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ADDRESSING SPIRITUALITY IN THE COUNSELOR SUPERVISION RELATIONSHIP

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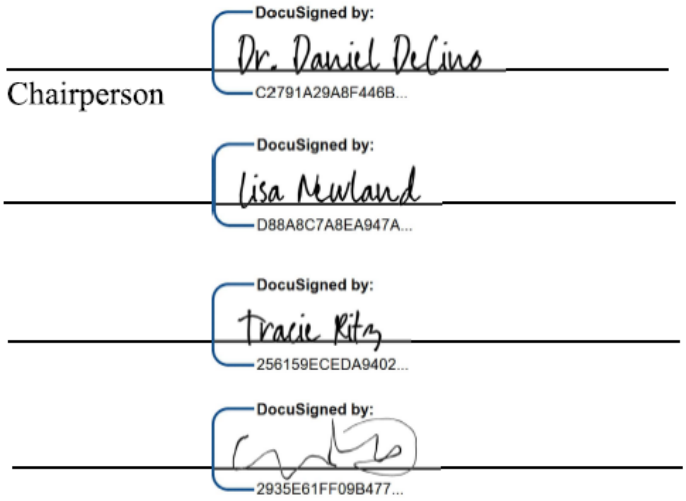

Abstract

A qualitative, phenomenological study was implemented to investigate the experiences of independently licensed supervisors who oversee counselors who utilize the 12 steps in the work done with those dealing with substance use disorders. Seven participants from the Midwest completed an initial semi-structured interview, journaling activity, and follow-up interview. Data was subjected to member checks and an external audit to ensure themes were trustworthy. Two overall textural-structural themes were found through the integration of the initial nine themes developed; five textual themes describing *what* was experienced (acknowledging resistance and consideration, using spirituality as a tool, acknowledging differences and diversity, observed growth and development, additional awareness) and four structural themes describing *how* spirituality was experienced by 12 step supervisors (diversity of experience with spirituality and religion, role of community, effect of workplace culture, holistic nature of spirituality). The use of spirituality as a resource and having consideration in spiritualities role in everything were found to be the underlying foundation of the phenomenon found across the participants' shared experiences. The findings of the study support the utilization of spirituality as a resource by supervisors, supervisees, and clients. The importance of acknowledging the role of spirituality as an aspect of culture invites the exploration, discussion, and continuing education of the diversity of experiences an individual may have. Those who supervise others, whether in an agency or in the classroom, can introduce these forms of exploration through differing formats.

Dissertation Chair: Daniel DeCino, PH.D

Dr. Daniel DeCino

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Chapter I

Introduction

Identity development has been an area that has been commonly researched and has been found to be a crucial component in the work that is done within the professional field of counseling (Evans & Foster, 2000; Kaplan & Garner, 2017; Topolewska & Cieciuch, 2017; Van Hesteren & Ivey, 1990; Vinson & Neimeyer, 2000). Many different identities are developing and forming within individuals over time such as identities of a professional, racial, social, leadership, and gender (Evans & Foster, 2000; Hall, 2015; Van Hesteren & Ivey, 1990; Vinson & Neimeyer, 2000). The concept of spirituality and religion is another area of identity which is formed within both the counselor and the client (Hage et al., 2006). The concept of spirituality and religion has been identified, but often portrayed in a negative light in the early years of counseling, while focusing instead on a more naturalistic scientific approach (Hage, et al., 2006). Counseling has often been addressed in the field of psychology and integrating spirituality has continued to be difficult within coursework and supervision (Berkel et al., 2007; Hage, et al., 2006; Zinnbauer et al., 1999), but addressing an individual in a holistic manner requires for there to be investigation and interest within this area (Arredondo et al., 1996). An individual's spirituality can be a trove of information about their past, morals and values, and gives the counselor an idea on how they may deal with stressful situations (Hage, et al., 2006; Schaffner & Dixon, 2003). This can be the case, whether they are an educator, supervisor, counselor, or client. Through the exploration of cultural differences, the counselor can create an environment for the client to be open and walk together through the client's cultural experience. It would then make sense this approach and impact could also occur within the supervisory relationship. Through understanding the supervisors' experience of their own spiritual identity, the spiritual

identity of the supervisee, and the meaning these identities have for the supervisor could create further direction for educational focus and cultural competency education.

When considering spirituality, it is important to look at the diversity present within the population of a community and the changes which continue to occur of a spiritual nature (Hill et al., 2000; Pew Research Center, 2015; Zinnbauer et al., 1999) as these have been known to be culturally pertinent and play a role in aspects of mental health and wellness (Hill et al., 2000). In a 2014 survey of 35,000 Americans exploring the diversity of spiritual beliefs, there were three primary groups identified (Christian, Non-Christian faiths, and unaffiliated), a total of 15 different religious affiliations were acknowledged between the three such as Protestant, Muslim, Buddhist, Atheist, and nothing in particular (Pew Research Center, 2015). To further reinforce the variety of religious affiliations, it is also worth noting within the survey, the Protestant affiliation was also broken into three distinct categories as well (Evangelical, Mainline, and Historically Black). As there can be such diversity in beliefs, it is important to take this into account when working with others.

An additional change has been found regarding a level of belief and spirituality where there has been a decline in religious affiliation and increase in religious disaffiliation compared to an earlier study performed by the Pew Research Center in 2007 (Pew Research Center, 2018). A more recent survey shows a decrease in a Christian belief in higher power, but an increase in the belief in some type of higher power or spiritual force, better known as agnosticism. The decrease does not appear to be a new phenomenon since its first report during the 40s and through the 70s (Zinnbauer et al., 1999). Understanding the various groups of faith, whether religious or spiritual, practicing within a country can assist professionals in identifying and assessing societal context of cultural functions (Bauer, 2012). Within the U.S., regions such as

the Midwest, Great Plains, and Pacific Northwest can be identified as highly diverse belt within the country, while regions such as the Southwest, intermountain West, South, and Northeast are defined by clusters of less spiritually diverse populations (Bauer, 2012, p. 523). Since the development of these regions in 1961, there have been few changes in the spiritual group makeup. It is important to acknowledge a continued value placed in spirituality by people in the United States (Hill et al., 2000; Pew Research Center, 2015, 2018) as these concepts of belief have been found to have positive effects in both physical and mental health (Harvey & Silverman, 2007).

