised religion in terms of tolerance, human need and struggling to reflect historical Christian teaching. He believes that today people perceive the Christian church as intolerant. John feels that some within the church are intolerant but intolerance is not reflected in Christian teachings. He says, for example, there is intolerance towards male homosexuals and lesbians in the church and this occurs with some who describe themselves as Christian, however, he believes careful reading of Christian tradition encourages a position of tolerance. For John, Christians are subject to the same difficulties and failures as anyone else but the difficulties of intolerance come not from the Christian teachings but individuals whose human needs and mistrust create a negative judgement of others. He believes the solution is not to demean or try to disassociate groups from organised religion but to continue to face the deep-seated difficulties implicit in human life and in the larger community.

Eric also has some concerns about organised religion. He says that within religion, spirituality can be oppressive and isolating when it claims to be the only truth that originates from a distant divine source. He believes this belief diminishes and excludes the views of others. He remarks "that in religion, spirituality gains in authority because it's like other-worldly authority which then imposes negatively on other people and claims to be the good stuff from God. This is most unjust." Eric also comments on the people who have power within the church and may operate with more human need that may not reflect his understanding of historical Christian teachings. He says there are individuals within the church with leadership power that can be highly intolerant and there are many outside of the church justifiably upset with the church's history and the actions of organised religion. He believes there is a strong biblical tradition that advocates tolerance, love, and fighting for social justice and intolerance has more to do with individuals than with the Christian teachings. Eric adds that intolerance needs to be confronted whether it occurs within organised religion or not. For Eric, these comments fit within a context that his sense of spirituality and sense of God come out of Christianity and work for him, however, he feels spirituality or organised religion are not for everyone.

Linking Integration and Wholeness to Diversity and Connection

According to the literature diversity and connection are important aspects to consider in counselling generally and that spirituality is an important dimension that can deepen understanding about beliefs and values. In the next section Sarah adds further clarity about the spiritual aspects of diversity and connection and argues for a balance between them when working with others.

Sarah believes that both diversity and connection are important concepts to work toward in our relationship with people. She found in some research that she calls post-structural that diversity was emphasised. This was meant to challenge belief systems that saw themselves as the only path or to counter belief systems that operate as superior to others. Sarah says she knows from her own experience that valuing diversity is important given a tendency in history for Western colonial practices to dominate many cultural groups with its worldview. However, she feels that excessive

focus on diversity has its drawbacks. She believes that only looking at diversity can create an environment that is fragmented and divided. For Sarah, connection is an essential ingredient to include along with diversity. She believes that connection builds on the strength of diversity by encouraging a sense of unity and cooperative sharing between diverse groups in society. Connection, for Sarah, is about relationships that lead to integration and wholeness rather than division and fragmentation. Connection in the midst of diversity is a philosophical position for Sarah that is at the heart of her spirituality. For her, valuing diversity and connection permits a global spiritual view that validates the differences amongst people and strengthens human and non-human relationships into an evolving unifying presence.

Sarah's comments have important implications for counselling in terms of strengthening a unifying presence without imposing a view that we need to be the same to achieve unity. She also argues that addressing only diversity or connection rather than both weakens the integration and wholeness. The final chapter will also identify that balancing diversity with connection is important to helping the depressed.

Cultural Awareness and Cultural Bonds

In the following, two participants indicate the importance of culture and its link to beliefs and values. They argue that counsellor awareness of their cultural beliefs and values as well as that of the clients is essential in counselling. They say this awareness can point out important differences in understanding between counsellor and client about connection, identity, and well-being.

Thomas is employed in the health system and is required to work alongside many specialists in the medical field. Although he respects the medical system and its specialists, he says there is some difficulty as a Maori working with modern day medicine as its belief system can be alien to Maori. He feels strongly that Maori need to work with other Maori because their well-being is strongly linked to cultural values and beliefs. In this regard, he comments on the positive impact of having a mental

health unit staffed by Maori specifically for Maori, which he says is frequently unavailable in many places in New Zealand:

> I'm not criticising modern day medicine, because I believe in that as well. The two of them can go hand in hand. However what we have found is that the Maori values and beliefs are never considered serious enough to be used by non-Maori people, who are working with Maori people and that becomes a concern for me. So I am really pleased that we have in this unit the opportunities to work with Maori in a way that is more Maori than what we had.

Eric supports Thomas's argument about the need to know cultural beliefs and values when working with any cultural group. He argues that someone who is a cultural insider is the most competent to do this. For Eric, an important strength of a cultural insider is having knowledge about identity development and boundaries. He says that one's beliefs and values translate into differences in understanding about identity development and the boundaries when, for example, a counsellor is looking at Pakeha, Samoan and Maori cultures. The concepts of identity and boundaries are fundamental in counselling and may be completely misunderstood when a counsellor is working cross-culturally. He suggests that cultural awareness teaches the counsellor not to assume that clients from a different culture share his or her sense of boundaries and identity. Eric explains this position in the following statement:

> I've really learned that in Maori and Samoan societies there is actually not a boundary between individual and whanau ... you cannot actually locate a place where the individual stops and the family starts. And in fact, it goes further in that I can't find the place where the mountain stops and their body stops, and the river stops. There is so much interconnection. I think very few Pakehas actually understand the depth of the difference of meaning in those, but you really do see it in therapeutic situations. It is very different. So, it is not that one is more right or more wrong, they're just different.

Society's Influence on the Depressed Client

All of the participants have concerns related to broad societal beliefs and values and conditions that they believe act as obstacles to the development of well-being with their clients. Many of the participants' comments reflect concerns that in society, competitive, dominating and fragmenting influences reduce power and belonging for individuals and subject some groups based on gender, culture, race and socio-economic status to a devaluation process.

Margo believes that society exerts an external pressure on an individual that undermines and disconnects with an inner knowing. She believes this inner knowing is essential for being true to oneself and being connected to a larger divine dimension. She believes people are persuaded from recognising an inner dimension of authority that can direct us to be active and responsible in finding our spiritual path in life. Mike believes that predominate values in society place excessive value on materialism, which leaves many in society on the margins and unworthy because they have not been able to acquire sufficient material wealth that affords societal respect. Eric argues that many are oppressed and marginalised in society due to poverty and cultural domination that result from the extremes of capitalism, secularism and individualism, which create a competitive and uncaring society. These factors tend to devalue the place of spirituality, community partnership and recognition of human commonality and acceptance in society. Thomas says that through Western cultural colonisation, Maori have lost land and some of their sacred knowledge associated with their spiritual lives. This means Maori are more vulnerable to health problems and must recover their Maori identity and practices to reduce this vulnerability. Sarah believes that competition, domination and patriarchy in society create a belief system that separates and is adversarial based on gender and qualities associated with gender. This belief system is then able to justify that men are preferred over women, the rational is superior to the irrational, and that humanity is more valued than nature. Sarah feels we need to move toward a belief system that encourages non-violence, cooperation and harmonious relationships and values all contributions to reduce the fragmentation and divisions within society. John perceives that society is divided and fragmented today. He believes that a more nurturing and enriched society is possible

through addressing conflicts and reducing dominant forces and worldviews that exclude and isolate many segments in society.

There is a range of views expressed in the above paragraph. The common theme amongst them is that society does exert its influence on people and that some of these influences create greater vulnerability to depression. Their concerns include excessive materialism, secularism and individualism. There are also concerns about Western colonialism and patriarchy. Ultimately these participants are noticing societal influences that can create division and fragmentation from competition, hierarchy, and political-economic inequity. It suggests that as a group they all share a belief that personal depression could be exacerbated or created by oppressive contextual conditions. However they tended to argue that oppressive contextual conditions creates vulnerabilities that could lead to depression rather than depression itself. Their perceptions reflect awareness about multiple causes for depression that is discussed in the next chapter.

Conclusions

The participants have provided the reader with an understanding of their world as counsellors and individuals. Their descriptions of what is important to them form a sense of what these participants have noticed in their worlds and what has concerned them about their work and this study. The interview process has begun to uncover that their personal and professional lives are connected and important in understanding who they are and the nature of their work. The next chapter will put their viewpoints and concerns into the context of their beliefs and values to further understand their spiritual world and their understanding of the depressed before looking at what they do in their practices with the depressed.

CHAPTER 6

CLARFIYING PARTICIPANT PERSPECTIVES

Introduction

In the previous chapter, the background training, personal accounts and counselling knowledge and experience were explored to give the reader some understanding of personal and professional profiles and counselling views. These aspects represent the participants' understanding of their counselling world and influences on their counselling practice. The previous chapter provides the reader with a look at their worldviews and provides personal and professional insights into counselling, spirituality, and depression. The current chapter investigates the participants' beliefs and values regarding spirituality, their professional counselling knowledge and understanding about depression, and their views about the impact that spirituality has on assisting the depressed in counselling. These areas are described in the following sections in terms of each participant's spiritual perspectives, causes of depression, spirituality's capacity to assist people, spirituality's capacity to assist the depressed in counselling, spirituality's limitation in helping the depressed and a conclusion.

Spiritual Perspectives

Spiritual perspectives reflect a significant part of one's belief system and reflect a pattern that may be congruent with values. During the interviews, each of the participants were encouraged to provide a perspective of their spirituality as each view will provide a greater understanding and relevance of its potential in helping the depressed within counselling. The following paragraphs establish connections of spirituality to counselling and depression by clarifying each participant's spiritual perspective.

The discussion to follow provides a glimpse of the participants' spiritual views that underpins their spiritual perspectives. There is a range of views that include spirituality in relation to the concept of god, sacredness intertwined with feminism and political action, Christianity and Christian humanism and Maori culture. These perspectives also highlight a variety of spiritual connections to self, others and the transpersonal for these participants and clarify some differences between them about important meaning taken from their cultural heritages. It is clear from these diverse accounts of spirituality that they obtain great strength from their spiritual beliefs.

Margo emphasises that her spirituality relates to the concept of God, which can be envisioned in many ways and located in many forms. For her, the spiritual is the immediate and tangible in a person's life as well as the inexplicable and beyond the physical. She says, "God for me is women, is crone, is man, it's spiritual, it's cloud, it's rock, depending on the situation, God changes." Margo believes that her sense of God includes others by having an open and unlimited sense of God's presence while embracing the divine views of others. She adds "she (God) is never imposed on another person whatever this person's spirituality is; it could be utterly different, it may be the goddess, it may be the earth, air, water, it doesn't matter." Her sense of God confirms her individual sense of power and responsibility that is immediate while integrating and respecting the unknown. However, it seems contradictory to her on occasion. This view is evident in the following: "My God is not somebody who takes away my responsibility or my inner authority, who imposes, it is a mystery element. I want to separate them and somehow want to bring them together." Margo's sense of spiritual mystery and respect for the infinite is something that can never be fully grasped. She finds a mystery element adds a sense of awe and humility toward the unknown and reminds her that others may experience God differently than she. The depth and breadth of this mystery called God is an important quality for Margo so that she is not limiting or self-centred in her understanding. She describes her position when asked by the researcher to define God:

> Yes, as soon as I hear the word definition I am horrified, only once you define you limit so I don't define God, God is bigger than, more than and going back to the immanence is fairly good image really. I can't define it really. If you put God in a box and define God I've made God in my likeness...

Sarah describes her spiritual perspective in terms of sacredness that is intertwined with feminism, political action, diversity and connection. She believes upholding connection as sacred within that diversity reflects a spirituality of wholeness and integration that can challenge fragmentation and division. She states that within diversity there is support and nurturing for everyone to evolve in their own way spiritually while connection and interconnection of the whole unify all things and provide a sense of commitment and caring toward one another. Sarah's connection is also very ecological in that the natural world is included in her spirituality as sacred and equal in value to humanity. Her spiritual perspective allows one to embrace what is inherent and diverse in both male and female images rather than creating a single image, which excludes the spiritual understanding of the others. In terms of a sacred power she believes that a multiplicity of images for goddesses allows for a more inclusive sense of sacredness in the world.

Sarah says her spirituality is also reflected in her political views, which are socialist. She feels socialism's emphasis on equality and non-hierarchy complements her spiritual sense that all are sacred and all human and non-human forms are of equal spiritual value and none ranked above the other in sacredness. Sarah's spirituality is not based on a transcendent Christian God as representing an otherworldly male divinity in the sky. Rather, it is earth-based and identifies with mother earth as a sustaining and nurturing being. Mother earth's presence pervades all things as an immanent spirit that interconnects all things into an evolving web of life. The linkage of her political and spiritual views is affirmed by her earth-based belief that the sacred is within earth, placing all things on earth as equal value and residing on the same sacred level. Connecting immanent spirituality to politics results in advocating for sustaining mother earth's web of life by being committed, caring and cooperative in our relationships with all sacred things and being active partners with mother earth in creating a sustaining and nurturing social, political and ecological world. Sarah

provides further clarity on her ideas of transcendence and her appreciation for immanence:

> ... transcendence often connects with Christianity, for example, the religion and spirituality that puts God in the spiritual up there somewhere, but to me it's about immanence. It's everywhere, it's here in the earth particularly... As you know, it's the earth, the wildness, it's nature, it can be up there, it can be me, I'm a goddess, it's all the elements and the elements are all around us... you can certainly associate goddess with earth, fire and water and the air... It's everywhere all around and within, the goddess. I am Goddess, you're God, it's in everybody and if we feel that, I think it's good for society in general.

Sarah, similar to Margo, is inspired by mystery. She finds that mystery coincides with a sense of magic about the earth, and its seasonal cycles. She finds that early European and indigenous cultures articulate many of her beliefs. These relate to living in harmony and balance with nature and celebrating seasonal periods such as the harvest and spring Equinox, which reaffirms mother earth's continued willingness to sustain and nurture us in her web. These cultures were and continue to be empowered through their rituals and attachment to the earth and frequently, in non-patriarchal societies, they displayed respect for the attributes of both men and women. Sarah also feels her spirituality, which she describes as neo-Pagan, works for her and she knows many women who have similar belief systems to her own but who find this sense of awe and connection with nature and people through various spiritual traditions including Christianity. Sarah says a crucial element in a person's spirituality is being free to find and create what works for them.

Eric describes his spirituality, which arises from a Christian perspective, as based on any relationship that affirms the spiritual through care, support, and commitment. He includes in these relationships the interactions within and with others, the environment and the numinous or transcendent that he refers to as God. He also feels that connection to one's history and ancestry is also a spiritual relationship. For Eric, spiritual relationships are typified by actively promoting justice, love and belonging and that for him none of these qualities should be excluded. He is able to draw upon many religions and spiritual traditions for his beliefs and feels that these traditions

give him important direction and clarification about the nature of spirituality. He embraces the efforts in all the great world religions to find and clarify the nature of a spiritual source and believes this journeying raises our awareness and expands our abilities to identify and be compassionate toward others. He says:

> There are different paths and different narratives, which try to make sense of that which are not easily explicable. But they get us beyond ourselves into broader issues of values and quality of life and humanity and sacredness and these sorts of concepts... central to those, today would be a fundamental sense of social justice.

Eric's spirituality has been predominantly influenced by the Christian biblical tradition, which directs him to identify with those who are vulnerable and suffering to help alleviate their difficulties without moralising. In this biblical tradition, his theological interpretation of the resurrection is that meaning and hope in life are possible from pain and suffering. He considers that his spirituality is part of everything that he does and therefore his spiritual practices extend to his workplace. Eric feels it is important to integrate one's spirituality into their work and that many perspectives on spirituality can be strengthened through attitudes of partnership and openness to cultural differences.

Thomas's spirituality is about being Maori and having a strong connection to his family, cultural heritage, and traditions. These aspects are intertwined and held together by his Maori beliefs and values. For Thomas, one's spiritual power is upheld by living according to these beliefs and values and this spiritual power is part of a much broader life force. The life force represents a spirit essence known as wairua that is pervasive in all things. The spirit is perceived as an active force that can impact the physical world and through one's spirit, Maori can explore and make meaningful contact in the spirit world. Contact with the spirit world is possible because the wairua is not limited by the body and is capable of travelling through time and space by an invisible cord attached to a person's puku or stomach. Travelling to the spirit world provides Maori with access to one's cultural heritage, ancestry and land.

Thomas says Western culture has reduced Maori understanding of their spiritual powers but he adds that many Maori today still know from personal experiences that these things are real and not imaginary. Thomas provides an example of Maori spirit involving dreams suggesting that a person's spirit is often active while we are sleeping and recounting our dreams is a recounting of one's spiritual activities during the night. The communication in the spirit world is not an extraordinary event but simply contacting what is alive and real for Maori. He describes the capacity of one's wairua:

> We have dreams and we dream about our Nanny coming to see us. And our wairua can see them. Our spiritual side of us is going on that unbreakable cord that stretches 25, 50, 100 miles and so on. We dream about the things that our wairua has done, it's been over there, it's talked to our Nan, it's been back to the dark world, or the other world on the other side and seen everybody. We say hey Mum, I had a dream last night. I dreamt Nanny came to see me. And we encourage our young ones to tell us about it.