Raising and addressing spirituality within the treatment of disorders has been found to be effective with many different disorders, including schizophrenia (Ho et al., 2016), post-traumatic stress disorder (Glas, 2007), depression (Paine & Sandage, 2017), and substance use disorders (Horton et al., 2016; Lyons et al., 2011). In treating individuals with schizophrenia, spirituality was found to be important in the process of rehabilitation and the clients' well-being by both the client and the professional (Ho et al., 2016). The perception of how spirituality plays a role in the process of rehabilitation was diametrically different between the two parties involved, creating insight into how the differences in spiritual belief and understanding can be integrated in services. Having a strong connection with personal spirituality has also been found to reduce symptoms of anxiety and assists in coping with traumatic events related to post-traumatic stress disorder (Glas, 2007); in comparison, having a high level of spiritual instability and disappointment with an individual's God figure brought about more depressive symptoms, while spiritual involvement tended to show lowered risk of depressive symptoms (Paine & Sandage, 2017).

An intricate relationship can be found between the concept of spirituality and the utilization of the 12-steps of recovery. The 12-steps serve as a valuable tool within various support groups like Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA), with their influence extending across diverse groups that have evolved over the years (Mustain & Helminiak, 2015). Remarkably, the message embedded in these steps has the power to transcend inherent differences among individuals, including those related to race, gender, and religion (Steiker & Scarborough, 2011). While the 12 steps are often perceived as explicitly religious due to the language used and the emphasis on surrendering one's will and life to a higher power through prayer and meditation (Alcoholics Anonymous, 2001; Kelly, 2016), there is a dynamic shift in the composition of these support groups. This shift has resulted in varying perceptions of spirituality, influenced by the diverse nature of the groups (Kelly, 2016; Mustain & Helminiak, 2015). Consequently, the understanding of a higher power in general AA and similar meetings has become subjective, creating a spectrum of perspectives (Mustain & Helminiak, 2015).

Spirituality has been known to play an important role in the treatment of substance use disorders (Horton et al., 2016; Lyons et al., 2011), as well as co-occurring disorders the client may also be experiencing such as a personality disorder (Horton et al., 2016). Personality disorders, such as borderline, histrionic, narcissistic, and antisocial, had a negative correlation between symptomology and spiritual components around the idea of life. Working in a psycho-spiritual manner could help to reduce psychopathology and improve outcomes in treatment through exploring the existential questions about purpose and meaning of life with the client. Similar findings were found in the treatment of substance use disorders and focusing on spiritual aspects of forgiveness, resentments, and meaning of life (Lyons et al., 2011). The 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous were used as a guide in identifying spiritual aspects within the sample

studied. The findings pointed to higher levels of spirituality related to forgiveness and meaning of life lead to lower levels of resentment and shame which can end in returning to the drug of choice. These findings raise more questions of how individuals relate to religion and spirituality, often leaving the answers to be found within the interactions and experiences with these individuals.

As counselors grapple with the complexities of spirituality and cultural competence in addiction treatment, it becomes evident that understanding the intricate interplay between these factors is essential for effective therapeutic interventions. Navigating the landscape of cultural competence and the importance of maintaining ethical boundaries can be a possible stumbling block for early counselors (Arredondo et al., 1996; Goh, 2005; Taylor et al., 2006; Sue et al., 1992; Vinson & Neimeyer, 2000). Being able to address the different facets of an individual's cultural background in a proper and appropriate way, such as showing an openness to discuss cultural differences, is an observable form of culturally competent work (Berkel et al., 2007; Burton & Furr, 2014; Goh, 2005; Hage, et al., 2006; Rogers-Sirin et al., 2015). The importance of multicultural competence is reinforced by groups such as the American Counseling Association (ACA) and Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) as both cite culture within the ethical standards of counseling (ACA, 2014) and the credentialing standards for counselor education programs (CACREP, 2024). Institutions providing previous courses to address the cultural component of spirituality have been found to be important in the future work of a counselor (Berkel et al., 2007; Hage, et al., 2006; Schaffner & Dixon, 2003), as well as having a counselor educator that is willing to address and work with levels of comfort when addressing cultural differences within a classroom (Burton & Furr, 2014). The importance of working in a culturally competent manner can better prepare future

counselors to work with a very diverse population seeking services. The same can be said about the supervision process as evidenced by the training requirements for Accepted Clinical Supervisors (ACS) and the content of examination for the Clinical Supervisor (CS) credential (Center for Credentialing and Education, 2024).

Someone seeking the ACS credential must complete educational training by CACREP standards which focuses on clinical supervision (CCE, 2015). CACREP's standards for the education of counselors, counselor educators, and supervisors makes mention the importance of cultural competency and knowledge of how multiple cultures are present within society (CACREP, 2024). For example, section 2 focuses on professional counseling identity, the standard of having current knowledge and knowledge of projected needs around multicultural and pluralistic society is presented. The International Credentialing & Reciprocity Consortium (IC&RC) offers the CS credential after completing an examination to ensure the applicant understands and utilizes specific content areas appropriately similar to the ACS (IC&RC, 2017). Within the first domain tested on, cultural competence is addressed multiple times for exploration and awareness within the supervisee and populations worked with in order to work with differing "values, attitudes, and world views" (IC&RC, 2017, p. 12).These standards in credentialing reinforce the importance of presenting the multicultural aspects, such as spirituality, while educating supervision professionals (Hage, et al., 2006; Pate & Bondi, 1992; Schaffner & Dixon, 2003).

Social and cultural diversity is also a common core area found to be foundational knowledge required within the education of all entry-level counselors (CACREP, 2024). In regard to supervision specifically, the CACREP standards direct the education of supervisors in "culturally relevant strategies in conducting clinical supervision," (CACREP, 2024, p.34) and

"legal and ethical issues and responsibilities in clinical supervision" (CACREP, 2024, p.27). Considering the ethical standards of supervisors regarding this concept, section F.2.b of the ACA code of ethics states, "Counseling supervisors are aware of and address the role of multiculturalism/diversity in the supervisory relationship" (ACA, 2014, p.13). The standards placed on supervisors by the CCE, CACREP, and ACA demonstrate the importance of addressing multicultural competency within the supervisory process, identifying the why there may be a further need to understand how spirituality is experienced within the supervisory role.

As addressing spirituality within a counseling setting can be so difficult to navigate, it may be important to find mentors and supervisors who are willing to work with a counselor who is just starting to practice after graduate school. Having a better understanding of the importance of the spiritual identity of mentors and clinical supervisors in the field could help in further defining areas of change that could help future clinicians.