Thomas presents his spirituality as intertwined with Maori culture, tradition and sacred practices, but not isolated from other cultures. He is respectful of the sacred practices from other traditions and cultures. For him going back into the early Maori ways, reminds him that Maori rituals toward the land have some commonality with other indigenous groups such as Native Americans who also value their connection to the land. To Thomas these connections are about survival and renewing one's strength that comes out of indigenous culture. Thomas also recognises Christianity in his spirituality and as a member of the Ratana church adopts some Christian practices and beliefs into his worldview. He says his spirituality is frequently centred on activities on his Marae. He says on his Marae, Christian leaders can be invited to perform ceremonies after someone has died and on these occasions, the Catholic and Maori cultural influences can work together and be enjoyed by Maori.

John's spirituality is based in the Christian tradition, which includes a belief in a broad caring power that is conceptualised as God. He says this caring power exists in the unfolding and developing universe. John finds the biblical story of Jesus also provides clarity about the values and goals of his spirituality. He suggests Jesus set an

example for Christians about treating others with care, respect and that he was active in helping those who suffered and fighting for justice. These things ultimately cost him his life but he remained forgiving and hopeful despite his ordeal. John describes his perspective in the following:

> My view of the world is influenced dramatically by my Christian faith. I have a view of the universe as being a friendly place, I have a view of the universe being in process and in development, I have a view that the word God, which is religious word language, refers to the over riding powers that exist within the universe. The second view that I take is that the person called Jesus, he had a view of life. The way he dealt with people and his relationship with people and the way he lived his life and the way he died in his life and the way he is as a person. This is extremely influential in relation to my understanding of the friendly powers in the universe.

Mike describes himself as a humanistic Christian. He also believes in God and the Christian teachings. The Christian perspective conveys a sense of ultimate authority that takes care of all people and deems all people as worthy and equal in this authority. Mike's humanistic link to Christianity suggests accepting responsibility and care towards other human beings as his equals and to act within his human power to help others who are in need or suffering. Mike distinguishes himself from the evangelical religious traditions that tend to convert people to their view. He does not impose his view on others nor sees a need to do this. He believes that individuals have a capacity to decide for themselves what they want and he has no authority to infringe upon someone's belief system. Mike says we live in a culture and society, which is permeated with spirituality, and people tend to form their own ideas about the subject, which may include rejection of spirituality.

In summary, the participants' spiritual perspectives revealed beliefs that are likely to have some influence on their work with the depressed. What surprised me in terms of their accounts was the powerful influence of Christianity amongst this group. Christianity either was a primary influence upon them or was a tradition that was significantly integrated with other meaningful beliefs such as humanism and Maori cultural beliefs. The exception to this was Sarah, who held neo-Pagan beliefs that

could be considered as drawing from pre-Christian views. She indicates in this section and in others about having problems with many Christian views that she sees as potentially divisive and hierarchical particularly to women. Despite Sarah's concerns about Christianity, her beliefs also include valuing the Christian beliefs of others and respecting the need for others to explore and find their own spirituality. Sarah's attitudes here are important to point out as they reflect attitudes that all of the participants expressed in many areas of the findings as crucial to using spirituality to help the depressed in counselling. This attitude is about respecting the clients' view.

Causes of Depression

Before establishing the potential of spirituality to help the depressed, clarification of participants' views of the causes of depression can give insight on whether spirituality in their view has a connection to depression. The participants, having substantial counselling experience with the depressed, were able to provide definite views about the causes of depression. These views begin to form a basis to discuss the relationship of depression to spirituality before evaluating its usefulness within counselling.

The participants' perception about the causes of depression is important in order to establish their links to the use spirituality in counselling to help. Their previous comments in Chapter Five was in terms of conditions that create vulnerability to depression. In this section, as a group, they say that subjective, relational and objective factors all need to be considered in terms of contributing to depression. As a group they are also very sensitive to multiple factors being considered in terms of holistic and interactive processes.

John believes there are many causes both internal and external to the individual that are linked to depression. He is critical of statements by people who suggest depression results from social problems or structural dilemmas only and of opinions that say it is not environmental but the misuse of personal resources and that the individual is to blame for their depression. He feels a comprehensive view of both the personal and social factors need to be investigated in understanding the causes of

depression. He generally feels that depression results from an interaction between social and personal conditions and that they may have initially started in either their personal or social life. John explains that some individuals despite having social stability seem more vulnerable to depression and can be viewed medically as having a chemical imbalance. However, if they are personally vulnerable and their social conditions are unfavourable then their depression is likely to be deeper. Alternatively, John feels that a stable person can become depressed if their social conditions become disruptive because these social conditions can impact upon them personally. Some of John's observations include that demographic change, family disruptions, natural environmental disasters and war can cause depression. He adds that there is still evidence that even with these causes some people do not become depressed despite being exposed to these conditions.

Sarah points out that there are lots of different types of depression. It can be related to abuse, past problems or life events, a chemical imbalance, misdirected anger, and a normal reaction to events. She agrees with John that some people seem more prone to depression than others. For example, people can put their bodies out of balance working too hard whereas others are not affected by the same circumstances. Sarah works with women and finds that many have been abused which fundamentally affects their self-esteem. For many of these women, they feel very negative about themselves inside, are fearful of expressing their feelings and have little hope. She believes that these conditions can have a major impact on a person and they can become depressed. Sarah also feels that in Western society the grieving process after death is inadequately supported by ritual and time constraints to take care of peoples' emotional needs. She feels the Maori approach to death that involves several days of mourning is more effective at helping people grieve. The consequence of the Western approach, says Sarah, is that unresolved grief may continue to be a problem for the individual years after the event.

Eric acknowledges the importance of situational or family crisis in precipitating depression but focuses primarily on contextual political issues as causal. He says that depression is the natural response to injustice in society. For example, not getting enough food and living in a damp house fundamentally affect one's health. He feels

that bringing about justice is fundamental to the therapeutic approach and although obvious is rarely recognised:

> But there is no doubt the sort of depressions that really concern me are the sort of structural things. People are forced to live in very unjust situations, poverty and just ongoing experiences of racism, ongoing experiences of sexism, heterosexism, and you know all these marginalisations which is extraordinarily unjust. I think they're just extremely depressing and they sap the motivation which of course then becomes part of the cycle which makes it so much harder for people in those situations to be able to succeed in the world that is set up against them anyway. On top of that, the depression leaks in and saps their motivation even when they are trying.

Eric's comments are worth pointing out because he has awareness about multiple causes to depression but chooses to focus on structural causes in his counselling his work. Eric indicates in other areas of this study that he feels counselling training and counsellors ignore structural factors in assisting the depressed. This view provides some insight into his more global understanding about causes of depression but despite this choosing to focus on structural concerns.

Margo says depression is related to nurturing, culture, and environment. It is not an either/or process. Some of these things can be described as lack of self-esteem and meaning and marginalization from abuse. She feels that people who have been abused and oppressed are forced to restrict their living and their life becomes more superficial and their self-esteem suffers. Margo works with women who have been particularly oppressed by patriarchy and the church and finds these people can become guilt ridden and this seriously impairs their ability to take care of themselves and to flourish.

Mike identifies that the depressed have lost hope, lack a sense of meaning, and do not have a sense of being able to change their situation. He believes it is more difficult when people come from very low incomes to change their situation and he sees the depressed response as natural under the circumstances. For him, if people lack hope it can relate to individuals who place responsibility for their relationships outside themselves and do not have a sense of personal agency. They are more likely to kill

themselves or someone else under these conditions. Mike says the depressed are not able to take responsibility for creating meaning in their life. He cites a case example where a depressed client decided there was no meaning in her life and wanted him to find the meaning for her. He was unable to do this and encouraged her to see this as her responsibility with him trying to facilitate the development of meaning. The client was unable to do this and remains depressed today. Mike finds in his work that family breakdown is a significant cause of depression. He speculates that people underestimate the capacity of family life to support people in their lives. His counselling contact with Maori families reminds him that their attachment to family reflects wisdom that family is a central social support and place of meaning for people:

> The connections to the family if you want to look at it from a European perspective are the issue of social support. But I think that there is a bigger issue. In traditional or in older societies they value the smaller collective whanau, iwi based, whatever level you want to expand it to as a way of getting meaning. As well, you talk about the meaning of life, lot of peoples' meanings relates to their families. When families break down they get depressed, they have lost the meaning of life... I think there is probably a little more validity than we care to acknowledge at times.

Thomas suggests that Maori related problems cause difficulties or even depression. In describing Maori related problems, Thomas uses an example of an individual who goes to the cemetery and kicks a family headstone and after leaving gets the flu or becomes sick. He says the help may involve a Tohunga who is a Maori healer. Thomas explains that each Tohunga has special power to heal regarding certain issues and types of problems. Maori healers derive their healing powers from their beliefs and ancestry. These powers need to be used wisely by Tohunga or anyone with a gift of seeing beyond oneself because if not used properly can result in hurting someone or themselves. Thomas explains that Maori related depressions can result from an individual grieving over the loss of a grandmother who has died twenty years ago. He says despite the passage of time the feelings can remain strong if spirit problems have remained unresolved. He explains that an injured spirit (wairua) may be related to difficulties from our past families that cause a breakdown in beliefs and values, which

in turn affects the gifts (taonga) handed down from their ancestors (tupuna). Thomas explains his views further:

> If my spiritual being is injured then my taonga is injured. If we need to fix my taonga I must first fix my wairua, that's an important part... how do we hurt that wairua, how did I hurt that spiritual being. I guess for me, it's a bit hard to say straight off, but for me, I am not talking again about Christianity, I'm talking about ... my wairua is about doing everything correct according to my beliefs and my values, especially the values of my ancestors. They are not my own, they've been handed down to me and they're mine to hand on.

Thomas states Maori related problems can arise because of a break in the connection to their land. If the land has been sold or taken from them years before then even if Maori are not aware of losing ancestral land the wairua can be injured. Some Maori who have lost touch with some of their beliefs and values may now confuse the concept of Maori wairua with adherence to Christian values and practices. Other complications for depressed Maori include the influences from Western medicine. He says Maori who are treated for depressions are often seen by psychiatrists that are unfamiliar with Maori culture. This can lead to the psychiatrist assessing the hearing of voices as simply mental illness. He believes Western medical specialists can help Maori who hear voices particularly if these voices are encouraging destructive behaviour but specialists need also to appreciate that a person can hear voices in response to one's wairua having contact with their ancestors. Thomas describes an example where cultural misunderstanding can potentially occur:

> Now you hear overseas psychiatrists come in and they say, "hello Tom, I see you've been hearing voices. Can you tell me about it?" "Oh, I was talking to my grandmother." "What did your grandmother say?" "Oh nothing she just came to tell me that now is the time to plant the kumaras." Now if he has an older person like that around him that remembers they might say, "That's good, it must be because his grandmother kept the time of the seasons and whether it was a good time to plant kumaras or not." And it highlights he's gone and talked to his grandmother.

The beliefs and values of the participants give us a deeper understanding about the participants' perceptions about the causes of depression. Their perceptions reveal that their collectively understanding is very comprehensive while on an individual basis there is a strong tendency to focus in specific areas. The tendency to focus on specific areas begins to appear related to their fundamental beliefs, values and interests in life. Some have chosen to identify primarily subjective or objective causes for example. They are all in agreement that relational factors are important to consider when investigating depression.

Spirituality's Capacity to Assist People

Before investigating spirituality's capacity to assist the depressed in counselling it is necessary to make some initial comments about spirituality's capacity in assisting people in general. Counsellors are usually embarking on specific therapeutic goals to assist clients and may use spirituality in the process. However, many of the participants' comments suggest that spirituality has a capacity to help that is not confined to the counselling context. Nonetheless, counsellors may consider these aspects as relevant to counselling or may apply these things in their work with clients despite their more universal implications. This section then outlines some of those broader aspects that the participants have noted as relevant to helping people in general.

Spirituality as a Unifying, Integrating and Sustaining Life-force

Several participants state that spirituality has value by being a pervasive presence existing in everyone and everything. This presence has an overriding power that sustains and interconnects all things. Awareness of this presence, whether called the divine, God, creation or web of life, functions as a primary source or force. This life-force is described as having the capacity to heal, create wholeness, and enhance belonging and strength. Its unifying tendency is also something that evokes a greater

sense of commitment in the world through spiritual journeying and expanded identity development and connection.

Some counsellors such as Margo, Sarah and Thomas feel this life-force encourages them to look at life holistically and to actively integrate mental, physical, emotional and spiritual components in their counselling work. The link of these components is based on a belief that greater health is achieved when these components exist in balance and harmony with one another. A unifying divine presence has also been described in Christian terms as creating an equality of sacredness with all things. Both Mike and John describe Christian teachings as a means of finding value, respecting others for their views and being part of something larger. John refers to the New Testament to support this idea on equality of worth and spiritual views:

> I mean very simple things that occur in the New Testament, which validates these things. That God has made of one blood of all the nations of the world, so that there is a unity to the human need. God reveals himself to people in all cultures and is a New Testament sort of emphasis. Therefore your religion may have got culturally adapted because of the way you have been brought up but that in itself is valid but it is not valid to impose that particular view on anybody else.

It is evident from the above comments that the participants are able to draw upon several different spiritual traditions to explain and support important beliefs. These are that we are all equally sacred and therefore are to be respected for who we are despite our differences. At the same time they believe that are all united by a spiritual presence that is very nurturing and healing and common to us all. They clearly have differences on how they define a spiritual presence but as a group they accept and respect that it can be defined in many different ways.

Spirituality and Belief Systems

Spirituality has also been described as part of a belief system that people can refer to in working through problems and finding meaning. Margo has applied this to her counselling and cites examples where having a spiritual view provides individuals

with the tools and strengths to face problems directly rather than rationalising or denying them. Mike also suggests that clients with spiritual beliefs are more resilient and have a means of locating meaning and purpose through difficulties. John has suggested these beliefs help access internal or external resources. The implications are that a spiritual belief system helps people get through obstacles in life.

Spiritual Awareness and Coping with Life

John believes that his Christian perspective has helped him to feel self-confidence to face whatever comes his way without excessive fear and intimidation. To him, this helps in engaging and integrating the unknown and not being afraid of uncertainties. John has learned from his own experiences that one's core views whether described as spiritual or not are an invaluable resource in guiding him to lead a fulfilling life. This personal awareness translates into a belief in this kind of resource in others. He finds that applying this spiritual knowledge to counselling helps to feel stable, accepting, and more confident with clients as they struggle with their difficulties. Eric shares a similar view to John regarding his spirituality. He feels his spiritual beliefs provide him with greater optimism about the world and individuals and that care, support and strength are available to assist one in working through difficulties. This optimism becomes an integral aspect for Eric to rely upon when working with clients in counselling who face enormous difficulties and to encourage their self-awareness of these possibilities of assistance.

Spirituality's Capacity to Assist the Depressed in Counselling

The above comments suggest that spirituality is considered relevant in helping people and that this understanding becomes integrated and used in counselling practice. The participants also believe that spirituality does have specific relevance to assisting the depressed and that the counselling context does impact the nature of spiritual awareness and how it is used in counselling. The participants suggest that

spirituality's capacity to help people can be added to the counselling process to help and for some participants their associated beliefs and practices in their spirituality are blended together and applied directly in counselling. These areas are discussed now in terms of empowerment, belonging and sacredness and specific beliefs, values and experiences relevant to the depressed.

Spirituality's Contribution to Empowerment, Belonging, and Sacredness

The participants have made several comments relating to concepts of empowerment, belonging and sacredness in one's internal and external dimensions of life as essential in assisting the depressed. These three concepts are very important in terms of their role in enhancing the values of inclusiveness, self-determination, diversity and connection and their ability to relieve the vulnerabilities of devaluation and powerlessness with the depressed. These themes will be presented in the following paragraphs.

The following participant comments indicate that they all share a strong belief in the value of spiritual empowerment, belonging and sacredness to assist the depressed. In describing their views below it also points out that these areas can be understood very differently depending on the participants' outlook. However, even in their differences they tend to identify that partnership is needed with clients to clarify commonality, differences and encourage clients to be self-determining.