Purpose of the Study

As individual definitions of spirituality continue to expand and adding to the diversity of culture (Zinnbauer et al., 1999), this continues to highlight the importance of clinical counselors remaining aware of their cultural competency and sensitivity to their client's needs. The American Counseling Association (ACA, 2014) code of ethics and CACREP standards (CACREP, 2024) identifies the importance of cultural sensitivity in the definition and experience of problems by clients, the need to be aware of cultural differences when selecting and using assessments, and being able to address culture within a supervisory role. To ensure clinical counselors continue to be prepared to meet these challenges with clients, supervisors are a critical component to guide and develop the professional in their work (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009; Campbell, 2006; Powell & Brodsky, 2004). Supervising individuals in addiction treatment

within the framework of a 12-step program can be challenging, particularly when incorporating spiritual elements (Kelly, 2016). This complexity arises from the diverse range of spiritual concepts embraced by participants in treatment (Alcoholics Anonymous, 2001; Kelly, 2016).

The purpose of this study is to explore the phenomenon of how spirituality is experienced by supervisors in the addiction field, specifically those working within 12-step based programs, through the use of interviews and journaling. The following research question will guide the investigation: Through a series of interviews and a journaling prompt, what experiences do supervisors within substance abuse centers share and express with the investigator when considering the concept of spirituality within their work? This question will be addressed through the following sub-questions:

1. What meaning, if any, do supervisors place on their own spirituality?
2. What meaning, if any, do supervisors place on the supervisee's spirituality?
3. How do supervisors experience their own spiritual identity in a supervision session?
4. How do supervisors experience a supervisee's spiritual identity in a supervision session?

Limitations of the Study

By identifying possible limitations within this potential study, the researcher can take steps to reduce the effects of the limitations and rectify possible issues. Possible issues which may arise are the lack of consistent supervisors within the field of addiction counseling due to turnover (Knight et al., 2011), as well as the lack of education and training in the area of supervision (West & Hamm, 2012).

Summary

Through this research, a greater awareness of how the concepts of spirituality and supervision interact may be gained to provide direction in addressing spiritual considerations through teaching students looking to enter the field, a space for supervisees to explore spiritual identity within agencies supporting a 12-step focus, as well as ways to help prepare and continue to educate supervisors on addressing the concept of spirituality. From understanding lived experiences, possible suggestions can be formulated to help promote further cultural competency development within the field of supervision and addictions counseling. Supervisors providing culturally competent work with counselors under supervision improves the possibility of culturally informed care being passed on to the work with clients, offering ethical services and individualized treatment.

Definition of Terms

Religion: An active searching for significance through the sacred by involvement in institutions, traditions, mythologies often within a larger group of individuals (Zinnbauer et al., 1999).

Spirituality: The personal subjective relationship with the concepts of higher power, inner motivations, a search for meaning in life, and/or a connection with religious traditions (Zinnbauer et al., 1999).

Faith: A concept present within a variety of religions, faith is a direction for an individual's purpose, goals, hopes, and actions observed through a combination of will, peace, and meaning (Fowler, 1981).

Identity: "The distinguishing character or personality of an individual" (Merriam-Webster, n.d) which is the foundation of behavioral, affective, and cognitive components related

to factors such as employment, relationships, politics, or religion as examples (Broderick & Blewitt, 2019).

Multicultural Competence: The ability and willingness to address experiences and perceptions of various cultural aspects with those served, while also keeping an awareness, having knowledge, and the skills to create an effective environment for work and functioning under the multiple cultural contexts present (Sue et al., 1992; Sue & Sue, 2013).

Chapter II

Literature Review

The findings within previous literature can provide insight on cultural competence within the field of counseling, the importance of supervision, the development of spirituality, stages of faith, and how identity can play a role in the counseling process. Within this chapter, these areas of focus will be explored in greater detail to identify the need for this particular study within the field. The concepts explored will begin from the broadest concepts of spirituality, morality, and identity. The concepts will then narrow down to cultural competency, its relation to counseling and the profession of supervision. Connections will be made through the exploration of these concepts.

Development of Spirituality

The concept of religion and spirituality has been recorded and reported within the lives of humans predating historical documents (Aslan, 2011; Segal, 2004; Srivastava et al., 2013) and can have different roles in a person's life depending on who you ask (Zinnbauer et al., 1997; Zinnbauer et al., 1999). The focus on religious and spiritual beliefs within the field of psychology and counseling have also been found to be difficult to objectively conceptualize and address in areas such as the classroom or agency office (Berkel et al., 2007; Hage, et al., 2006; Zinnbauer et al., 1999). The development of a form of religiosity, spirituality, and faith has been observed over time and through a series of stages (Fowler, 1981) similar to other areas of human growth and development (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Kohlberg, 1984; Srivastava et al., 2013). As the concept of religion and spirituality appears to be present in the lives of many individuals (McKenzie, & Jensen, 2017; Srivastava et al., 2013; Steiker, & Scarborough, 2011; Wahrman, 1981; Zinnbauer et al., 1999) acknowledging how it

effects their lives is important. This can be witnessed frequently when the focus is turned unto the concept of a higher power and spirituality as occurs within addiction counseling services focusing on the 12-step model of recovery (Kelly, 2016; Mustain & Helminiak, 2015; Steiker, & Scarborough, 2011). Due to the broad nature of spirituality and its effects on individuals, the exploration will be broken into multiple sections. First, an understanding of the ways religion and spirituality are defined will help set a context of the present study. Next, an exploration of how faith and morality are developed and intersect with supervisor's clinical experiences are needed. Finally, an examination of how religion and spirituality intersect with 12-step programs ties together how supervisors may experience spirituality in substance abuse treatment programs.

Defining Religion and Spirituality

The definitions of religion and spirituality are broad and differ depending on who is defining these concepts (Zinnbauer et al., 1997). There are multiple ways of understanding religion and spirituality and range from being very concrete in nature to a definition which is deeply abstract. In regard to the concept of religion the definitions given within the literature emphasize references to supernatural or mystical experiences, social values, group concerns, and attendance at church activities such as services. Through the many different definitions of spirituality, a diversity of concepts is also present similar to religion. These concepts could overlap with the definitions of religion such as traditional institutions or organized structures, systems of thoughts and beliefs. There are also concepts that can be independent from religion such as increased connectedness, positive states of being, and concerns with existential questions. This diversity in the definitions that researchers in the field hold about these concepts can often mirror the diversity found in the different populations served within the field. Within

these definitions a trend appears of religion being objective in nature, while spirituality is subjectively individualized.

Fowler's Stages of Faith Development

When considering spirituality and religion, faith is an additional concept which can be taken into consideration as well. A formal and comprehensive definition of faith can be stated as such:

> People's evolved and evolving ways of experiencing self, others and world (as they construct them) as related to and affected by the ultimate conditions of existence (as they construct them) and of shaping their lives' purposes and meanings, trust and loyalties, in light of the character of being, value and power determining the ultimate conditions of existence (as grasped in their operative images – conscious and unconscious – of them). (Fowler, 1981, pp. 92-93)

Faith by nature is often subjective and is based upon an individual's life experiences, social environment, and identity development (Fowler, 1981). Changes in environment, people, ideas, and beliefs can also be a catalyst for developmental changes (Powell et al., 2012). Through these developments, strong connections can be seen between the social and relational aspects of an individual.

The development of faith occurs over a lifetime, spanning from infancy to maturity and can be seen through different interactions throughout this time (Fowler, 1981). Fowler's development of this model is related to parallels in the stages of various models of human development and is presented initially as a conversation between individuals like Erikson, Piaget, and Kohlberg. The development of faith is presented in six defined stages (Appendix A), with an undifferentiated stage at the beginning of development. Similar to other developmental models,

the opportunities of growth and movement can be observed within individuals as they transfer to each stage. By exploring the observable qualities, strengths presented, and struggles within stages possible solutions may be presented to an individual to help in moving them to a new level of their awareness in faith.

Fowler (1981) identifies the concept of faith being first presented in a pre-stage of undifferentiated faith where the child experiences trust, courage, hope and love. This first level of faith sees these positive feelings used to help cope with negative experiences of feelings of abandonment, inconsistencies, and other deprivations within the environment. A difficulty found within this pre-stage of faith is the inaccessibility of empirical research to bring about strong support to these ideas, but similar to other early stages of development the positive or negative qualities which emerge can help or hinder in the later stages of faith. Positive qualities which may enhance the growth in later stages of faith are those of trust, mutuality between the infant and those providing care. The negative qualities which may hinder the growth of faith are extremes on either side of mutuality, being a sense of egocentric importance of the infant or that of neglect leaving a sense of isolation or lack of mutuality. The initial sign of transition to the first defined stage of faith is through the use of thought and language together, allowing for the use of symbolism in speech and ritualistic play (Fowler, 1981).

The first stage of faith is the intuitive-projective faith often experienced at the ages of three to seven defined by a sense of fantasy and imitation found to be powerful and influential through the use of examples, moods, actions, and stories of visible faith presented by adults (Fowler, 1981). It is through the thought process of children at this age they can use their imagination and fantasy to define meaning behind novel encounters. It is the unrestrained imaginative process which assists this stage, while also unhindered by logical thought, in

creating both positive and negative long-lasting images and feelings. These points can then be sorted out through developing stable and self-reflective thinking, leading to an initial level of self-awareness of deeper concepts such as death, sex, and the taboos associated with some of these concepts. The strengths observed emerging from this stage are that of imagination, the unification of experience and self-made images, and the skill of using these stories to understand more existential concepts such as the ultimate conditions of existence. A possible danger which may arise is the unrestrained imagination leading with concepts of terror and destructiveness. The imagination could also reinforce concepts of taboos, moral or doctrinal expectations. The primary factor of transition is the emergence of concrete operational thinking, resolution of relational issues, and a yearning to understand better how things work around the individual (Fowler, 1981).

The second stage, mythic-literal faith, is the point where the individual begins assimilating the stories, beliefs, and observances of their community as a way of belonging (Fowler, 1981). The symbols and morals are given a more linear and literal sense in the conceptualization process. It is also during this time where the imaginative processes in the previous stage are ordered and sorted to find what fits with the literal understandings presented to the individual. This stage is marked by taking on the perspectives of others around the individual and a focus on fairness, justice, and reciprocity. The strength within this stage is the development of narrative, story, and myth as a way to find and give coherence to experiences within life. The literal factor within this stage can bring about the limitation of creating an overcontrolling or strongly biased view of experiences. The opposite can also be created of a severe sense of badness, neglect, or mistreatment present within those present significant others. The catalyst for transition is conflicts, clashes, and contradictions between differing narratives

leading to the pursuit of meaning in the individual. This could be through the disillusionment of a previous teacher or mentor, or through differing narratives such as a religious creation story compared to the theory of evolution. Through these situations the individual is pushed to find a way to unify personal beliefs and beliefs of others around them in a more personal manner (Fowler, 1981).

Synthetic-conventional faith is the third stage of faith development, defined by an individual's experiences now extending past their family and entering a number of other microcosms such as school, peers, media, or perhaps religion (Fowler, 1981). Faith is now being used to unify values and information from other areas of life and provide a foundation for personal identity and outlook. This is a stage often found in adolescence but is also observed in adulthood as a place of equilibrium. The stage can be defined through conformity as focus can be seen on expectations and judgements from significant others. At this point, there is also not a strongly defined personal identity to be maintained autonomously. An ideology is present in a sense, but it may not be defined or even in a place of awareness. Authority is often placed in traditional authority roles or within a strongly valued group of personal peers. Creating a personal myth, or how one came to a personal identity of faith, and the anticipated future is the positive capacity of this stage. The extremes of expectations and evaluations are the potential deficits present within this stage. Having such a strict understanding of expectations could lead to a lack of autonomy of judgment or action or an issue leading to some pain may create a form of despair about personal principles of being. Serious clashes, contradictions, or major changes are seen as the transition or breakdown of the third stage into the fourth. These often lead to critical reflection of one's own beliefs and identifying how these beliefs and values formed or

changed. This experience frequently parallels an experience of leaving a comfort zone physically or emotionally leading to this examination of self (Fowler, 1981).

Movement from the third stage of faith development to individuative-reflective faith in the fourth stage is one of unavoidable conflict as there is a battle between individuality and being defined by a group or membership to a group (Fowler, 1981). A drive for concepts of self-fulfillment and self-actualization is of primary focus rather than service to others from within the group. Although this stage has been found to take form in young adulthood, some adults do not construct this stage, or it may not emerge until around their forties. During the fourth stage two developments may be witnessed: a development of self or identity and of an outlook or world view. Through this symbology and mythology can be deconstructed down to conceptual meanings. These strengths can also hold dangers whereas excessive confidence in these meanings developed through self and outlook can create a similar issue from a past stage, a strict understanding of the concepts constructed with no flexibility for other points of view. These many different points of view, alternative understandings of faith, or previous concepts from past stages can create a dissonance within the individual's understanding of faith and create a need for a more dialectic take on faith and meaning (Fowler, 1981).

The fifth stage is considered conjunctive faith and revolves around the unification of self and outlook that was suppressed or unknown to maintain consistency of the fourth stage of faith (Fowler, 1981). This stage takes concepts from the past and reworks them through a deepening understanding of the self, while also addressing unconscious factors such as prejudice, ideal images, and class. This stage allows for vulnerability to other views and perceptions on topics to help find unification of opposites within the individual's worldview. This stage often is not observed until mid-life and seeks to help develop the faith of others by generating identity and

meaning. The strength of this stage is an ability to be part of a personal or groups' worldview and understanding, while also being aware of the other understandings from other groups. This also introduces the possible danger of passivity or inaction and complacency due to the paradoxical nature of a belief in many different truths. For many this is the final observed stage of faith and is fluid with changes in group and understanding, but some face a final radical stage of actualization (Fowler, 1981).