John feels that empowerment and belonging are fundamental needs for human beings that can become challenged when a person is depressed. Counselling often focuses on talk-therapy, which John feels is insufficient therapy for clients who suffer from major depression. He believes they need to feel empowered by doing something different, being active and involved with others. This may include taking walks, joining a group or starting a hobby. John says being part of a community also provides a sense of belonging and social support. He believes it is vital to be a member of a group where you are known and respected and can celebrate certain rituals with that group at certain times. Organised religion does help some people to feel that they belong but they can also be excluded by these organisations if they do

not meet their criteria. John says overall that one's spiritual beliefs, family and sense of community provide people with resources that reduce isolation and loneliness that accompany depression.

Margo believes that connecting to a divine dimension enhances self-determination, personal responsibility and inclusiveness in her practice. She creates rituals of belonging by connecting with the divine within and beyond oneself with her clients to relieve the pain of grief. Her sense is that empowerment, belonging and sacredness are all by definition synonymous with how she would describe the divine. Mike also expresses this perspective. He believes that empowerment, belonging and sacredness are all important to the depressed. His spiritual beliefs are important not only in sustaining himself but in keeping focused on human needs and values for all people rather than values that devalue some in society. Mike says that he is empowered by his Christian beliefs and it gives him all he needs in terms of his relationship with all people. These Christian beliefs also direct him to perceive everyone as sacred and to respond in a human way to those who may be suffering. This is despite a society that seems to place more value on those with material success. He explains:

> I think, that our society says that what we earn or our economic or social economic position is what counts... I think that a sense of spirituality, the humanness we all have in common, for me outweighs if we have a full wallet or an empty wallet. I try very hard not to buy into the world's criteria or success model. Instead I prefer being grounded in what is a clinical humanistic Christian model and none of those things are about economic prosperity.

Mike believes there is a spiritual power that comes from God, which sustains people. He believes God has the ultimate authority with this spiritual power and that his part in this power is to express it in a human way to help others. This means in his counselling he has no power over anyone else and one's spiritual power is a basis to take responsibility for oneself. As a counsellor, he helps people to become aware of their power that they can use to achieve what they need and that its connection to a loving God or something greater can give a sense of belonging in people's lives. He says they can be empty without this. "People need to be agents of their own lives. They need to belong. From a spiritual point of view, I think that comes into the issues

of responsibility, as I believe God gives us that." Mike says he is careful about this concept of power and does not perceive himself as having some special power above others or does not try to cast himself as anything more beyond his counselling role.

Sarah believes that empowerment, belonging and sacredness are important to the depressed. She describes empowerment in terms of relationships with people and nature that reflect equality and sharing of resources and actively remove community obstacles that create isolation and loneliness. She believes that power-within and power-with rather than power-over others and nature are central to human health. Sarah states that her view of healthy communities may sound like political and structural analysis but she believes it follows from a spiritual belief of the sacredness of all things. It is an argument she notes that fits very well with spiritual feminism where spirituality and social transformation are complementary.

Sarah states the depressed can feel isolated and lonely and need a sense of belonging. In her group work with women she finds that the group itself can become an important place of safety and belonging for them. This seems to be created by hearing stories from the group participants about one another's lives and a willingness to express themselves in an open and honest manner. Sarah's comments about the importance of belonging seem to be enhanced by the dynamics of equality, sharing, and respect within the group process. The beliefs and values suggested here are not restricted to social groups for Sarah but include a desire for similar conditions at the community level. She says that her spiritual and political ideas impact all relationships and thereby commit her to working for greater levels of harmony within counselling and at the community level and beyond. Sarah describes her position:

> ... the sort of society that I want is to strengthen community. You could call me a socialist as well. A lot of aspects of socialism I don't agree with, but certainly I believe in everyone sharing the resources and that is a recognition that not everyone can put in as much as others and we all have our different contributions. There are a lot of contributions in life that are not recognised in terms of status... I support leaning towards a more sharing and more caring society and I'd love to have a non-violent society and I see that as a really long journey.

Thomas believes everyone has his or her own power that is spiritually centred and this is to be respected. He understands this power for himself and many other Maori as based on beliefs, values, and practices. This spiritual power is collectively built and reinforced through connection to land, family, ancestors and the spirit world. Thomas says many of these important connections for Maori have been lost from movement away to urban centres or through losing their traditional land. One's power, sacredness and belonging are always there but become weaker through these changes. A person cannot give another person a sense of being sacred, powerful or that they belong. It is a reality in itself but is realised by abiding with Maori practices. Thomas says the marae for Maori still operates as a meeting place to celebrate their beliefs and participate in rituals like the tangi and plays an important role in retaining and strengthening Maori culture that assist Maori in realising that they are spiritual beings.

Eric strongly endorses empowerment, connection, partnership and sacredness in one's inner and outer dimensions of living to enhance self-determination and create social justice. He frequently describes these things in terms of liberation, belonging and sacredness. The term liberation is important to him because he believes there are many contradictions at the personal, social and community level that have provided a sense of sacredness and belonging but are not particularly liberating. Eric explains that, on the one hand, community or family environments need to be accepting, safe and enriching to benefit from connection. If people feel isolated and really want to be part of a community then those environments are very beneficial. However, some people may want less connection than others given their experiences. For example, people who have been abused in their lives may see safety as getting away from family, community or certain individuals and suggesting that we should all be mixing together would be harmful to those people. Eric says these people may be at a certain stage in their lives or know from first hand experience that one's community or family has been terrorising. These people are likely to experience something described as belonging and sacred as not liberating. Eric says that empowerment, belonging and sacredness all need to be present in counselling to deal with the contradictions and to ensure that client best interests are being served.

In exploring the participants views about spirituality's contribution in helping the depressed in counselling it was apparent they felt that spirituality could enhance a

sense of empowerment, belonging and sacredness. Each of the participants frequently referred to these themes in reference to their particular kind of counselling work. For example John discusses these terms of family and involvement with community, while Margo looks at in terms of an inner divine. Sarah's view unlike the other participants identified subjective, relational and objective realities in terms of empowerment, belonging and sacredness. Balancing these three areas may be related to her explicit emphasis of linking her spirituality to social action. Sarah is also the one person who least identifies with being a counsellor. Eric also pointed out that in helping the depressed that spirituality could be undermined if it enhances belonging and sacredness while retaining disempowering elements. These comments indicate that there are many spiritual dimensions to consider in helping the depressed and that empowerment, belonging and sacredness are need together to promote the most optimum conditions to help.

Beliefs, Values and Experiences Relevant to the Depressed

In investigating the needs of the depressed, the participants have identified a number of factors that are specifically important in helping the depressed. They reflect the participants' knowledge of spirituality's connection to counselling the depressed. These factors include the importance of meaning, hope, and core beliefs, spiritual and non-spiritual transcendent experiences, and connection to a divine dimension.

Eric, John, Sarah and Mike all believe that having hope is an important ingredient in helping the depressed. Mike says the depressed go through a process of losing hope and that it may precipitate people re-examining their sense of meaning and belonging. For him, finding a means of renewing hope is essential and this often involves a revitalisation of one's spirituality. Eric believes spirituality operates from hope. For him, spirituality is reflective of a worldview where hope can flourish or can be renewed. Therefore, for Eric, the counselling process needs to reflect a spiritual hopefulness in a sensitive and caring manner when working with the depressed. Eric explains:

> I mean the spirituality helps me in this way. First of all, I find a lot of hope and belief in situations where people feel hopeless. Now that has got to be handled really carefully because that can be arrogant too, that has to be taken into account... But indeed in the whole therapeutic process you must be a purveyor of hope. Hope is the way out of depression. I am absolutely convinced of that. Depression is at one end and hope is at the other.

Margo says the divine dimension is a powerful means of connecting with an essential core within the individual and that this core resonates with the external divine. Together the divine guides and provides strength and belonging. However, the internal divine is what gives us our unique purpose, direction and activation in life. Margo feels societal conditions discourage a connection or even an awareness of this internal dimension and that the depressed often seem out of touch or have been unable to locate this internal dimension. Therefore, the depressed need help in their journeying or ordeals to find this inner truth and not to devalue themselves when in their discoveries this reality does not meet with societal expectations.

John says that one's worldview has a foundational core set of beliefs and values. These beliefs are important in understanding where our meaning and direction are to be found. He has noticed that one's core beliefs are usually significantly challenged or have collapsed when a person is depressed. He says, for example, that core beliefs that have worked effectively in the past seem to be in doubt when depression deepens and extends over time. These conditions occur irrespective of whether one has been religious or nor prior to the depression. Spirituality then plays a key role in a counselling process in that these core conditions have a spiritualised significance to people. A person who recovers from depression usually finds that their core conditions have been altered, revitalised or replaced. A counsellor can help the depressed with a spiritual awareness by engaging and facilitating these needed changes with the depressed client.

John's comments above point to an important area in these research findings. These findings indicate that there are many barriers to using spirituality in counselling and also that spirituality has possibilities of engaging an untapped potential with the depressed. These strengths and weaknesses relate to a perception that spirituality represents a part of a core set of beliefs and values. Therefore counsellors need to be

realistically careful in ensuring that they do not impose their fundamental beliefs and values on the client. However, given the potential benefit of spirituality to the depressed, counsellors may also need to be alert that they do not miss opportunities to help when being careful. John also briefly indicates in the next paragraph that transcendent experiences can also help the depressed. This is an important connection that is strongly supported in the literature. Given that there was only minimal comment made about this area other than John's, I discuss the discrepancy in findings between the participants and literature in more detail in Chapter Eight.

Depression can also be a springboard, says John, for transcendent experiences. He says transcendent experiences can be spiritually oriented or not but are marked by a fundamental emotional and intellectual shift for a person that changes their life. Transcendent experiences help people to see and understand things differently and transcend their limitations. John's own transcendent experiences occurred when he was a very young man and this has taught him of their value. Given the different orientations of clients he feels that these experiences are described in various spiritual and non-spiritual ways. Despite these differences, the counsellor can appreciate their importance to the client by validating their potential for inspiring awe and mystery about life.

Overall, the above section is important to this research in that it strengthens the argument that spirituality is very much part of beliefs and values and enhances meaning and hope. Its connection to beliefs and values also underscores that what is spiritual to some people may be defined as organised non-spiritual beliefs and values for others.

Limitations of Spirituality to Help in Counselling

The participants have provided several factors in counselling that potentially assist the depressed client. However, to continue to maintain the best therapeutic interests of the clients also means being aware of what not to do or what to safeguard against. These

following comments also reflect ongoing self-evaluations of their counselling as they proceed in their respective fields.

Contextual Factors and Competitive Belief Systems

One of the significant limitations of spirituality to helping the depressed is that behaviour and conditions that improve the quality of life for people do not always accompany spiritual beliefs and values. This is outlined in the next paragraph and the quote below. Together they suggest that life-affirming beliefs and values associated with spirituality are needed to insure that behaviour actively supports conditions that improve people's lives.

Despite the potential of spirituality to assist the depressed, Eric states that there are no simplistic equations of improvement for the depressed from spirituality. He believes it is the liberating and hopeful values and beliefs associated with spirituality that determines its potential in assisting people and people's willingness to put aside their own human needs to live up to these values and beliefs. Otherwise, his experiences teach him that what passes for spirituality can become oppressive if it is associated with judgmental and excluding conditions. He also feels that there are limitations in helping the depressed within counselling given contextual factors imposed on the client. These contextual factors which limit choice and access to resources include power differences, societal prejudices and economic inequities and dominant values that justify greed, oppression and non-sharing. He says:

> There are huge issues between women and men, between cultures that
> are dominating, cultures that are dominated, between rich and poor,
> between gay and straight people, there are huge differences in access to
> resources and it is getting those accesses fair.

Eric feels that contextual factors exist related to gender, culture, economy and sexual identity that are part of a depressed person's objective spiritual world and are limiting their well-being.

Spirituality's Potential to Exclude and Devalue

Spirituality can harm the depressed in counselling when beliefs and practices come into counselling that are excluding and devaluing. The participants all expressed concerns about these kinds of beliefs and practices and felt that they are present in some counselling environments.

Sarah's own experience with organised religion was that it could be elitist and judgmental toward others. She found that a Christian patriarchal God represented as a divine male figure above her was excluding. The image of a patriarchal God limited her connection to other spiritual traditions, women and nature and gave her little sense that she could be active in developing her own spiritual images and practices other than those prescribed by the Christian tradition. Margo is also concerned with spirituality that excludes others, and has found it prevalent in spiritual environments that only recognise a feminist Goddess or patriarchal God. Margo's strongest criticism is toward fundamentalist Christian theology that to her is dictatorial and devalues non-fundamental spiritual views. John has found that some organised religions do exclude people who do not adhere to particular beliefs. Eric believes spirituality needs to be associated with values of love and justice to enhance our sense of connection and partnership and equality with one another. However, he says that Christianity can take the divine as otherworldly and set itself up to be more divine than other spiritual traditions. This excludes the everyday physical world as spiritual and creates an inequality regarding what is most sacred. Thomas believes that Western spiritual ideas are beneficial but can be imposed or insensitively applied to the spiritual needs and beliefs of Maori. For Mike, spirituality becomes problematic when counsellors present their beliefs as more correct than the clients'.

Participant Limitations in Helping the Depressed

The participants have indicated that there are some non-spiritual and spiritual limitations in assisting the depressed in counselling. These limitations need to be included to provide further clarity in relation to spirituality's potential in counselling.

The participants say there are limitations in helping the depressed if their spiritual perspectives do not match well with the clients. Sometimes counselling knowledge and cross-cultural understanding are also not sufficient to work with particular clients. In these cases, the counsellor needs to face his or her limits and possibly refer the client on to a more suitable practitioner. Sarah says the counsellor cannot know everything and that the unknown is present in life and although it can inspire us it is also a reminder that many things are still beyond our understanding. Mike says his limitation in helping the depressed relates to the social causes of depression such as the lack of proper food and shelter. He frequently refers people to the Salvation Army whom he sees as a very good place that provides a good community service and tries to maintain a good working relationship with facilitate future referrals. John believes his Christian faith, worldview and assumptions are culturally specific and therefore not suitable to many clients. His counselling is also short-term which means the more seriously depressed person may need more counselling time than he provides in his practice. Therefore, referring the more seriously depressed client onto more long-term practitioners or agencies is a necessity. Thomas says the biggest limitation in his work with Maori is that many health specialists are unfamiliar with the importance that the culture plays in Maori health. He therefore must spend time educating other specialists or advocating for Maori practices. He notes that many Western specialists need contact with indigenous people to develop cultural sensitivity.

Conclusions

In this section, the participants have provided in greater detail their views about spirituality, depression and counselling. It is important to have established these perspectives to be able to link them with what the participants do in their counselling practice. I have also found that in clarifying the descriptions about spirituality, counselling and depression that there is evidence of a range of different views about their understanding and emphasis regarding one's personal interaction with others and the larger world. The next section explores the counselling practice adopted by each participant. This increases the capacity to begin making links about commonalties and differences between the participants counselling approaches and to clarify a diversity of ways that spirituality potentially could assist the depressed and help the counsellor working with them.

CHAPTER 7

IDENTIFYING COUNSELLING PRACTICES

Introduction

The participants' counselling practices are outlined in this chapter. It provides an opportunity to connect participants' belief systems with his or her counselling practice. From this it is possible to further clarify my research questions. It may also identify whether there is continuity in counselling practice with their professional and personal influences in counselling. These links strengthen a view that beliefs, values and knowledge do affect the counselling work of the participants and that patterns do exist with one's counselling perspective, spiritual counselling approach and understanding of themes and issues about spirituality and depression in counselling. In this regard, the sections in this chapter include the participants' approaches, counselling styles, skills and techniques, and conclusions.

Therapeutic Approaches

The approaches of each of the six participants are profiled in the next section. Their explanations further clarify how they would help the depressed using spirituality within their counselling approach. The first participant to be profiled is John. He values client self-reliance, respect for their worldviews and community and family connection in is approach. He also believes these areas are enhanced by spirituality.

John describes his counselling as a comprehensive approach in dealing with personal and social factors related to depression. It is Rogerian-based, client-centred and non-directive counselling. He specialises in short-term work and his goal is to maximise self-reliance with the client. John explains that as a counsellor his self-reliance goal involves working with the family to find what they need for themselves, what they need to do with others and to answer their questions. He is respectful of client

worldviews, beliefs and ethics and works within their worldview to show them how contradictions might be emerging and how they may be damaging in their relationships. He says clients need to find ways of changing that are consistent with their worldviews. John believes that counselling is not an end in itself and requires affiliation to others that might assist in the problem. His work with families where depression is evident indicates that further outside help may be necessary. For example, a general practitioner may be asked to look at possible biological causes of depression and could suggest the use of medication as part of the treatment. John's counselling approach is connected to his theology by his belief in a pervasive force that he calls God, which touches all things and is a resource for everyone and values all views. This theological perspective also encourages him to work holistically and comprehensively by God's interconnective nature with all things.