The final stage of faith is called universalizing faith and is not often experienced by many (Fowler, 1981). Through the previous steps of faith, the individual has faced a series of constructions of concepts, integration of other ideas, deconstruction of identity, and reconstruction. The fifth stage of faith can be considered a challenge in finding unification between paradoxical views, mythologies, traditions, and group norms to name some concepts. It is through this final stage of faith that the individual is able to create a compositional understanding of faith which can allow for multiple points of view to be accepted in an all-inclusive manner. Through the work of individuals within a universalizing stage, environments are created which allow for others to feel this sense of liberation from the constraints of strict views on society, politics, economics, or ideologies. Examples of these individuals are often seen as dangers to the status quo and their work may continue after their passing such as Gandhi, Mother Teresa, or Martin Luther King Jr. (Fowler, 1981).

The concept of faith development occurs over time and can be observed differently between individuals. This general framework provides a guide for how one develops their faith in a higher power and others around them. The development of faith and spirituality have strong connections, but there have been contradictory findings between these concepts with moral development (McKenzie, & Jensen, 2017; Srivastava et al., 2013; Wahrman, 1981).

Understanding how these concepts have been explored and the different findings within previous studies continue to reflect the diversity in thought and development regarding spirituality (McKenzie, & Jensen, 2017; Wahrman, 1981).

Moral Development

Moral development has been a point of focus for many years and multiple models have been identified and evolved over those years (Srivastava et al., 2013). The connection between morality and the spiritual aspects of religion has been found to have contradictory findings within the research (McKenzie, & Jensen, 2017; Wahrman, 1981). Identifying how these concepts are related within the development of an individual helps to reveal a level of importance of fusing cultural aspects with the developmental lenses when investigating a person in a holistic manner (McKenzie, & Jensen, 2017).

Models of moral development range in their understanding and conceptualization of how, when, and why an individual or group believe something is either good or bad and how to react to situational dilemmas (Srivastava et al., 2013). Bronfenbrenner and his associates (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998) presented a bioecological theory that all development occurs due to proximal process and distal processes**.** The proximal processes are defined as reactions to people around the individual, the environment they are a part of, or the symbology present in their life. The distal processes are internal traits such as genetics. Through these two processes, development took on a surface level conceptualization that did not immediately address the internal thinking of the individual. This concept is addressed through the cognitive theories of moral development, which were pioneered by the research of Piaget and Kohlberg (Broderick & Blewitt, 2019).

Piaget presented a two-stage model, with a pre-moral stage during the preschool years of life (Piaget, 1932). During the pre-moral stage, the child has no concern about rules and will create their own rules for the world around them. The first formal stage of morality development, heteronomous morality, is understood by the child as concrete rules set by authority figures within their lives. The rules which are set are absolute and if violated always lead to punishment. Autonomous morality within the second stage is constructed as the adolescent begins to move past the consequences of action dictating right or wrong, but instead being able to see morality connected to the intentions of the action and a flexibility with rules. It is at this point the individual begins to see social rules as a way to promote positive values like cooperation, equality and justice.

Kohlberg (1984) expands the concept of cognitive moral development with three different levels of thought broken into two stages at each level. The first level of moral development is the preconventional level morality (Kohlberg, 1984) and is broken into similar stages as Piaget's two stage model (Broderick & Blewitt, 2019). The first stage focuses on punishment and obedience, where the child understands rules as being very rigid and the authority figure is the superior or right (Kohlberg, 1984). The second stage focuses on concreteness and orientating the moral rules to the individual. The individual follows the rules for their own gain and when using the rules to help others, it is in a way in which to still serve the individual. The conventional level of morality is often observed starting at the age of 13 to 16 years old and begins to identify the way in which the individual begins to fit in a larger framework of the environment around them. The third stage begins to focus on the social-relational perspective in life and begins to put others ahead of the self-interests. The positive values of being generous, helpful, and forgiving are raised to a higher standard than previous

thoughts concerning only selfishness. The fourth stage begins to present a member-of-society perspective and focuses on the importance of maintaining social order, norms, and the status quo. The individual does this through behaviors and actions which help to maintain the integrity of the social environment. The values presented are those which promote the growth and continuation of the group such as hard work and obedience to laws.

The final level is one of postconventional moral thinking and begins to take an individualized look at the values and principles of an abstract or existential nature (Kohlberg, 1984). This level of moral development is not always observed in the development of adults, and some maintain their moral understanding in the conventional level. The fifth stage of morality focuses on the prior rights and social contracts which are served through the rules and laws put into place by society. No longer are the laws most valued, but instead the principles which the laws are put in place to maintain. These principles can be described as the individual rights of citizens, rights of people, or democratic principles. The final stage of morality is of universal ethical principles and finds the abstract moral principle to be valued over all else. This was a theoretical concept introduced by Kohlberg as it was never observed within the subjects observed. This conceptual stage also highly valued social order unless it were to begin to violate the core moral principles which are held in such high regard. These cognitive moral development stages are very similar to the developmental concepts of Fowler's faith development model in so much as there is a formation, deconstruction, reconstruction cycle which appears to be present, and ends at a point few can obtain focused on broad abstract principles which may create wide reaching change (Fowler, 1981). Kohlberg's theory has been criticized as it was only developed with the observation of men and not taking into consideration of women (Srivastava et al., 2013).

The diversity which was not addressed within this theory is important to identify when looking at the connections between different groups and beliefs.

Kohlberg maintained the concept of moral development was independent from religious beliefs, but the dogmatic thought of some individuals within a religious group was also considered within research (Wahrman, 1981). The Merriam-Webster (n.d.) definition of dogma is, "a doctrine or body of doctrines concerning faith or morals formally stated and authoritatively proclaimed by a church." When exploring the concept of dogmatic adherence within more orthodox religious groups, Wahrman (1981) identified contradictory studies finding a lower level of moral development or an accelerated moral development depending on the research. The possibility of religious dogma being the variable to consider when exploring moral development was explored by Wahrman. Through the use of questionnaires and a test of 124 students from three different levels of religious category (orthodox, liberal, and non-denominational) his findings reinforced Kohlberg's opinion that religion did not have a statistically significant (r = .02) effect of moral development. Warhman (1981) also supported his hypothesis of level of dogmatic thinking having a statistically significant ($p < .04$), although weak, effect on moral development by stunting the developmental level achieved. The findings within this study pointed to there being a relation between religious dogmatic thinking and moral development, but also maintained the differences between the two concepts. It also reinforces how diverse concepts such as religion and understanding of spiritual concepts can affect how an individual develops and reiterates the need for awareness of individualized differences.