John values connection, which is supported by his theological position, but he also acknowledges the importance of differences that need to be considered between people. He credits the women's movement as bringing this awareness to society over the last several decades. He says feminists have raised awareness about male/female relationships and the extent that male power has harmed the world for women. However, he perceives differences as potentially creating divisiveness within the women's movement such as between Marxists and radical feminists. The splits that he notes here are part of what he sees as a much larger tendency within society to fragment. His spiritual belief in valuing all views means engaging and respecting differences and participating in conflicts but without creating fragmentation. Conflict, for John, is to be valued but it needs to be conflict that does not exclude or alienate people. He, therefore, tries to work constructively with conflict without excluding people's views or positions and does not use the opportunities or vulnerabilities within conflict situations to create unnecessary turmoil. John's comments about conflict reflect his inclusive approach to counselling by not privileging one factor exclusively over another when analysing and counselling. He explains this philosophy and theory used in counselling:

> I didn't use a class analysis to understand why the Maori are the way
> they are, I didn't use ethnic analysis to understand why class is less
> important, I didn't use gender as the solely clarifying thing. These
> tended to be from my point of view... tended to be components that
> are important in some circumstances and less important than in others,
> but I wasn't prepared to privilege one of those.

In summary, John's approach is primarily focused on personal and social factors related to depression and this indicates the spiritual dimensions that are likely to receive primary attention in his counselling. The above quote also reveals John's awareness about many social and ideological points of view that can be considered in counselling. He seems to incorporate these views while ensuring that he is flexible in utilising what understanding best fit a given situation.

The next participant profiled is Thomas. He identifies the importance of culture in his work. Accordingly cultural beliefs and values are very prominent in his approach.

Thomas works entirely with Maori of all age groups that are referred to him in the health system. His approach is substantially oriented towards Maori beliefs, values and practices. As already stated, he sees his approach as spiritually based, family-centred and holistic. Many of the problems he works with are described as Maori problems in that they arise out of difficulties in abiding by Maori cultural practices and difficulties between Maori and Pakeha culture. Thomas says that in treating a problem, whether depression or cancer, means not discounting any parts of a person's being, whether that is physical, emotional, mental or spiritual. He says a problem may come from all over and a lot of things. He explains "you can't just heal something in the mind. When a person is mentally ill it's not just thoughts or in the mind, maybe in the body too." Thomas approaches problems in a circular way, not in a direct way, which he believes, can offend or confine one's point of view. He looks at the broader picture that may involve the family, outside relationships and larger cultural connections including family associations with their church organisations. He says when all these relationships are investigated, the problem may be picked up without directly asking about it.

Thomas also describes using the Powhiri model developed by a Maori educator in the drug and alcohol field that emphasises a circular and multi-causal approach to

counselling. He says the model is very holistic and generic in its approach so that it can be applied to a range of illnesses including depression. Thomas also works in conjunction with the medical model, which may alleviate problems through the use of medication for Maori. He may be called in to see if there are any Maori issues that need to be addressed given that he is recognised for this expertise. He would then talk to families and would advise a medical team if he felt there were Maori issues related to a person's depression. Thomas states that being successful in his work often reduces the reliance on medication for depressed Maori and the beneficial effects can be long lasting. His work involves actively reflecting Maori beliefs and values. An important part of this is discovering who you are and where you come from. One's land, ancestral and family heritage is an essential part of identity but also a means of bonding between Maori. The bonding is stronger than a simple connection because of the seriousness and sacredness that this belonging has for Thomas and many of his clients. Thomas describes this bonding process:

> For me it is when we sit down and talk...when you greet them... I might say to you, translating it in Maori, "Oh greetings, you've come in, I don't know who you are. I know you're the family of this particular person that I'm seeing, and you know who I am"... I would say roughly with you I stand on the highest pinnacle of my sacred mountain and give its name. I look out in the wild yonder and I see the sparkling waters of my river...I'm telling you the name of the river... And then I would give the hapu or the sub-tribe that my whanau belongs to... you know where I come from in Maoridom. The name where you come from is the main point of who you are, because you've established who you are by declaring who your hapu is. So you say to me your hapu is and straight away I am sitting here listening to you... Straight away you start bonding.

Thomas makes a strong argument for cultural knowledge being essential in his counselling approach. For him, his work with Maori is holistic and relational. He also indicates that establishing identity in counselling, which is less individualised is very important in order to connect with clients and perhaps work out differences. Thomas's work challenges the notion that generic trained counsellors can adequately deal with cross-cultural counselling situations unless they have in-depth knowledge about that cultural group.

The next participant is Eric. He chooses to investigate primarily on structural issues in his counselling approach. He places a strong emphasis on what he describes as liberation counselling and considers spirituality to be an important ingredient that strengthens liberation.

Eric says his approach promotes the creation of fairness and justice. His approach focuses on adding to what he sees is missing from most therapeutic approaches, which is working with disadvantaged groups, creating gender equity, and helping the poor. Eric says that in therapy it is important that people leave sessions realising they are not the authors of conditions that result from unjust situations. This approach emphasises that the disadvantaged are part of a group of people in society who, as a result of unjust processes and structures, are victimised. They are victim survivors of these unjust situations and he commits himself to work with them at a personal, interpersonal and societal level to eliminate the injustice. If someone is depressed and psychotic they may need medication but they also need to get at underlying issues and address them.

Eric's commitment to disadvantaged families goes beyond his counselling work by becoming active in the community. He considers that advocating for structural changes in society that disadvantage the poor is part of the therapeutic endeavour and reflects a fuller commitment to family well-being. This approach means the depressed are not treated as failures and issues such as abuse that might be related to depression are considered at the personal/interpersonal level and linked, where relevant, to societal conditions that are also contributing to this depression. This perspective frees the individuals from excessive self-blame. Eric says it is improving conditions at all levels, whether at the behavioural or external social justice level, that is important and he stresses that the interconnection of belonging, sacredness and liberation taken together are optimal in enhancing well-being. He clarifies the connection of his counselling approach that incorporates contextual issues into the therapy through the following:

...Part of that process would be exposing injustices, helping people to create new meanings, we use a lot of metaphor... The goal of therapy is to get people to understand any injustice that they are subject to because that is very depressive making. That doesn't mean they then have to become activist to work against. I mean some choose to, many don't, but at least they know they are not to blame which is absolutely crucial for good health and, secondly, that we think it's really important that the agency that is providing the support is known to be working on those issues. So when they are telling their stories no one is breaking their personal confidences but we're taking their stories seriously.

As indicated above, Eric's counselling encourages story telling which describes the narrative approach. Narrative therapy is useful in addressing a variety of cultural and personal factors by looking at meaning and transforming problematic meaning. Eric describes some of these aspects in his use of narrative therapy when he says that people have " problem webs of meaning." He says that the meaning that has been created can be problematic and the task of the counsellor is to be able to enter into a conversational process with the client, group, or family. The goal is to help facilitate new meaning that is liberating, hopeful and increases self-determination.

For Eric, a significant aspect of meaning in narrative therapy is spiritual meaning. He says spirituality is an important aspect of therapy because it is about meeting greater potential within our self. For Maori and Pacific Island people, the focus is specifically spiritual, holistic and communal and they emphasise transcendental experiences, curses, mauri mate, and blessings of protection and body-soul connection. He finds Pakeha are less spiritually inclined and tend to separate physical and mental things and have more individual concepts of worth, identity and more individual concerns about strengths such as assertiveness. Eric says there are commonalties between Samoan and Maori regarding an emphasis on communalism, which differs from a more individualist emphasis for Pakeha. However, for Eric, justice and fairness in therapy are not about saying one is better than the other but focusing on each cultural group to determine their own connections and working with models and counsellors that will best reflect the client's perspectives.

Eric's counselling approach adds support to the literature about contextual factors being important in affecting people on a personal level. His approach suggests that

oppressive conditions do create negative internal conditions for individuals and therefore his counselling involves consciousness raising about these links and helping people to be free of self-blame. Working with client meaning and finding positive spiritual meaning can be an important part of his work. Similar To Thomas, Eric indicates that cultural awareness is important for counsellors. This awareness helps them clarify individual or communal identity development and client connection.

Sarah's counselling approach is integrated with her ecofeminist and neo-pagan spiritual beliefs. These beliefs combine to encourage her to focus on women's issues in counselling and to address subjective, relational and objective spiritual realities.

Sarah says her approach has been influenced by an emphasis on respecting diversity and connection with all things human and non-human. This is best clarified for her by ecofeminist writers who emphasise the importance of relationships based on care and cooperation at all human and non-humans levels and a knowledge that is embedded in these relationships. Sarah believes that ecofeminists are also guided by the natural environments that have evolved through diversity within a connected web of life that is sustained by harmony rather than domination between the elements within the web. Ecofeminism supports the non-dualistic spiritual and guardian aspirations of cultures connected to the earth as this fundamentally supports us all. Sarah's approach to counselling links diversity and connection within a client-centred, psychodynamic and feminist perspective that enables her to develop a comprehensive and egalitarian approach.

Sarah uses a holistic empowerment model when working with the depressed regarding immediate and deeper issues. One particular model she has used that incorporates the depressed involves an investigation into various feeling patterns and whether their presence is likely to lead to depression, oppression or expression for people. Sarah finds these concepts are helpful for women who have been abused, go through periods of depression, and need to work through strong emotional reactions from this abuse. She feels that depression can result from oppressive conditions and that unexpressed anger from oppressive conditions also can lead to further depression. Her work involves validating and supporting women in finding a way through their feelings and to challenge dominating patriarchal conditions in their internal and

external lives.   Sarah sees significant evidence that women need to challenge patriarchal structures in the counselling process because of the substantial number of women who have been abused by men and also by women. This abuse becomes a significant barrier to their recovery. She explains:

> We are responding to what feels to be there, there is so much childhood abuse and hurt and being stuck with it... so we are working with what's there really.   When we went into it, it was not like this is what we are going to do, it kind of evolves with what the women are talking about and we do work on the present.   Supporting women in their present lives and with people making life difficult for them, knowing they have an eating disorder and treating them in a certain way, talking about that, so it is the present and the past and feelings, just a whole lot.   A lot of it is going back into what's affected them, and there is lot of abuse, including sexual abuse.

Sarah says her approach also emphasises partnership and equality between the counsellor and clients and connection with one another through the sharing of stories. She says the importance is placed on the relationships as being nurturing and compassionate. Spiritually, the person is a sacred and special person to affirm, empower, and befriend in a warm and non-judgemental manner. These counselling conditions encourage risk taking, self-disclosure and honesty; recognise the differences and respect them; and encourage the feeling of belonging with women. Sarah believes these interactions can illustrate that people have many things in common, which reduces the feeling of isolation often associated with depression. She explains the counsellor's part in this process:

> There is an element of sharing of ourselves by telling our own stories to a certain extent.   There's not so much of a hierarchy of them and us. We share our struggles in the group.   We're there to be professional and not be a friend outside of the group, but without a hierarchy as a facilitator.

Sarah's approach also resonates with themes presented by Thomas and Eric about the importance of counsellor awareness and capacity to connect with clients. With Sarah

the connection is based primarily on gender. She suggests a strong connection is needed in counselling to establish a trusting relationship and to be able to explore client issues in-depth.

The next person profiled is Margo. She identifies the power of the divine to provide connection, guidance and healing in her approach.

Margo explains that a significant part of her counselling approach is facilitating self-determination, belonging and transcendent experiences within an inclusive spiritual perspective. Her spirituality and working with spirituality is an essential part of her practice but she does not try to set limits on the understanding of the divine to only her view. For example, she cites a specific case and refers to the client's sense of the divine as a source of creation in the cosmos and that her work involves full acceptance of this understanding rather than describing the divine in her terms. She says "if the cosmos of creation is her God so to speak or whatever, it doesn't have to be my Christianity." Margo describes her spiritual values as empowering to her and connecting with a true sense of self. This approach is evident in her counselling. She helps the clients explore their spiritual values that strengthen and connect with something fundamental. During her discussions with the researcher, a metaphor arose that fit with the exploratory and journeying orientation in her counselling. She says, "It's just like an image that has come to mind. I see myself very much as a midwife and facilitating the birth of this real person, or the rebirth of this real person, not creating a new person. It's allowing this person to be." Margo says respect for the unknown during discovery is essential. The unknown can best be described as an appreciation of mystery, which the researcher reflected back to the participant during this discussion. She agreed that mystery was very important to her. She says:

> I am smiling, because mystery is my word. There is very much an element of mystery. And for me I believe that the spiritual journey, I see this in my clients too, is that sort of learning to let go the control, learning to let go the unknown and learning to live with the mystery. We don't have to know everything and we don't have to control everything. So it's accepting the fact that I thought I had no control. So it's the paradox again, like I'm responsible and yet there are things that I have no control over.

Margo's discovery and awareness orientation to an inner reality is client-centred. It emphasises many Jungian concepts and processes that she considers are spiritual in nature. These concepts and processes include a collective unconsciousness, synchronicity, archetypes, integrating shadow elements of the psyche and using the Myers-Briggs personality profile based on Jung's research. Another important aspect to her approach is that she does not impose her view on others but works only with those clients that are comfortable with her spiritually oriented counselling. Margo says it is important that she is honest and open with potential clients about the nature of her work but also realises that many come to her specifically looking for her perspective. She explains her thoughts on this subject:

> It's very much client-centred ... What the presenting issues are. When people come, I make it very clear to them that I am coming from a spiritual base and it is my deep-seated belief. I don't impose that in any way, but they need to know that is part of who I am. Normally people who come to me are people who are looking for that approach. I would be very up-front about that right from the beginning and I would talk about the way I work, the skills I had and which style I'm using. I might contract for a few months and see if that is meeting their needs and take it from there.

Margo works primarily with a spiritual approach in her counselling. She is aware that being identified as a spiritual counsellor poses problems or creates a reaction for some people. Her quote above relates to her awareness of needing to be clear with clients about her explicit spiritual counselling approach. It also indicates some sensitivity that other possible clients may reject her approach because it is explicitly spiritual.

The final participant outlined is Mike. He considers himself a Christian humanist and that his counselling is influenced by these traditions. He also is required to do many psychological assessments for the court system in his work. Therefore his approach is also influenced by the expectations of following through with his written recommendations to the courts and in needing to respond to the high number of referrals he receives from them.

Mike's approach is client-centred, existential and Christian with a cognitive-behavioural emphasis. He describes the implications of placing an importance on a cognitive-behavioural approach in his work. Mike feels that cognitive-behaviourism can deal with problematic aspects, for example, with families that would allow parents to gain control of behaviours and then they can begin to develop meaning. He feels that concrete issues are bests tackled first before attempting to develop meaning. He believes that clients are motivated to receive counselling when they reach an impasse and want something to change to get past it. The cognitive-behavioural approach is grounded in addressing the immediate issue before linking the issues to meaning. He feels this approach is also practical given present day concerns with cost-effectiveness. Since funding for only a limited number of counselling sessions is available in the politics of cost-effectiveness, Mike says the client gets the most tangible assistance in the least amount of time. He also orients his approach to the needs of the client and he will do anything to help as long as it is ethical and is within his scope of skills. For example, if they need relationship counselling then he does not medicalize the approach and provides marital or family therapy.

In regard to the spiritual aspects of his work, Mike indicates it is very human and practical. He says "what I can change is the state of the living, that is a Christian, the Christ principal you know. You have the living with you, what are you going to do with them." The focus of the spiritual side of Mike's counselling is encouraging hope. Mike says client well-being rises when hope increases. He has a lot of clients who come back and say "things are not that different but I felt good just having some hope when I walked out of here last week." Mike believes hope is important because it lifts the clients' mood and they feel less badly about themselves and more optimistic. This stops the negative spiral and they can work through blackness and see the light at the end of the tunnel. Mike indicates that feedback from his clients indicate that the hopeful and caring aspect of his counselling seems to really benefit them.

Mike's spirituality is important to him and he believes his clients because it can provide hope. He recognises a spiritual presence that he considers God but this spiritual view is not imposed on others. There is an existential element to his approach

regarding meaning and utilising this spiritual presence yet he emphasises a need to be practical and concrete in his counselling. It may be that the expansive quality of the spirit for him can be usefully applied in counselling by focusing on everyday and tangible client need.

Counselling Styles, Skills and Techniques

The participants have provided insight into the specific nature of their counselling approaches in the interviews. Their counselling approaches also contain more specific qualities and orientations that are better described as styles, skills and techniques. Given the general congruence of styles, skills, and techniques to a counsellor's approach, this section will provide the reader with further details in which to understand how spirituality can assist the depressed in counselling.

I have chosen to keep my comments of styles, skills and techniques as one heading in the following section. It was evident that the participants' comments about these things often flowed together and were interconnected with one another. Therefore comments about technique also reflect participant perception of their skills and style. Eric's counselling practices are introduced first in this section.

Eric describes engaging families to clarify the problems, understand the meanings attributed to these problems, and addressing them. He says it helps families to confront power issues at the interpersonal and societal levels thereby raising awareness about the impact of interpersonal and societal oppression on them personally. Expressing their concerns to someone who respects their stories contributes to gaining control in their lives and to feeling better about themselves. He describes this process in the following case example:

> Well, if you come in with the problem, like, say you've got a family situation, the mother's very depressed, dad's drinking a lot and the kids are out of control. And there is a lot of depression all round, now liberation from that is actually being able to address what is going on between the mother and partners and the other partners in the situation.

There are probably all sorts of power dynamics that are quite depression inducing for at least one member. But in that situation probably both in different ways need liberation. There may well be external factors like poverty or racism that needs to be addressed in terms of the way they conceive the meanings that the family gives them for a start. There needs to be also help, not just to change the feeling state in the adults but ways in which parents process in which they can begin to act with more control over their family so they can get in to a bit more order, which liberates that situation.

It is interesting to note that Eric feels strongly about the spiritual component to his counselling. However, the above comments in relation to helping the depressed through liberation counselling appear without a reference to spirituality. This follows a pattern that counsellors may consider spirituality to be part of the equation in understanding depression and helping. At the same time, there is a tendency within counselling to consider that spirituality can provoke a strong reaction and therefore is not specifically identified in the counselling process. His comments are also interesting in that Eric has a long religious history and is very critical of secular influences in society. At the same time, his history has sensitised him to the reality that explaining counselling in non-spiritual terms can often be more acceptable to many people.

Eric's belief is that therapy in relation to oppression involves freeing families from negative self-images. This view underscores a belief that oppressive societal conditions are not isolated from the individual and are capable of reproducing an oppressive pattern within the internal life of the individual. This process is understood as more pronounced with the powerless or who differ from the dominant culture, as they do not have the resources to resist these dominating influences. He explains the link between society and the individual and the implications of this theory on his practice:

There are negative things that are put on people, who are poor, or people that are different, or people that are powerless, because those images are so strong. Because the powerful people put them on them, the poor people take them on themselves, and the crucial thing of therapy is to free them from that, to help them create. We work in a fairly postmodern way.

Eric's counselling practices are congruent with his counselling philosophy by focusing on oppressive structural issues in counselling that can create vulnerability to depression.

In the next section Mike discusses the importance of cognitive-behaviour therapy, hope, and the use of prayer to help the depressed client.

As indicated earlier, Mike uses cognitive behavioural therapy, which is well recognised as a viable approach in working with the depressed. This approach focuses on identifying the thoughts that are depressive or self-defeating and altering them to more positive and rational thoughts about oneself or others. This investigative and altering process includes looking at one's feelings and the impact they are having on a person's life. The counselling style may also involve identifying behaviour in terms of actions and possibly body responses that are indicative of difficulties and changing behaviour that reinforces more positive outcomes for well-being. Cognitive-behavioural styles may also include discussions about relating to others in the same way as described above. Mike feels that if people are able to get concrete help that works for them that they then develop an expectation of feeling and thinking better which then build on the element of hope. These changes then create a new cycle that benefits the clients. He describes part of this new cycle:

> In feeling better they can challenge the black thoughts that are global, arbitrary, that magnify and personalise things for us. So you cultivate hope and confront things that don't work out with the possibility that they may work next time.

The development of meaning is important in the cycle and to Mike is likely to take place more satisfactorily once positive changes have begun to occur. However, this is meaning related to specifics and he does not presume it to be more than it is. Nonetheless, teaching people about day to day life and changing views that work for them contributes to establishing meaning, which coincides with hope. He says "you might not have hope for your entire life but you need to focus on finding hope and

meaning in your life now." Mike says the immediate focus of his work in part relates to biblical teachings:

> The question posed in the Bible sticks in my mind. Who is my neighbour? It's a person from a Good Samaritan thing. You can think of lots of theologically based reasons why you may not do something but at the end of a day if someone is in front of you and needs help. What is your response?

Mike also believes in the power of prayer. People may call positive results from prayer a coincidence and that is okay for him. He relies on his own beliefs to support his views and realises that not everyone will agree with it. He is convinced that Christian or spiritual beliefs help people cope better but the counselling context is not a place where these things should be promoted.

In summary, Mike indicates that there is value of spirituality to strengthen the counsellors' abilities to help the depressed. However, along with this is the view that the promotion of counsellor beliefs and values should not be promoted in counselling particularly if they are spiritual beliefs and values. The distinction of spiritual beliefs and values as being perhaps more critical than some other beliefs and values may be related a view that spirituality is central or of primary importance in a person's worldview.

In the next account, Margo offers some interesting ideas about personal balance, body focusing techniques, Jungian counselling and creating rituals. Margo's description gives a strong sense about her perceptions of an internal spiritual dimension that she has referred to previously as divine and finding ways to work with the divine in counselling the depressed.

Margo's spirituality affects her approach and technique in counselling which she describes in terms of listening for what is out of balance or not connected within the whole person. She states her spirituality is holistic and that we are made up of body, mind, spirit, soul, and psyche. If one aspect is damaged or hurting it affects the whole person so one of her skills is to listen for which aspect is affected and how that affects

the whole person. Margo says raising the awareness of our connection, for example, with our bodies is not only essential for spiritual health, it is needed to know what is right for us. Without these connections, people are out of touch with themselves and vulnerable to the demands from society. She describes her goal of developing greater spiritual awareness through a body focusing technique:

> It's only by working with them and raising their awareness and getting them to raise their awareness. Often I say to the person what would you need, and they don't know what they need. What would you like, they don't know what they like, because they are so conditioned by what they should or have to do or must do. So it's a re-education of the person. For me that's why I use a focusing tool to get them in touch with their body, what your body's telling you, they don't know what their body's telling and so I try and identify somewhere in their body what they need and what they want. Then perhaps I image that and do some focusing to get them in touch with what they're really like.

Margo often uses a Jungian style of counselling with the client. It facilitates journeying and connecting with rejected parts of themselves for greater wholeness and learning. She feels that rather than rejecting or cutting off parts of ourselves we can learn by befriending these rejected parts through an inner journey to discover the gifts they have to offer us. So with depression it is about naming it and reclaiming it and getting past the sense of blaming or even taming the depression. Margo also utilises dream material in her Jungian style of counselling. Her dream-work blends such things as artwork, relationships, and light and darkness to achieve this. Margo describes a case example utilising dream material:

> I think one good example of that is nightmares. And I mean I can do work with drawing and they might draw something that is ugly and terrible, well with another person they can look at it, or in the company of another person, often I might light a candle. With these people if they sense there is light around they can begin to look at this and discover that Jung says the gold is in the shadow. Because if you don't look at it, it just keeps revisiting, I believe, so if you look at these horrors and these fears you can go through them, I believe that.

Margo attempts to incorporate the client's spirituality into her work. If a client has a strong Christian faith, which includes a personal relationship with Jesus this image may be called upon to help the client through their difficulties. She also adapts rituals in counselling to reflect a client's views. For example, a ritual of belonging using the client's more cosmic sense of spirituality was created with a woman who had a miscarriage that was handled in a cruel and abusive manner. Margo describes the process of the healing journey through ritual making that was facilitated in counselling. The ritual included naming the baby and bonding the image of the baby to the mother and then allowing the baby to grow and develop before leaving her. The ritual meant that a reality was created in counselling so that the mother of the baby was able to establish a sense of attachment to her child before letting baby go on in its journey to affirm a connection with the cosmos. Margo clarifies that the process of going through this was painful for the client and choosing to let go of the baby to join the cosmos in the ritual must be done by the client and not by the counsellor.

Margo, similar to Mike feels that spiritually oriented counselling work must be placed primarily in the control of the client and not the counsellor.

Sarah outlines in the following her counselling practices with women. Her beliefs, values, connection and sensitivity to women's issues are illustrated in her group work them. She also identifies that in her counselling relationships that a spiritual presence can arise that heightens awareness and can be nurturing.

Sarah says her counselling is about sharing values, being with women in a respectful and loving way as they are sacred persons like everyone else. It means taking care of one's physical, mental and spiritual self as a whole. It is important to have a place that is safe particularly for abused women and women who are suicidal so that honesty, hope and connection can be supported. Much of the work is very concrete process-oriented and avoids excessive abstractness and is not prescriptive. This is important to ensure the women are not alienated from the process and that they are responding to the women's views in the present rather than fulfilling any pre-planned ideas of what needs to take place. Tending to the practical everyday needs of women as they arise, naturally, is important and it helps to create a special place for women, says Sarah. It is important that women who have been hurt by others have a sense that they can

control their lives. Therefore, group work process emphasises the women taking control of the sort of group they want and direct it in terms of what kinds of things can happen in the group. The women work on the issues they want to explore in the group work. Sarah describes the process of helping a woman to feel that they she has healed herself and created change for herself:

> Good counselling practitioners help the person feel that they did it all by themselves... I think that it is a real strength if you can be with someone, again it is empowerment in a way, but it's giving them tools, standing there with them, journeying with them and I think the real delight is when you do it for yourself.

Sarah describes that in the group work there can be a spiritual presence that seems to arise out of women sharing their stories and validating one another. She says it is not easy to convey this understanding in words but words are not always needed in conveying spiritual and sacred matters when you are close to others. This presence has a realness that is grounding, calming and is about feeling whole that is very beneficial when working with others who are distressed. Sarah adds that her spirituality is important as it connects to intuitiveness, within her and an acceptance that she does not have all the answers. She calls this a "knowing", a guide to knowing what one needs to value, and gives her the strength to hear what is spoken. Sarah provides insight to this spiritual presence that connects to other women and heightens awareness for her during the group work:

> I was thinking your spirituality links in with being aware with what's going on. Like you've got a room full of people and you have got a lot of non-verbal happening. I think somehow the spiritual grounded person that has done a lot of work on themselves makes them more able to actually be sensitive to the non-verbal somehow. Maybe you would describe that differently. It's a skill, for me it somehow connects with my... I guess spirituality connects with deepness, the deeper side to life...

Sarah says that, in her work with women, using her intuition as a resource and a subtle cue of what to say or how to act when helping the depressed is helpful in doing her

work. However, she points out that it becomes an imposition if one's intuition were used to suggest that you now have the power to tell someone else how things are for him or her.

Sarah's view that an intuitiveness that may include a spiritual dimension needs to be carefully used in counselling. Her reason for this is similar to Mike and Margo in that its value and importance is evident but it can be a problem for counsellors if it permits the counsellor to lose sight of client self-determination.

The next participant is Thomas. He highlights the connection and healing that takes place by connecting to various spiritual dimensions beyond the individual. This includes passing through barriers of time and space. His comments are thought provoking in terms of considering a capacity to achieve this. The capacity for individuals to get beyond their own time and space is explained in terms of cultural beliefs that Maori can tap into through their immanent spirit power.

Thomas describes his counselling style with Maori as a passage through ordinary and sacred territory that must be respected and safeguarded for both the counsellor and clients to be able to explore, bond and learn. His work with Maori involves contact with the client family's wairua (spirit). The spirit as indicated earlier is linked to the physical being by an invisible cord attached to the Puku or stomach. It provides the connection to one's heritage and family and potential understanding about Maori problems. One's belief in the sacredness of these discussions and experiences is very important. The process may involve Maori capacity to see beyond one's physical space and time, utilising individuals with special gifts to heal, solve specific problems or see into the future, and gaining strength by sharing and learning amongst Maori. Thomas has firsthand experience with some of these gifts within his own family that strengthens his belief. He relates the influence of Maori spirituality on one's life as providing a connection to one's culture by actively bringing forward from the past sacred knowledge into the present. He recognises this connection when he says, "it is important that it is not what you say but what you believe you are saying."

Thomas describes the counselling process as beginning by performing the karakia that may involve the families, children, aunties, uncles and grandmothers. Having the

whanau there is important to get a picture of the whole situation. This gathering though is in accordance to their needs and the situation. It is also important to take your time and focus on the family rather than rushing them through a process involving your ideas of what should take place. Thomas indicates that the Karakia however sets the stage for entry into the spiritual dimension for Maori. He says the karakia is a significant step in engaging and understanding sacred and ordinary dimensions of living within one's spirit world. These dimensions are described as tapu for the sacred and noa for the ordinary or non-sacred. To work with these dimensions requires a means to safely and respectfully engage the spirit world and be guided through these dimensions from the ordinary to the sacred and back to the ordinary again. The karakia provides the vehicle in which to make this sacred passage and where the counsellor and client can identify if there are any Maori problems or get direction on what to do to resolve difficulties. Having faith in this process is essential for healing to take place.

Thomas says he is familiar with the karakia not from his Christian influences but as member of the Ratana church that has adapted some Christian influences onto Maori practices. Rituals are also important in other areas of Maori life to negotiate shifts from noa to tapu and some of these rituals are familiar to practising Christians. He provides an example of using water as a cleansing ritual that is common to both Christian and Maori traditions. It is used when shifting from tapu to noa during a time of death for Maori. He says one must be very careful during the burial ceremony. If a person touches the dead person who is tapu, you need to cleanse yourself by washing your hands before participating afterwards in non-sacred or noa activities like eating. Thomas says that sometimes people forget to do this and although it is better not to, it is understandable given the conditions surrounding grieving.

Many of Thomas's comments about connecting to the spirit world coincides with transpersonal and ecofeminist literature describing immanent beliefs. This literature often cites immanence as part of indigenous and ancient European cultures. Ecofeminists in particular feel some connection to these cultures based on a common belief in a universal life-force. As indicated in Chapter Three, some transpersonal writers also support the idea that spirituality for some involves a sense of going

beyond time and space. Thomas adds to this that the karakia provides the means of connecting to a life-force.

The final participant is John. John identifies worldview as a concept useful in counselling because it allows counsellors to work more closely with clients' beliefs and values. He also introduces the Buddhist tradition of dealing with depression through spiritual journeying. This latter aspect has relevance to spiritual experiences and spiritual emergencies that will be further clarified in Chapter Eight in reference to the literature and participant findings.

John describes his counselling style as "straight-forward," non-directive and brief. He encourages altered behaviour to improve situations in the "here and now." He places importance on relational and social concerns with couples and families but does not see individuals. He associates his primary counselling concern with external interpersonal factors rather than intra-personal factors more associated with individual counselling. John recognises a comprehensive and generic nature of human need and values in-depth and psychodynamic orientation of intra-personal counselling but says it frequently involves long-term work, which has a potential to create client dependence. John states that there is a lot of literature of a spiritual intra-personal nature about the "dark night of the soul" that represents Buddhist efforts to deal with deep-seated depression. He respects this approach along with a long-standing existential tradition about finding meaning in one's life but they do not reflect his counselling work.

John explores clients' worldviews to validate them and to decipher core beliefs and ethics. He believes everyone has a worldview and spiritual experience that are worthy of respect. Given John's Rogerian influences, his work involves active listening and reflecting back to clients in order to decipher their worldview, core beliefs and ethics, some of which can be hidden by clients. In these activities he may clarify that certain actions and beliefs may be harmful to family members so he tries to work within their core system to highlight these difficulties and problem-solve with them for better solutions. John has a non-directive quality to some of his work that is related to people's worldview. This represents part of a spiritual belief that everyone has internal and/or external resources to solve their own difficulties. He has an active

stance in his work with the depressed who can be lacking in needed energy to work through their difficulties. This is in conjunction with people's worldview and ideas that arise from it. He explains:

> Your willingness to wait with them while they experiment with various ways of dealing with this difficulty... There is a confidence that you have with their own worldview, there are ways through this with your willingness to wait with them and not hurry them finding an answer in relation to this....depression is not forever. Yes, depression can be overcome, but one must be realistic about it and for some it can be very much pervasive and longer lasting than for others... I will support you experimenting with those ideas and if you have got no ideas I will contribute ideas that will allow you to, that's still consistent with your own views of life. I will try to assist you to do that. Yes a very active process.