Wahrman's (1981) study focused on Christian and Jewish denominations when considering dogmatic belief from a quantitative lens, while more recently McKenzie and Jensen (2017) explored moral development within Christian evangelical and Protestant groups through

qualitative study. These researchers suggested that children who grow up in these different groups grow into the moral life which is presented around them. The focus was put on how different cultural definitions of the divine may direct the direction of moral development. To expand the theoretical scope considering moral development they followed a framework around three big ethical principles introduced by Shweder and his colleagues (Shweder et al., 1997). These three principles were ethics of autonomy, which focuses on the self; ethics of community, which focuses on the social self and group welfare; and ethics of divinity, which focuses on the spiritual self and moral concepts. What McKenzie and Jensen (2017) found within their research was a distinct difference between the moral life course narratives presented by Evangelical followers and mainline Protestant followers over time. Their findings point to the difference between how the groups' tradition see and understand the moral dilemma of sin and connection with higher power. They also found it to be critical to look at these individuals at different stages of their life. They proposed the importance of fusing the cultural and developmental experiences of individuals when investigating the evolving nature of the relationships in a holistic manner. In identifying how these cultural differences affect the development of an individual could lead to a better understanding of how to make connections with them and help to guide the way they are offered services.

The finding of a certain religion's effect on moral development within Wahrman's (1981) study provided a new scope to explore how specific beliefs of groups have an effect on moral development. The concept of morality and moral development was explored and compared to traditional Hindu concepts (Srivastava et al., 2013). Understanding moral values are governed and developed through multiple factors, looking at a religion's primary literature used to assist in moral development can provide a greater understanding of what is being presented in regard to

moral development. These teachings are believed to have been composed into the original Sanskrit language in the 3rd century BCE. Within this Hindu literature there are many tales and fables of animal characters giving examples of ethical dilemmas and spiritual concepts such as the Hindu concept of morality, Dharma. There are many ethical and moral dilemmas presented within the literature directed at different age groups, but a primary philosophy is to perform selfless actions with an attitude which does not take into consideration of personal likes or dislikes. This connects closely with the final stage of faith development presented by Fowler (1981) that looks beyond the self and gives to others in working towards the greater good. In the moral and spiritual development within the Hindu faith, there is a hierarchy which is presented with living a moral life at the base, Dharma; Taking care of securities and necessities, Artha; Seeking out sensual pleasures, Kama; and the final stage of Moksha, or the freedom from concerns of Artha and Kama (Srivastava et al., 2013). The concept of Moksha is not conceptualized as being obtainable in life, but instead is sought out through having a level of conscious contact with God, the Brahman, which is internal and part of everything. When reflecting upon this research, it helps to reinforce how diverse the concept of religious and spiritual connectedness can have effects of moral development and the behaviors an individual takes part in. This notion of power within an understanding of a spiritual connection or higher power seems to be prominent within different groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous with their 12-steps for example.

Spirituality Within the 12-Steps

The 12-steps are a tool often used within different types of support groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), Narcotics Anonymous (NA), and many other groups which have developed over the years (Mustain & Helminiak, 2015). The message these steps share is one

which has the ability to transcend diverse differences such as race, gender, and religion as just a few examples (Steiker & Scarborough, 2011). The 12-steps have had a tumultuous relationship with professionals due to its long-standing focus on the spiritual aspects of the program and how it has been seen as the most important change for recovery (Kelly, 2016). The skepticism and concern present originates from the severity and potentially fatal aspects of alcohol or drug addiction being resolved by the use of a spiritual program composed of peers rather than a professional clinical setting and highly educated providers (Kelly, 2016). The 12 steps are often seen as explicitly religious through the wording of the steps and a focus on turning one's will and life over to God through prayer and meditation (Alcoholics Anonymous, 2001; Kelly, 2016), to such an extent that the US Supreme Court has Alcoholics Anonymous classified as a religion, finding no one to be mandated for attendance to maintain a separation of church and state (Kelly, 2016). Looking at compiled research around the effectiveness of AA, there has been findings which point to greater long-term success of programs which promote the use of AA and the 12-steps over the use of cognitive behavioral therapy and motivational enhancement therapy. When looking specifically at the spiritual aspects of the 12-steps' effectiveness there is a different set of findings. When only looking at spirituality, it is considered a significant mediator in the process of AA's success, but when looked at considering the holistic nature of AA it was not found to create the majority of change. This reinforces the importance of looking at an individual on a holistic level when thinking about identity and culture, but a possible limitation to the research was the measurement of spirituality was more closely aligned to a measurement of religiosity. Finally, severity of the experience of addiction also was found to play a role in the effectiveness of the spiritual component of AA. Increased severity of experience lead to an observation of greater effectiveness of spirituality playing a greater role in recovery, fitting to how AA was

founded by alcoholics who had hit rock bottom and were experiencing hopelessness. So as the population seeking help through AA continues to become more diverse in cultural aspects, as well as severity, it is to be expected that AA will begin to shift and become more subjective in nature regarding the spiritual aspects of the program (Kelly, 2016).

Through this change in the composition of the population of 12-step support groups, the way spirituality has been perceived has changed depending on the group (Kelly, 2016; Mustain & Helminiak, 2015). The emphasis in the wording of the steps assists in directing individuals to find a God of their own understanding, but ultimately identifying an external power source or sources that is greater than themselves (Mustain & Helminiak, 2015). This has led to a spectrum of understanding the higher power where general AA and meetings composed in a similar manner have become subjective in nature. Two more groups, for example, take a more objective understanding of God; the group Celebrate Recovery marries the 12-steps with Biblical principles of Jesus and the group Steps to Freedom in Christ identifies that acceptance of theological truths being the only way to be delivered from addiction. Understanding an individual's spiritual or religious identity can be an important piece of information when referring to possible outside resources and support groups. Even some seeking treatment and help who have a spiritual identity may be going through resentments toward their God or is focused on possible punishment from their God. When considering religious identity and religion of choice, sending someone who is not Christian to a group such as Celebrate Recovery or Christian based recovery center could create possible conflict (Mustain & Helminiak, 2015; Steiker & Scarborough, 2011) or an ethical dilemma of culture (ACA, 2014). These conflicts and dilemmas can be addressed through the subjective nature of the 12-steps but can also have similar issues with certain religious beliefs (Mustain & Helminiak, 2015).

Depending on the dogmatic nature of religion, the concepts within the 12-steps could be either too objective or too subjective for individuals to take part in their practices (Steiker & Scarborough, 2011). Within Judaism, the myth that Jews, especially Jewish women, were less likely to be prone to alcoholism is present within the culture (Vex & Blume, 2001). A few possible reasons presented were cultural aspects leading to less women drinking, Jewish women being less predisposed, or the possible stigma present within alcoholism leading fewer to seek help (Steiker & Scarborough, 2011). These examples raise the awareness of how culture and identity can have an effect on the population of people who may need to seek services. Keeping in mind the cultural components of those served, when referring to outside resources such as AA, some non-Christian alcoholics or addicts may feel more comfortable in a secular setting rather than one that presents a formalized Christian understanding of God. Within the example presented by Steiker and Scarborough (2011), the subjective nature of AA also created issues with Orthodox Jews. Making sure to find where the concept of the 12-steps and an individual's religious or spiritual identity complement each other can help to create buy-in. By acknowledging spirituality, the individual can work in a more holistic way and treat the physical, psychological, and spiritual effects of addiction. This helps to create character refinement (Steiker & Scarborough, 2011) and spiritual growth through reestablishing a sense of self, connectedness to others, and the ability to regulate emotions (Mustain & Helminiak, 2015).

Understanding Identity

Due to the diverse backgrounds and biological differences people have, there are often many different ways people see themselves fitting into the community they are a part of (Sue & Sue, 2013). This concept of how individuals view themselves within society is seen as forming a sense of identity (Hall, 2015; Kaplan & Garner, 2017; Topolewska & Cieciuch, 2017; Van

Hesteren & Ivey, 1990). Individuals may strongly identify as a specific identity, but the different roles they may take on or the cultural aspects which are important to them may also contribute to the identity they form about themselves (Hartung et al., 1998; Luke & Diambra, 2017; Middleton et al., 2011; Steiker & Scarborough, 2011). In understanding identity, exploration of how identity is developed, the different forms identity can take on, and the importance identity plays within the lives of individuals underscores the intricate interplay between personal perception, societal roles, and cultural influences.

Identity Development Within Supervisors

The concept of identity development has been present throughout the history of counseling, having its roots within the research and observation of many of the well-known names in psychology (Broderick & Blewitt, 2019). These developmental models are defined by the differentiation of actions, behaviors, and thinking present within the movement through hierarchical stages, lifting the individual to a new plateau in life. It is also within the focus of development where major issues such as identifying the importance of the role of nature over the role of nurture have been explored for example. Some of these issues are addressed through the models that have been identified and, in some cases, improved upon. Considering supervision, depending on the stage of development an individual may have reached can play a role in how they interact with others and their consideration of others' identities.

Erik Erikson's model of personality development through stages is where the concept of personal identity can begin (Broderick & Blewitt, 2019) and the concept can evolve further (Topolewska & Cieciuch, 2017). The development of personality, as described by Erikson (1950), occurs through the facing of crises and developmental tasks. These moments are also defined by changes within the individual's level of maturation, cognition, motor skills, environment, peer

group, or experiences as examples. Similar to other developmental models, these stages take place over varying ages and are observable through the changes and trials faced. These events also often create an observable positive or negative virtue or outcome. Additional developments were done by Marcia (1966) in validating four statuses of identity development. Identity achievement finds individuals were more persistent, were not affected by authoritarian values and self-esteem were less affected by negative information. Moratorium finds individuals dealing with a crisis, are ready to make a choice, but have not any commitments. Identity diffusion finds an individual without a defined identity, taking on the identities of those around them, and not seeking personal identity. Foreclosure sees individuals being more open to the authoritarian values, being obedient, and respectful of authority. This status also found a greater negative reaction to negative information and maintaining unrealistic standards and goals. These statuses see movement from a strong sense of identity to one dictated by the authority figures present. The development of identity continues to be further developed and expanded over a longer period of time than childhood and early adulthood (Marcia, 1966).

Professionals within the field have had recent interest in integrating and updating the models of identity development to help reflect social reality (Kaplan & Garner, 2017; Topolewska & Cieciuch, 2017). It is also through this attempt to update the concept of identity development where identity development in adulthood can also be identified and defined (Topolewska & Cieciuch, 2017). Topolewska and Cieciuch (2017) sought out a resolution to three persistent problems of the Erickson-Marcia model of identity development; lack of consistent integration of the two theoretical models, the lack of change with the spirit of the times, and the absence of efforts to study identity development in adulthood. They offered their own proposal which addressed these issues and attempted to validate their circumplex of identity

formation modes. This concept redefined the four identity statuses and created an expanded eight modes. Through their research, they observed validation of their model and its use with a variety of age groups. The model was also found to have the ability to be integrated with other models regarding identity development. Kaplan and Garner (2017) were seeking a similar answer to finding a developmental approach to address the many variables which can affect identity. Their work identified the dynamic nature of identity and the multiple factors which can be present within different roles. This continued change within the models of identity development shows a sense of consistency in the role identity plays in the lives of individuals and the evolving process of the many different forms of identity.

Forms of Identity

There are many different forms of identity to take into consideration when working with an individual and it is important to understand the expectations and preferences of those seeking services (Schaffner & Dixon, 2003). Six dimensions were identified by Hettler (1984) which were understood to affect health and wellbeing. These dimensions were physical, emotional, social, vocational, intellectual, and spiritual. Within the work of counseling, these dimensions may be addressed with differing attention and can lead to a better understanding of specific identities the individual holds (Schaffner & Dixon, 2003).

Professional Identity

As students work through their graduate program and identify their understanding of the profession or new professionals to the field begin meeting their first clients, a professional identity is developing similar to other identities present (Luke & Goodrich, 2010; Reiner et al., 2013). Within counseling programs, new graduate students are not only learning about the profession through their classes and counselor educators, but they are also building their

professional identity through being involved in professional organizations such as Chi Sigma Iota (Luke & Goodrich, 2010). It is important to note, similar to other identity developments, each individual's experience is different and there is not a universal process allowing for equal opportunities for experience or growth. Within counseling programs students are able to get a similar experience conceptually, but through the choices the students make such as joining a professional organization, the experiential component can be different. Through the combination of the conceptual and experiential learning, the student's professional identity can be more fully developed. It is also through the interactions between like-minded individuals that help to reinforce some of these identity changes and provide differing experiences and world views expanding the individuals understanding of diversity of others.