John's comments about utilising worldview in counselling to connect with clients' core beliefs and ethics are important to this thesis. It is argued that core beliefs are important in counselling and that spirituality plays an important role in the formation and maintenance of core beliefs. The relationship of core beliefs to spirituality also offers a useful way to understand counsellor appreciation for spirituality's capacity to help the depressed but also their tendency to be very cautions in identifying this area in counselling. This caution relates to concerns about imposing views on clients, provoking a strong negative reaction, and a concern that everyone does not view core beliefs as having a spiritual dimension. The concept of a central guiding belief system helps to discuss the overall strengths and weaknesses of spirituality in this study.

Conclusions

Chapter Seven has completed the last section of the findings before this data is discussed with reference to the counselling literature and theoretical framework to provide some conclusions, future research and overall conclusions. This chapter has provided more concrete detail of spirituality's potential to help the depressed and what counsellors might consider in their work with the depressed. The participants

have contributed to a belief that there is potential for spirituality in counselling to help the depressed and the various means of doing this suggests there are many ways for counsellors to understand this potential. They have also indicated that spirituality is not sufficient to help everyone who is depressed and that oppressive conditions exist that may reduce spirituality's potential. Many of the arguments set forward by the participants suggest that spirituality's positive potential with the depressed could be compromised by counselling practices that exclude, reduce self-determination, impose a worldview on clients and do not have a basis to connect with others. Counsellors also need to be sensitive to contextual issues in counselling that reduces spiritual well-being due to the marginalisation and devaluing of people based on their gender, culture, socio-political status and worldviews. In summary, the exploration of my research questions from the participant interviews strengthens a view that spirituality's potential with the depressed in counselling relates to its affect on their sense of empowerment and belonging.

CHAPTER 8
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

This research has explored two questions. The first question asks does spirituality in counselling assist the depressed? The second question follows from the first one. It asks, what understanding and conceptualisations could help counsellors in their work with depressed clients? The study of these two questions involved comparing and integrating various sources of knowledge. These included the spiritual counselling literature, the four components in the theoretical framework, and the personal and professional knowledge of the six participants and myself.

The research process has been useful in continuing my own spiritual development and interest in helping the depressed in counselling through spirituality. This chapter focuses on exploring the possibilities of spirituality's potential to help depressed people and counsellors who work with them. It does this by discussing the research findings in order to analyse the two research questions. The chapter begins by discussing attributes of spirituality in relation to the depressed then suggests some conceptualisations of it that counsellors might consider, before outlining research limitations and future research. It ends with a summary and conclusions of research findings.

Spirituality's Potential in Counselling to Assist the Depressed

The findings in the literature, theoretical framework and fieldwork do give support to the contention that spirituality is perceived to assist the depressed. The participants have confirmed most of the views identified in the spiritual counselling literature that spirituality does have potential to assist the depressed. However, the strength of

confirmation in specific areas varied when comparing the spiritual counselling literature to the participants. There were also areas identified as important in the literature that were not confirmed by the participants and, equally, areas identified by the participants that were not confirmed in the literature. These findings are discussed in terms of spirituality's capacity to provide meaning, purpose and motivation, to sustain a guiding belief and value system, to improve coping, and encourage growth and development.

Spirituality Assists the Depressed in Counselling

Provides Meaning, Purpose and Motivation

The literature substantiates that spirituality assists the depressed by providing meaning, purpose, and motivation in people's lives (Benland, 1988, p. 464; Chandler et al., 1992, pp. 168-171). Spirituality's capacity to facilitate meaning, purpose, and motivation is said to help individuals find wholeness, direction, and fulfilment (Aponte, 1998, p.38). Spirituality's ability to help individuals find direction and fulfilment in life corresponds well to a central aim in counselling. Counselling often attempts to engage individuals through an exploration of their fundamental views to help them develop a deeper understanding and to be more fulfilled. Given that both spirituality and counselling have a common aim of enhancing fulfilment, together they could strengthen the benefit to depressed clients by helping them to find meaning, purpose and motivation (Aponte, 1998, pp. 37-38; Fukuyama & Sevig, 1997, p. 235; O'Hara, 1997, p.7). The participants all indicated that spirituality provides a sense of meaning and direction in their lives as well as many depressed clients. A few participants also felt that counselling was a suitable context to explore one's spirituality.

Sustains a Guiding Belief and Value System

Spirituality has important implications in shaping a secure and effective belief system when facing life difficulties. Given that spirituality permeates all relationships, it can assist the depressed in counselling by positively influencing their belief systems

(Benland, 1988, p. 464; Chandler et al., 1992, pp. 168-171). Having a belief system that is resilient and effective when facing difficulties stems from their foundational and guiding role in life. These beliefs become further strengthened when they are congruent with one's core values (Brink, 1993, p.384; Westgate, 1996, pp.28-30). However, the significance of spirituality to central beliefs and values also suggests that if these beliefs and values are contributing to one's depression then spirituality could also play a role in creating depression or possibly hinder one's recovery from it.

The participants acknowledged that spirituality is an important part of a person's belief system and that depression may involve difficulties with that belief system. For some participants, the exploration of clients' spiritual beliefs was an important part of counselling work when attempting to determine causes for depression. These participants suggest that exploring these beliefs included the role that spirituality played in forming and reflecting a centrally organised framework that guided people's lives. This understanding led some participants to comment that difficulty with spirituality or lack of spirituality may contribute to depression and that their clients' recovery may involve a revitalisation, alteration or replacement of their spirituality. One article in the literature more clearly than the others indicated that one's core values or ultimate values are spiritually based and that depression, unlike any other mental health problems, indicates that one's core values are missing or are no longer functioning (Brink, 1993, p. 387). The views from these participant and by Brink (1993) led me to speculate whether linking depression to core spiritual values warrants further examination as it could represent an untapped potential in helping the depressed. This will be discussed further in the summary section of this chapter.

Improves Coping

The interconnection of important beliefs and values to finding meaning, purpose and motivation in life has implications for coping. A person's assumptions and philosophy of life often reflect a level of organised thinking about their beliefs and values and their efforts and success at getting what they need for their well-being. In counselling, it is important to consider this kind of framework or organised view with a depressed client as it may reveal an understanding about their abilities to meet their needs and therefore abilities to cope in their daily living. Spirituality has a role in

helping the depressed cope with the problems of daily living through its connection to important beliefs and values (Sermabeikian, 1994, p. 182). The notion of spirituality as attributable to helping a depressed person to cope is further evident in the literature and with the participants. These are presented in the following paragraphs.

It was apparent in the literature that spirituality is considered important in helping people to cope in their daily life. The literature identified that spirituality helps many in counselling to alleviate their mental health problems including that of depression (Nolan & Crawford, 1997, p. 289; Sermabeikian, 1994, pp.181-182; Smith, 1995, p.412; Westgate, 1996, p.33). More specifically, spirituality is associated with increasing resiliency in facing problems, and acts as a resource for solving problems and facing our mortality. An important aspect to coping with life difficulties appears to be spirituality's capacity in contributing to and sustaining a view that is hopeful (Haase et al, 1992, p. 143). From this position, people are more optimistic about successfully meeting challenges or being able to live with the results of these challenges (Chandler et al. 1992, p.173; Reed, 1992 p.354; Sermabeikian, 1994, p.178; Smith, 1995, p.412; Westgate, 1996, p. 27). The argument in the literature about spirituality increasing depressed clients' capacity to cope was fairly consistent to the participants' views.

The participants believe that spirituality strengthens the resources of the depressed to face life's difficulties. Their comments included that spirituality can be a resource to solve their problems and it may give comfort to some people who worry about their futures being out of control or see themselves as being near death. Four of the participants specifically referred to spirituality's capacity to encourage hope as being helpful to the depressed. One participant said that hope was essentially spiritual and the lack of hope directly translated into depression for people.

Encourages Growth and Development

Growth and development are generally considered beneficial to good health because they reflect vibrancy and an expanded sense of involvement and identification in the world (Chandler et al., p. 171, Hale, 1992, p. 83; Grof & Grof, 1995, pp. 186-189). Growth and development improve the well-being of the depressed by expanding

personal boundaries, while spirituality extends this expansion by encouraging a stronger connection and identification to others and perhaps something larger than themselves (Everts & Agee, 1994, pp. 294-295; Morell, 1996, p. 307; West, 1997, pp.304-305). Spiritual expansions also may improve motivation, connection and identity development (Myers et al, 1991, pp. 54-56; Walsh, 1992, pp.22-26). The transpersonal literature also says spirituality inspires, encourages creativity, and enhances awareness about self, others, nature and the sacred. This kind of growth and development gives more choices in resolving the problems, and may remove the emotional barriers impeding the well-being of the depressed (Anderson & Worthen, 1997, p.11; Grof & Grof, 1995, pp. 48-49; Watson, 1994, p. 22). There are also indications that the depressed look to spirituality in resolving or finding meaning in their depression, which also creates new opportunities in awareness and connection (Nolan & Crawford, 1997, p. 289).

Many aspects of spirituality's enhancement of growth and development for the depressed is also described in conjunction with increased empowerment and belonging (Bristow-Braitman, 1995, p. 414; Hood Morris, 1996, p. 444; Rappaport & Simpkins, 1991, p. 46; Witmer & Sweeney, 1992, p. 140). It is argued that empowerment and belonging are very important considerations due to internal, relational, and contextual factors that marginalise and exclude. For this reason they will be more fully discussed later in response to the second question of this study.

The research theory supports and further clarifies the findings in the literature. New science theory helps to explain a common positive spiritual energy in counselling that would benefit to both the depressed client and counsellor (Adams, 1995, p. 204-205; Mindell, 1996, pp. 72-78; Wendler, 1996, pp. 837-838). Rank theory also indicates that the depressed feel powerless, isolated, and devalued (Gilbert, 1992a, p. 19, p. 148; 1992b, pp. 471-473). Therefore, the theories in conjunction with the spiritual counselling literature do support spirituality's capacities to be positive by encouraging growth and development for the counsellor. They also support that spirituality could increase depressed persons' powers of awareness and meaningful connection and identification in their lives (Rappaport & Simpkins, 1991, p. 46; Westgate, 1996, pp. 30-31; Witmer & Sweeney, 1992, p. 145).

The participants have provided a number of comments about spirituality's capacity to enhance growth and development for the depressed. Spirituality was described by participants as helping counsellors and the client to be aware of a spiritual energy that would connect a person to sacred aspects in their life. The participants indicated that connection could increase relatedness to self, others, nature and, for one participant, to the spirit world. Many of their comments linked growth and development to expanded identity, spiritual development, empowerment and belonging and heightened awareness of sacredness in the world. They felt that spirituality would reduce the sense of isolation and alienation with the depressed.

Differences in the Research Findings

The previous paragraphs indicate that the literature and the participant views reflected similar comments about spirituality. This agreement in views did not apply to all aspects of spirituality. The following section outlines these differences.

The Significance of Spiritual Experiences to the Depressed

An important benefit of spirituality described in the literature is immanent and transcendent spiritual experiences. These are referred to in the transpersonal literature as sustaining or improving well-being through their capacity to motivate or create expansion of one's personal boundaries. The literature has also indicated that these kinds of spiritual experiences also assist the depressed. It is interesting to note that three participants indicated the importance of spiritual experiences but referred to them as beneficial in their own personal life. However, they did not indicate that this was something they had observed or were aware of in their work with the depressed. Their positive attitude towards these kinds of experiences outside of counselling would suggest that they might consider them beneficial to depressed clients. This finding indicates a stronger support in the literature than with participants about spirituality's ability to help the depressed in counselling. It also may point to a need to explore possible barriers to using spirituality or dealing with this dimension in the counselling context. In future research I would want to look more closely at my questioning and participant comments to see if I had missed opportunities to explore

this area. I would also want to look closely at whether there is further evidence of barriers to using spirituality in counselling.

Given that some literature suggests spiritual experiences expand one's boundaries and help the depressed and what appears to be a lack of comment by the participants, this finding warrants further discussion. The difference may be due to the transpersonal literature's primary focus on an individual's subjective transcendent processes and only two participants tended to primarily focus in the subjective area. The transpersonal writers also describe themselves as reflecting newer and a less dominant view within the counselling field (Walsh, 1992, pp. 20-25). If this is accurate it may account for some of the difference. Many of the participants also focused a number of comments on the depressed experience with external factors such as gender, culture, and socio-economic rather than on transcendent experiences. The prominence of contextual experience may reflect the focus of their work or that my research questions tended to draw out these kinds of responses. There might have been a different result also if more than one interview had been conducted with each participant to encourage more comfort and reflection between the participant and myself. These participants were also particularly sensitive to problems associated with counsellors imposing their views on clients.

Given the relationship of spirituality to guiding beliefs and values, it may be that counsellors feel this is an area that must be approached carefully and with full permission from the client and not something that is initiated by the counsellors. In the second part of this chapter other barriers such as spirituality's controversial links to religion, spiritual issues and secular influences in counselling are discussed that identify more blocks to counsellor's use of spirituality with the depressed. Before I turn to this, the participants make important additional comments about counselling and depression. Their comments were a reminder to me about the seriousness of depression and their sense of concerns and of responsibility that they hold toward others.

Emotional Responses to this Study

The participants' personal and professional knowledge about depression influenced them to respond very seriously to this research. Their comments indicated that they saw no evidence of a simple or conclusive understanding or help for depression including the use of spirituality in counselling. All the participants indicated a belief in the multi-causal nature of depression and that counsellors as well as clients are potentially vulnerable to depression. They recommend for themselves and others not to underestimate the needs of the depressed or the capacity of depression to devastate. The personal and professional knowledge of these participants provided the research study with an emotional and reflective quality not available in the literature.

Suggestions about Spirituality to Assist Counsellors Working with the Depressed

Introduction

The previous section has explored spirituality's potential to benefit the depressed in counselling. This has identified that a positive direction in life, good coping skills and a capacity to grow and develop is important for the depressed and the literature suggests that spirituality makes a contribution in these areas. There were some interesting differences between the literature and the participants that add more richness to this investigation and encourage thinking about possible differences and commonality when outlining the findings on the second question of the study.

The second part of this research, based on question two, builds upon the ideas presented in the first section of this chapter. As indicated, the second question explores ways of understanding and conceptualising spirituality's potential with the depressed in counselling to help counsellors in their work with them. This part of the study may be of interest to counsellors who are considering integrating spirituality in their work or are looking at ways to be more organised and focused in their practices. These counsellors may regard a broad understanding about this area helps in reflecting on their beliefs and values and to consider various views, approaches, and

interventions in order to strengthen a goal of integrating spirituality into their practices and deal with a diversity of spiritual needs. The next section begins to explore these areas to offer some direction about using spirituality in practices to help the depressed.

Assisting counsellors in their work with the depressed involves looking at influences in counselling to raise awareness about their effect and usefulness to counsellors. Beginning to focus on a counselling philosophy and beliefs that may help in our work and to explore their links to spiritual counselling approaches does this. This section will also discuss issues and spiritual conceptualisations that could further focus counselling work relevant to this research. The components in the theoretical framework also encourage attention to our subjective, relational and objective worlds when understanding its relevance to this research question. This section begins with considering counsellor awareness of spiritual counselling philosophies and approaches to helping the depressed, then explores issues related to spirituality and depression in counselling before clarifying how empowerment, belonging and universal sacredness may help the counsellors in their work.

Counsellor Awareness of their Philosophy and Approach

Spiritual Counselling Philosophies

The assumptions and philosophy of the counsellors influence their understanding and use of spirituality in counselling (Aponte, 1998, p. 37). Therefore, awareness about their counselling philosophy will provide them with insight into their use of spirituality in counselling and its impact on the depressed client. Western society has played a central influence upon counsellors' views and subsequent philosophy and exploring and evaluating some influences here can contribute to increased awareness.

Many counsellors are likely to trace influences in their counselling to being raised in a Western society. It has contributed significantly to the creation of counselling and the value of respecting and helping the individual with their subjective processes (O'Hara, 1997, pp. 11-12; Sampson, 1988, p. 15; Sue & Sue, 1990, p. 6). There are

also influences in this society that minimise spirituality and contribute to depression by creating marginalisation, devaluation, competition and disconnection (Gilbert, 1992b, pp. 150-153; Morell, 1996, p.307; Myers et al., 1991, p. 56). For example, the Eurocentric view, which was clarified in Chapter Two, has tendencies toward patriarchy, excessive materialism, individualism, mechanistic science and secularism (Adams, 1995, p.201; Mindell, 1996, pp.68-69, Morell, 1996, p.306; Smith, 1994, p. 406; Tapping, 1993, pp.31-32). These influences can exclude or marginalise women, non-Western cultures, and poorer socio-economic groups and discourage considering spirituality as part of reality (Adams, 1995, p. 201; Benland, 1988, p.464; Bulhan, 1988, pp.256-259; Sue & Sue, 1990, pp. 7-13; Turbott, 1996, p.720). Therefore counselling may be subject to influences that encourage a more individualised spiritual development, perceiving sacredness as transcendent, Christian and male, while minimising immanence, collective spiritual development and non-Western deities (Donaldson, 1996, p.198; Ivey, 1995, pp.55-56; Myers et al., 1991, p. 55). Given these potential influences on counselling, counsellor consciousness-raising about spiritual beliefs and values may help them to choose practices or philosophies that include and value women, cultures and viewpoints.

As indicated above, the Western world can create some conditions that influence counselling to develop practices that exclude or devalue. Counsellors can compare these with the fundamental beliefs and assumptions represented in Chapter Two by the medical-scientific, humanistic and socio-political perspectives. These perspectives represent a significant breadth of influence in the counselling field (O'Hara, 1997, pp.11-13) and served to focus my research. The theories identified in the theoretical framework also further clarify the importance of spirituality in relation to gender, culture, worldview, and holistic and interactive processes. These theories highlight that these factors can be considered in terms of oppression and liberation when helping the depressed (Flaskas, 1994, p. 143; Paterson & Trathen, 1994, p. 91; Sanders, 1998, p. 116). Therefore, in consciousness-raising, counsellors can look to various perspectives and theory in counselling and compare them with their own to evaluate or further shape their work and counselling philosophy.

The participants believed that counselling philosophy shapes their knowledge and spiritual work with the depressed. They felt that counsellor awareness of their

philosophies was important, as they are less likely to devalue and isolate the depressed client by imposing their spiritual worldview on them if they have this awareness. Their counselling philosophies were reflected in perspectives self-described as medical-scientific, humanistic, ecofeminist, feminist, socialist, indigenous and liberationist. The participant perspectives were familiar to me from my literature research outlined in Chapter Two and therefore may be useful for counsellors as a starting reference when evaluating their views.

There was general agreement when comparing the findings from the literature and theory to the participants' comments. The participants felt that Western society affects the depressed or creates depression. They confirmed that marginalisation, devaluation and isolation do result for some people from the beliefs and values of Western society, which reduce well-being and may cause depression. As a group they identified that gender, culture, and worldview are important aspects when evaluating conditions that are devalue and isolate the depressed. On an individual basis the participants tended to focus on specific factors such as patriarchy, domination of Western culture and individual worldview in their discussions. Therefore the view that spirituality was part of gender, culture and worldview and needs considering when working with the depressed client was more strongly confirmed in a collective rather than individual sense. They also indicated that in their counselling, spirituality helped them to respect the depressed clients' worldview, value their personal and social circumstances, encourage supportive social and family relationships and challenge social inequalities.

The findings from the theory, literature and participants indicate that a broad holistic and interactive view about gender, culture and worldview is useful to consider when helping the depressed with spirituality. Counsellor awareness of their philosophies and perspectives is also helpful to add to counsellors' ability to include and affirm the spiritual beliefs and values of the depressed client. It was also evident that these participants on an individual basis tend to focus on assisting the depressed with spirituality in specific areas. This tendency to specialise in their work could be from a number of influences related to their interest, life experiences and working conditions. The actual participant connection to their views also seemed to reflect on how they saw themselves and their passions about life. Therefore evaluating counselling

philosophy and areas of counsellor expertise is likely to require going back to the core beliefs and values that guide us in our lives and in our counselling work.

Spiritual Counselling Approaches

It was evident in the previous section that the participants tend to select specific areas or identify areas of expertise when clarifying their counselling philosophy. The tendency to specialise was also evident when the participants described their spiritual counselling approaches. This section will outline the participants' spiritual counselling approaches and compare it to the literature to further evaluate their spiritual beliefs and values. This section will rely on the literature in Chapter Three, which described transpersonal, earth-based and liberationist spiritual counselling to review the participants' approaches. As with the three perspectives in Chapter Two, the broad counselling approaches provide a significant overview about understanding the kind of spiritual help the depressed could receive in counselling. These descriptions are also helpful to review more specific counselling practices and techniques used by the participants. The theory will also be used to highlight what affect the participants' approaches appear to have on the clients' internal, relational and objective realities.

In reviewing the fundamental beliefs and assumptions of the participants with the spiritual counselling approaches it was evident that each participant's client work could be identified within the three approaches. However, their client work tended to cover more than one spiritual counselling approach. The participants all tended to reflect comprehensive understanding about counselling despite representing a wide range of beliefs, values. In regard to beliefs and values three participants felt there was an inner spiritual, which reflects an influence from subjectivism and transcendent spirituality described in transpersonal spirituality. Three participants indicated a belief in immanent life-force that included nature and a spirit world. These are frequently described in earth-based spiritual counselling. Four of the participants focused on spiritual liberating action by challenging oppressive conditions particularly in society as they considered that they impede spiritual development. This view is reflected in liberationist spirituality. These results indicate that the spiritual counselling approaches were helpful in identifying some spiritual beliefs and values when

exploring the participants' work. Given that there is more than six sets of beliefs and values represented here it also indicates that each participant cannot be categorised as simply representing one spiritual counselling approach but are more likely to be influenced by beliefs and values that overlap within the three descriptions.

There were interesting results when using the theory to explore the participants' spiritual counselling approaches in terms of addressing the subjective, relational and objective realities of clients. They indicate some commonality but also a tendency to be more focused in their spiritual counselling work. All the participants emphasised the importance of working on the spiritual reality of the depressed clients' relational world. However, in terms of including all spiritual realities there were some differences. One participant was more balanced regarding a focus on the internal, and external world along with the relational considerations. Three others were more externally focused while two others were internally focused. These findings may indicate a tendency by participants to focus their counselling approaches in specific spiritual areas with the depressed. Their choice of spiritual realities in their work may also reflect decisions based on interest, sense of spiritual connection and confidence for them as individuals. These results may indicate that within a counselling context it is difficult or unrealistic for counsellors to try to effectively address all spiritual worlds. The results do not reflect that one participant approach is better than another in assisting clients with depression, but could add to counsellor awareness about how they practice. It may also indicate that a comprehensive awareness and understanding about spirituality and depression is still needed whether one is focused on internal or external dimensions in their work.

The participants also used a range of specific counselling approaches in their work. Using the literature and their self-descriptions as reference, their counselling approaches include archetypal and psychodynamic counselling, cognitive-behaviourism, existentialism, gestalt, holistic wellness, ecofeminist spirituality and shamanism and interpersonal and narrative therapy. All of the approaches were considered as potentially useful by the participants in incorporating a spiritual dimension to help the depressed. Some counselling literature suggests most approaches can be adapted to include spirituality (Myers et al., 1991, p.60). Other literature identifies archetypal counselling, ecofeminist spirituality, existentialism,

holistic wellness and shamanism as conducive to spiritual counselling work (Durie, 1989, pp. 19-20; Enns, 1994. p.132; Paterson & Trathen, 1994, p. 97; Starhawk, 1989a, pp. 175-177; Watson, 1994, pp. 31-35; Westgate, 1996, pp.26-27; Witmer & Sweeney, 1992, pp. 140-141). There is some reference in the literature to psychodynamic and interpersonal counselling and cognitive-behaviourism as useful with the depressed. The usefulness of these latter approaches to depression is considered strengthened when a more global biopsychosocial perspective is adopted (Cicchetti & Toth, 1998, p. 224;Gilbert, 1992a pp. 144-147; Gilbert, 1992b, p. 380; Klerman 1994, pp. 37-38; Paykel et al., 1997, p. 59; Vasile et al, 1987, p. 341). I have found that most approaches can be adapted to include spirituality, though my preferences are toward archetypal counselling and shamanism. However by introducing depression into the equation of spiritual work I would tend to shift toward existentialism, interpersonal, and psychodynamic approaches.

The list of techniques presented by the participants included body focusing, identifying an inner divinity, facilitating mind-body-spirit connections and creating therapeutic rituals and prayer. The strategies described by the participants' work included facilitating social supports, social activism, working with groups and families, connecting with nature and the spirit world. These spiritual counselling practices outlined by the participants are supported and documented in the spiritual counselling literature (Chandler et al. 1992, p. 173; Durie, 1989, p.15-16; Durie, 1995, pp. 70-75; Enns, 1994, p. 127; Morell, 1996, pp. 306-307; Park, 1996, p. 322).

In summary, the theory, literature and participants encourage a view that a wide spectrum of specific spiritual counselling approaches can be used to help the depressed although some appear favoured in the literature either to spirituality or depression. The three broad spiritual counselling approaches identified in Chapter Three may help to identify beliefs and values for counsellors to consider when further developing their awareness. The participant findings indicate that counsellors may be inclined to focus their spiritual counselling work and that a comprehensive awareness does not necessarily translate into addressing all spiritual realities within the counselling context. The counsellor and client in negotiation together are likely in the best position to make choices about practices and areas of work to focus upon. Therefore, ongoing awareness development regarding spirituality and depression in

counselling seems useful in providing more assurance that the counsellors' worldview is not imposed on the client. Ongoing awareness is also needed to insure counsellors are comfortable and familiar with spiritual matters so they can be addressed when or if they are raised by clients.

Spiritual Issues in Counselling the Depressed

Counsellors can be assisted in their work with the depressed by understanding counselling issues regarding spirituality and depression. These issues are outlined in terms of qualifying spirituality in counselling, religion and spirituality, depression and spirituality and spiritual emergencies. They are then compared to the participant findings.

Qualifying Spirituality's Usefulness in Counselling

It has been established in the counselling literature that spirituality can benefit the depressed in counselling (Nolan & Crawford, 1997, p. 289; Reed, 1992, p. 353; Westgate, 1996, pp 32-33). It has also been established that spirituality and counselling share a common goal of helping people to find purpose, meaning and fulfilment in their lives (Aponte, 1998, p. 37; Fukuyama & Sevig, 1997, pp. 233-235; Goddard, 1995, p.814). There is some literature that indicates that spirituality's benefit to the depressed in counselling needs to be qualified. For example, a few writers indicate that spirituality can be perceived as reducing self-determination. This can happen if spirituality is associated with uncritical acceptance of abusive conditions, surrendering to oppressive spiritual leadership or if one's spiritual doctrines produce excessive guilt or rigidity (Fukuyama, & Sevig, 1997, pp.237-239; Ingersoll, 1997, pp. 229-230). These kinds of associations also apply to the depressed (Prest & Keller, 1993, pp.139-142). If spirituality is associated with these conditions it can be oppressive and places it in conflict with central counselling goals of encouraging client choice and control in their lives.

A few participants felt that spirituality and counselling worked well together in that both tended to explore the depressed clients' worldview and was oriented to

improving peoples' lives. Concerns about certain aspects such as spirituality reducing choice or being associated with excessive guilt were viewed in terms of a need for counsellor awareness that spirituality cannot be assumed to be a positive influence in peoples' lives. In particular the influence from Christian Fundamentalism was seen as rigid and hierarchical and therefore problematic for improving one's life. This became even more an issue if a fundamentalist Christian counsellor were to impose this belief system on a client. In these situations the counsellor's spiritual approach was in direct conflict with goals of counselling. There was also discussion that many of the descriptions attributed to spirituality could be viewed by client or counsellor as reflecting an organised and rational belief system that had little to do with spirituality. From the clients' point of view, ideas introduced into counselling as spiritual could be rejected philosophically because they have redefined their understanding about life. This is a significant comment in that to argue for the potential of spirituality to help the depressed in counselling ultimately reflects reliance upon a set of beliefs and values. Therefore, spirituality's usefulness still resides in the acceptance of having certain fundamental beliefs and values and that its value in counselling relates to the extent that these beliefs and values reflect an interest or need on the part of the client. These considerations take us back to the importance of helping clients to explore their world to find for themselves a sense of meaning and purpose, which may or may not have spiritual implications.

Religion and Spirituality

Spirituality has been associated as meaning religion and this poses some problems for counsellors (Sermabeikian, 1994, p. 180). Spirituality in counselling generally represents something broader in meaning than religion (Benland, 1988, p. 453; Bristow-Braitman, 1995, p.412; Westgate, 1996, p. 27). However, spirituality historically has been associated with religion and, therefore, some people still make a link between the two (Dyson et al., 1997, p. 1183; Goddard, 1995, p. 809). The problem with this link is that when spirituality is associated with religion in counselling some clients can reject it. This may relate for some to religion being historically part of a belief system that colonised, persecuted or imposed their views on women, non-Western cultures or individuals with non-religious views (Donaldson, 1996, p. 198, p. 202; Fukuyama & Sevig, 1997, pp. 239-240; King, 1989, pp.20-21).

Therefore, counsellors may need to be sensitive that some people may have a strong negative reaction to spirituality or reject it outright if they associate it to these excluding and devaluing situations.

The connection of religion to spirituality created a very strong sense of debate and controversy amongst the participants. As indicated earlier, the Christian Fundamentalist were criticised for a tendency to impose a worldview and hierarchical structure on others without due regard to client self-determination. Christianity's patriarchal God, was also viewed as excluding the spirituality of women and encouraging hierarchical understanding of spirituality. There was also recognition that religion is problematic for many in counselling because of its past associations to cultural colonisation and the persecution of women in medieval Europe. Amongst some participants there was a sense of frustration that presently organised Christian religion was actively excluding gays and lesbians into the church and that this was unacceptable. At the same time these participants argued for a need to distinguish between the structure and beliefs coming from the organised Christian Church and Christian teachings. They felt that Christian teachings are often confused with some of the identified difficulties from organised religion and therefore Christian messages of acceptance, sacredness of all things, and concern for social justice was not being heard. These comments along with the literature may suggest that the topic of spirituality in connection to religion is very dynamic and that for some counsellors their religious background becomes an important primary resource to explore and evaluate their heritages and views. In my view, the interactions between religion and spirituality will continue to be mutually influencing and will become a more explicit reference for counsellors in their work.

Depression and Spirituality

Some literature suggests that depression itself is a spiritual malaise or crisis and that a core element of an individual's beliefs and values is no longer functioning when someone is depressed (Brink, 1993, p. 387; Hood Morris, 1996, p. 444). This literature suggests that spirituality and perhaps the lack of spirituality plays an important role in creating depression and also in relieving depression. The concept of interpreting depression as a form of spiritual loss or associated with being

disconnected from an important spiritual element in life is also indicated in other literature (Elkins, 1995, p.86; Fenn & Capps, 1995, p.2; Hunter, 1994, 23). Given this, it may help counsellors in their work with the depressed to investigate an interactive quality between spirituality and depression.

There was some discussion during interviews with participants that linked depression to spiritual difficulties in the client's life. The connection was described as the lack of spiritual hope, loss or disconnection with a divine element within the individual, and difficulties with one's spiritual beliefs. The comments suggested that these difficulties reduced meaning in life, which created a greater vulnerability to depression. These comments seem to reinforce what was identified in the literature (Westgate, 1996, p. 29). There was also a suggestion by a participant that depression could have a major effect on one's core spiritual beliefs and that the depression itself stemmed from a problem or limitation within one's core belief. This raises interesting questions about the possible spiritual nature of depression and whether depression is symptomatic of a problem in belief or hope. One could also speculate that for some people, depression functions like vehicle to move them closer to a healthier and perhaps deeper spiritual understanding. Within counselling, the tendency is to explore for deeper meaning and purpose. It would appear that depression can be a powerful force to encourage some people to question why they are depressed and why this is happening now (Nolan & Crawford, 1997, p. 289). Therefore depression may also create conditions that encourage greater spiritual exploration.

There was confirmation by the participants that positive elements could come out of being depressed and that the counsellors might be more aware of issues if they have had bouts of depression too. However, this was usually accompanied by concerns that these comments were not a statement that depression and pain were necessary in people's lives and that counsellors should not be naive to the power of some depression that can confront people. This latter comment relates to the participants' personal and emotional connection to life experience and depressed clients. All of the participants stressed the potentially devastating impact that depression can have on lives including that of the counsellor. This professional self-knowledge seemed pivotal in grounding the participants' comments because of their awareness that some depressed people did not survive their ordeals.

Overall, the literature indicated that there are multiple causes for depression (Cicchetti & Toth, 1998, p. 221). This was recognised by the participants and translated to mean that any discussion about spiritual assistance for the depressed would become problematic if it were simplistically understood and applied. The participants also indicated that in their counselling work they could become vulnerable to depression. There was a sense that their work with the depressed could bring them into contact with pain and was always challenging. There was recognition that spirituality could create a rebirth for the depressed but that this must always be balanced with the other reality that depression could create conditions of extreme vulnerability. There is merit in investigating the interactive qualities between spirituality and depression as long as this includes an appreciation for the needs of the depressed and insight that both counsellor and client can be vulnerable to depression.

Spiritual Emergencies

The transpersonal literature suggests that peoples' spirituality can be undeveloped or confined by their worldview and that through personal or social changes one's spirituality begins to rapidly emerge (Chandler et al., 1992, p. 169; Grof & Grof, 1995, p. 39; Hale, 1992, pp. 66-68; Walsh, 1992, pp.22-26). In the rapid emergence, unusual symptoms can arise and can be misjudged by health professionals as signs of personal pathology rather than increased spiritual awareness and development. There can be a role for counselling to support these individuals and to consider that their difficulties are not pathological in order not to undermine the inherent growth and development potential in these experiences (Watson, 1994, p. 24). There is literature available that identifies these difficulties as spiritual emergencies or spiritual distress and indicates ways to assist (Chandler et al., 1992, p. 170, pp.172-174). There is some evidence that these experiences may also alleviate the emotional difficulties associated with depression (Grof & Grof, 1995, p.190; Watson, 1994, p.22).

As was discussed in the first part of this study, the participants did not observe what is described as spiritual emergencies with depressed people that they counselled. There was a comment by one participant however about valuing theological traditions that deal with the " the dark night of the soul"(Hale, 1991, pp. 64-65). This comment can

be found in the literature and usually accompanies discussion about spiritual journeying, encountering depression and joy deep within, and experiencing the emergence of spiritual phenomena (Elkins, 1995, pp. 84-86). These same experiences can also become spiritual emergencies and as indicated earlier are of interest in counselling for their transformational qualities (Grof & Grof, 1995, pp. 50-51). The positive potential in spiritual emergencies is encouraging. However in my view, there can be problems if clients' unusual symptoms or experiences are untreated because counsellors see them as spiritual emergencies that will help them through depression. This could unnecessarily prolong peoples' pain. Rather, recognition is needed that positive elements can develop for some out of the pain or experience of depression.

Counsellors' Conceptions of Spirituality in Counselling

The next section will indicate that spiritual power, belonging and universal sacredness can be useful conceptualisations for counsellors to help them in their work with the depressed. I will link theory, literature and participant findings to do this.

Spiritual Power and Belonging

Spiritual power and belonging are useful ways to understand assisting the depressed in counselling. The counselling literature has indicated that counselling is influenced by Western society's views about gender, culture and worldview with power and belonging being important amongst these three factors. Ecofeminist, optimal and new science theories have suggested that Western views in counselling can create internal, external and relational conditions that are oppressive (Dennis, 1995, p.40; Griffin, 1990, pp. 87-88; Hera, 1995, pp.39-42; Mindell, 1996, p.72; Patterson, 1998, pp.288-289; Spretnak, 1990, p. 6). These conditions can be divisive and fragmenting by encouraging competition, hierarchies of worth, excessive individualism and limitation to identity development and spiritual growth (King, 1990, p. 113; Merchant, 1990, p.105). The theories also state that division and fragmentation are further aggravated by Western patriarchal, dualistic, cultural and secular beliefs (Bulhan, 1988, p. 260; Durie, 1989, pp. 15-16; Guitterez, 1995, pp.229-236; Ivey, 1995, p.55; Macy, 1989, p. 206; Sampson, 1988, p.17; Sue & Sue, 1990, p. 11). The theory also indicates that

liberation is possible by an inclusive sense of equality, self-determination and justice, which creates greater unity and integration (Enns, 1994, p.131; Merchant, 1990, p. 105; Myers et al., 1991,p. 56; Paterson & Trathen, 1994, p. 91). Liberating conditions are achieved by an inclusive enhancement of power and belonging (Myers & Speight, 1994, pp.111-112). As outlined in Chapter Three, rank theory indicates that devaluation, isolation and powerlessness create depression while empowerment and belonging alleviate depression (Gilbert, 1992b, pp.150-153). Therefore, according to the literature and theory, power and belonging are important ways to understanding helping the depressed given the existence of conditions that can be oppressive or liberating.

The literature indicates that spirituality is reduced through oppressive conditions and enhanced by liberating conditions (Adams, 1995, p. 202; Bulhan, 1988, p. 272; Dennis, 1995, p. 37; Griffin, 1989, pp.7-11; Ivey, 1995, p. 54; King, 1989, pp.22-25; Mindell, 1996, p. 69; Tapping, 1993, pp.31-32; Turbott, 1996, p. 722). It is also evident that spirituality alleviates depression and that depression is sometimes a result of spiritual difficulties. This suggests an interactive process regarding conditions that can enhance or diminish both spirituality and depression. Therefore, a useful way for counsellors to understand helping the depressed can be by enhancing a sense of individual and collective spiritual power and belonging. In the first part of this chapter, spirituality was regarded as providing purpose, meaning and motivation, supporting a guiding belief system, increasing coping ability and strengthening growth and development. It may be useful for counsellors to evaluate these attributes also in terms of their capacities to increase spiritual power and belonging with the depressed.

The participants, as a group, were sensitive to internal and external conditions of gender, culture, and worldview, which could be linked to spirituality and potentially could be oppressive and liberating. Their comments about these conditions frequently referred to power and belonging by references to integration, wholeness, equality, and connection as beneficial to the well-being of the depressed. They also indicated that through terms such as division, isolation, fragmentation, devaluation, and hierarchy, spiritual powerlessness and exclusion were harmful to the well-being of the depressed. Spirituality was generally regarded as a unifying presence that could

increase possibilities of connection and belonging to self and others. They also suggested that because of oppressive conditions spiritual power was useful in challenging these conditions by increasing individual and collective self-determination to improve quality of life. Overall, the value of spiritual power and belonging was implicit in many of the participant comments, which may indicate a constructive way forward with the depressed.

Universal Sacredness

Conceptualising spirituality in counselling in terms of a universal sacredness has merits for this research. Universal sacredness is not about creating a single view or truth that would diminish another person's spirituality. It is recognition of the sacredness of multiple spiritual views that counsellors may encounter with the depressed. Spiritual diversity is evident when writers begin to define and describe spirituality and how it can affect all aspects of being (Aponte, 1997, p.38; Bristow-Braitman, 1995, p. 414; Everts & Agee, 1994, p.292). Therefore, a universal sacredness facilitates counsellors' ability to be part of the potential diversity of spirituality while addressing the diversity in depressed clients' spiritual understanding and needs. Global sacredness has also been identified as fundamentally unifying and connecting aspect within spiritual diversity (Donaldson, 1996, p. 195; Goddard, 1995, p. 814; Morell, 1996, pp. 306-307). A universal view of sacredness in counselling encourages the development of a spiritual philosophy or approach that unifies in counselling within a context of connecting to spiritual diversity (Everts & Agee, 1994, pp. 292-293; Fukuyama & Sevig, 1997, p. 224; Ingersoll, 1997, p. 233; Sermabeikian, 1994, p. 182). This means counsellors do not compromise or devalue their beliefs, and have a rationale for not imposing their views on the client. It creates a situation where the counsellor can connect with the unifying aspects of spirituality and remains focused on respecting and understanding the client's spiritual view and needs (Westgate, 1996, p.34; Witmer & Sweeney, 1992, p.141). In summary, sacredness conceptualised universally potentially places the counsellor in a stronger position to explore and appreciate the commonality and differences within a spiritual dimension when helping the depressed (Myers et al., 1991, p.62; Speight et al 1991, pp.32-33; Witmer & Sweeney, 1992, p. 141)

It was interesting to note that the participants in this study reflected a diversity of spiritual views. As a group, they described being influenced by Christianity, Christian Humanism, Paganism and Maori spirituality. Their spiritual beliefs were in reference to a transcendent god, immanent goddess, life-force and creator of all things. Several of the participants further clarified that these spiritual views could also be described as sacredness, divinity, energy or primary source. Despite differences in spiritual views, all the participants spoke confidently about their spirituality and its assistance to them as counsellors, while continually reiterating the importance of not imposing their view on the client. Generally, their understanding of a spiritual presence applied to all aspects of life including our relationship with nature. There was also a sense that no one person can claim any ultimate knowledge of what is sacred. Therefore, respect in counselling involved acceptance of counsellor spiritual limitations about the sacred and an appreciation of events and activities that may be spiritual and cannot be fully explained. There was frequent reference to appreciating the differences in spiritual understanding and experience, which encouraged respect for the spiritual knowledge and sacredness of others.

Overall, the participants indicated sensitivity to connection and diversity. They felt their individual spiritual views helped them to connect with the depressed by viewing all people as sacred. Their respect for diversity was upheld by encouraging client self-determination and exploration of the clients' own spirituality and fostering equality between them and the client. Their spiritual thinking reflects the valuing of a universal sacredness found in the literature, while their emphasis on self-determination and equality seem to indicate a way to apply universal sacredness to counselling.

Research Limitations

There were limitations when considering the implications of this research. The sample size is small and therefore is only partially representative of counselling. There was also a preference in choosing a sample of participants who, like myself, were positive about the potential of spirituality in counselling. The research also focused only on what was reported by the participants. However, given that the use of

spirituality in counselling represents a much smaller segment of the counselling field, the findings in this study is more generalizable to the spiritually oriented segment of the counselling field. Further research with other sample groups is needed to establish more comparisons with the research findings in this study. The sample also was not entirely consistent in that only five of the six participants who use spirituality in relation to counselling work consider themselves counsellors. One participant identifies more with community work than counselling.

A few of the participants also identified that the term counselling is distinct from psychotherapy and psychology and that trained professionals from many fields do counselling work. This suggests that the term counselling is a very generic and does not account for possibly different emphases that may exist between people described as counsellors, psychotherapists and psychologists. It also suggests that many professionals involved with counselling work may come with a variety of health and social related training that influence their work. These influences were not fully tracked or fully clarified in this study. Therefore, the scope of professionals who apply under the term counselling is very wide. Subsequent studies of this nature are likely to require more precise terminology than counsellor or may need to use several terms to reflect different types of therapeutic work. Comparing findings that use terms other than counsellor to the findings in this research may give more information about the impact of background and training to practice.

The questions that spirituality potentially assists the depressed and how this could be understood to assist counsellors in their work were both explored and clarified. Exploring these questions did provide some insights about spirituality in counselling and the spiritual needs of the depressed. However, this study has only focused the fieldwork on the perceptions of participants who do counselling work and has not explored the clients' viewpoint. Clients' views on this subject are an essential ingredient to consider here and would provide a valuable means if investigated to further clarify the results from this study.

Future Research

The findings in this research encourage further study of depressed clients' perceptions about spirituality's benefit to them. This research could also be reviewed with counsellors from another country and perhaps consider using a larger sample size. This would provide more information in which to compare with the results from this study. This research has also indicated some support in the literature and by one participant for conceptualising the depressed as having difficulties with a core spiritual belief and value system (Brink, 1993, p. 384). I would be interested in further researching this area. Finally, this research has pointed out the presence of barriers to using spirituality in counselling. This is an important discovery requiring more investigation because it highlights a dynamic between strengths and weaknesses in using spirituality in counselling. It identifies that counsellors are sensitive to the dangers that counsellors' spirituality can be imposed on the client. However their cautionary approach can also miss important opportunities in participating in powerful and meaning change with clients.

Summary and Conclusions

This study provides clarity and suggestions about counselling, spirituality and depression. It indicates that spirituality may be beneficial to well-being of the depressed and that difficulties with one's spirituality could be a factor when investigating the needs of the depressed client. Although there is some interconnection with having a vibrant spirituality and resiliency to depression there were also indications that the depressed also have special spiritual needs. In particular, the depressed client often feels a spiritual sense of isolation, devaluation, and lack of power. Spirituality that is empowering and enhances belonging and worth may provide a useful way to meet these needs.

This research encourages personal and professional awareness. Counsellor awareness of spirituality and depression could result in increased sensitivity about the connection of spirituality and depression to gender, culture, and worldview. Spirituality and

depression are also potentially affected by conditions that can be oppressive or liberating. This understanding could be further extended by a view involving our subjective, relational and objective spiritual realities in holistic and interactive processes. This understanding is congruent with systemic therapies common in counselling and can now be supported scientifically by current research in physics and biology. Awareness or development of spiritual counselling philosophies and approaches, which address connection and diversity, may also assist counsellors. A process of becoming knowledgeable in this way can increase confidence to utilise their spirituality, avoid imposing a counselling view on the depressed. This knowledge also strengthens the counsellors' ability to assist the depressed with a variety of spiritual needs while encouraging them to explore their spirituality. It can also help in looking at barriers to using spirituality and to understand them appropriately thereby reducing missed opportunities of helping the depressed.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview Questions

1) Could you describe your training, approach and work place environment (ie. public/private) as it relates to counselling?

2) Describe the primary client group you serve in terms of gender, class, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, ability/disability and age?

3) What factors do you think contribute to client depression (ie. marginalisation, inequalities, disempowerment, oppression, and personal/social... other)?

4) Could you describe the beliefs, values and philosophy of your spiritual perspective for yourself and the client?

5) Does your spiritual perspective assist the depressed? If so, how?

   i) Does your spiritual perspective address all of the factors you have identified as contributing to depression?

   ii) Does your spiritual perspective assist the depressed client in the following ways:

      a) Meaning in life (meaning, hope, purpose, and strength).
      b) Core values (individual and community).
      c) Transcendence (relating to a greater spiritual presence in one's life)
      d) Community involvement (living and sharing with others).
      e) Empowerment and belonging.

6) Are there limitations with your perspective in helping the depressed?

Appendix 2: Information Sheet

FOR THE RESEARCH PROJECT OF
USING SPIRITUALITY IN
COUNSELLING THE DEPRESSED

Bruce Stewart
Palmerston North

Dear

Thank-you for agreeing to be involved with this research project. I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself and to further clarify my research. My name is Bruce Stewart and I am a postgraduate student at the Department of Social Policy and Social Work at Massey University conducting a research project for my Masters thesis. My research is on the use of spirituality in counselling to assist the depressed by empowering them in their personal and social life. I will be conducting six interviews with experienced counsellors who use spirituality with depressed clients. You have been chosen either from my professional contact directly with you or you have been recommended to me by other professionals. This research is being carried out under the supervision of Dr. Celia Briar from the department. If you have any questions we can be contacted at Massey University at 350-5220.

The research involves conducting taped interviews. For your participation, I will be inviting you to discuss and sign a consent form to conduct your interview. This will be a maximum of one and a half hours in duration. It involves discussing your practice based on a few questions about your use of spirituality in counselling and its connection to working with the depressed. During the interview, you have the right to ask any questions, refuse to answer any or all questions and can choose to withdraw at any time. The interview will be transcribed for analysis afterwards. All steps will be taken to preserve your anonymity in this project. No names will be recorded on tapes and there will be only one copy of my initial contact list, which will be kept in my home. The transcriptionist will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement. A draft copy of the transcription of your interview will be sent to you so that if you are uncomfortable with the information you can remove or alter any or all comments. Once the research is completed, a summary of the findings will be sent to you. Your tape can either be returned to you or erased by me, whichever you prefer.

I will be contacting you in the next few weeks to further discuss your willingness to participate and to set up an interview time.

Sincerely,

Bruce W. Stewart

Appendix 3: Consent Form

SPIRITUALITY IN COUNSELLING:
ITS POTENTIAL IN ALLEVIATING DEPRESSION.

I have read the Information Letter and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I understand I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time and to decline to answer any particular questions.

I agree to provide information to the researcher on the understanding that my name will not be used without my permission. The information will be used only for this research and publications arising from this research project.

I agree/do not agree to the interview being audio taped. I also understand that I have the right to ask for the audio tape to be turned off at any time during the interview.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Letter.

SIGNED: _____

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Appendix 4: Feedback Request

Bruce Stewart
54 Church Street
Palmerston North

November 24, 1998

Dear   ,

Pleased find enclosed a copy of the three chapters that summarize my findings. I am also enclosing the tape used for your interview. No other copies of the tape have been made and it is yours to keep. If possible, please review this material within a fortnight and give me feedback if you want something removed, added or altered. There are six participants mentioned in the findings and each was given another name to protect their confidentiality. You are identified as _____ . Once my thesis is completed I will be sending you a copy of my conclusions.

I can be reached at my home telephone number at 358-2230 or through my supervisor Celia Briar in the Social Policy and Social Work Department at Massey University at 350-5222. My mailing address is the same as indicated above.

I wish to thank you again for your participation.

Sincerely,

Bruce Stewart

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