Similar to the experience of counseling students, professional counselors continue to develop their professional identity through the work they do and the professional organizations they are a part of (Reiner et al., 2013). It is also through these professionals' work and voice which helps to solidify or fragment the overall identity of the counseling profession. When counselor educators were asked, they identified how the profession of counseling can be seen as both a single profession, but also a profession comprised of multiple affiliates and specialties. Mental health counseling and school counseling are the two of the largest specialties, but still are made up of professional counselors. It is this fragmentation that continues to create some issues that are still being addressed to this day such as a lack of permission to work with clients with Medicare, exclusion from third-party insurance panels, and struggles with licensure portability between states. It is through the practicing counselors who have the responsibility to reduce fragmentation through their voice and ability to share a strong, solidified professional identity.

Through this form of advocacy change can be created and the profession can continue to grow and develop (Reiner et al., 2013).

Leadership Identity

The identity of a leader is another area of development that can be seen in the work that is done as a mental health counselor, as well as those who are supervisors (Luke & Goodrich, 2010). The development of leadership identity is reflected across many stages of an individual's life and often begins with a level of awareness of the actions of the leaders around the individual (Hall, 2015). It is through the basic modeling of these leaders which brings the individuals attention to the actions taking place, but the leaders are seen as other people. It is through being challenged to understand what leadership is where they start to reach the second stage of development of exploration and engagement. It is here that the individual becomes a member of the group, and the leader takes on a more important role of helping the individual grow within the group. At this stage there is also a greater awareness of peers taking on roles of leadership and being seen as models as well. The beginning of the transition to the third stage comes with a greater awareness of their own place in potential leadership roles. The third stage identifies a leader of a group as the set mentor, while everyone else becomes followers. It is also within this role that the individual starts to experiment with new roles that provide an introduction into becoming a leader. The fourth stage is defined by movement in understanding leadership can be a group process and more attention can be paid to how all members can be empowered in some form. An example of this can be seen through actions within a group which can create change in the group or the environment the group is in (Luke & Goodrich, 2010). It is through this work the individual is introduced to structure and experience in areas such as advocacy and leadership which is not always found in the classroom. The fifth stage of leadership development sees the

individual looking toward the future and making sure that the group is taken care of in the long term (Hall, 2015). The focus is on transition and passing on leadership to the next generation. The last role in development sees the individual confident in their leader identity and identify they can be a leader in any role they are placed into. It is this model of identity which closely reflects the experience supervisors may have with their supervisees, looking to pass on what they know to the next generation of potential supervisors.

Religious Identity

Just like racial identity, sexual identity, or professional identity, the religious identity of a person is an important aspect of multicultural awareness to be aware of when working with an individual (Pate & Bondi, 1992). Spirituality is a more inclusive concept than religion, but religion is made up of more objective concepts that can be observed within identity such as faith, practice, and values. Disregarding the religious beliefs of a person may be seen as an action that disregards the diversity that is represented. Due to the role religion may or may not play within an individual's life, it may suggest the legitimacy of considering it when trying to work as a culturally competent professional, similar to other forms of identity. Worthington (1989) identified five reasons to attend to the religious identity. The first reason was the high percentage of Americans who identified as being religious. Although the numbers of individuals who consider themselves religious has been steadily declining (Zinnbauer et al., 1999), many still claim their general approach to life is based on religion (Schaffner & Dixon, 2003) or hold importance in their spirituality (Zinnbauer et al., 1997; Zinnbauer et al., 1999). The second and third reasons were the numbers of individuals who would seek out religion when facing dilemmas and how individuals were found to be reluctant to bring up religion in a secular setting of counseling. The fourth and fifth reasons relate to lower numbers of therapy providers

identifying as religious (Schaffner & Dixon, 2003; Worthington, 1989) and that leading to little knowledge about other religious concepts and identities (Worthington, 1989). To be able to properly address the religious identity of an individual, it helps if the professional is comfortable with their own spirituality and aware of possible biases that could affect the client (Schaffner & Dixon, 2003). Because there are such a diverse selection of identities and people develop them in different ways, the importance of what identity can do for the individual, as well as the professional, is critical to explore.

Importance of Identity

The identity of the counseling profession has been a focus of literature over a wide range of years (Reiner et al., 2013; Van Hesteren & Ivey, 1990). Finding a professional identity, which could be considered sustainable in the early years of counseling as it had to be able to stand apart from similar fields such as social work, clinical psychology, and counseling psychology (Van Hesteren & Ivey, 1990). The definition of the identity was based around four defining traits; a focus on positive human change, a focus on both individuals and their environments, counseling being practiced in a variety of settings, and the pervasiveness of multicultural awareness (Van Hesteren & Ivey, 1990). Making sure the professional identity was constructed could then allow for the defining factors of a profession to be accomplished; having requirements for certification and set laws, ethical and professional standards in place, and a curriculum, which can be followed in the teaching of the next generation of professional. It was at this point the counseling profession began to set out on its own and separate itself from the field of psychology.

This definition of the profession continues to take place across the field (Reiner et al., 2013). Not only does there need to be a definition which sets the profession on its own, but professionals in counseling need to be able to articulate what the identity is to those who may not

know. It is through this ability to put the profession into words counselors are able to be proactive in their communities in educating the population served and those who form policy about how counseling is different and can help so many. This knowledge about professional identity is crucial in making changes to areas that would allow for current and future counselors to be able to offer their services. Having a clear, unified counselor identity is increasingly difficult with multiple specialties in counseling such as mental health counselors, school counselors, and family and couples' counselors. This unification can be worked toward by utilizing both counselor educators and supervisors within the field to help develop this sense of identity and to promote the concept and skills related to advocacy.

Cultural Competence

The concept of cultural competence in not new to the field of counseling (Arredondo et al., 1996; Hage, et al., 2006; Sue et al., 1992) and remains a talking point within counseling and within society as a whole (Burton & Furr, 2014; Hook et al., 2016; Howard, 2016). Cultural competence is present within much of the counseling and counselor education environment, being an active part within our ethical standards and credentialing standards (ACA, 2014; CACREP, 2024). Research has been done on how to properly address different facets of multicultural competence within the classroom and be able to address conflict and concerns which may be present within students who may be addressing this for the first time (Berkel et al., 2007; Burton & Furr, 2014; Hage, et al., 2006) Cultural competency has developed strong roots within the field of counseling, as well as many other professions, and it is important to understand how it has developed over the years.

Conceptual Development of Cultural Competence

Within the writings of Sue and Sue (2013), they identify the difficulty many individuals face when discussing and confronting issues of culture. They begin with the diverse nature which is inherent when discussing cultural issues and the possible negative feelings that can be present. They also make sure to point in the other direction; the positive feelings present for individuals who are able to see they are not the only ones who have been affected by cultural issues and dilemmas in society. This introduction suggests a lack of clarity involved in a topic with no clear-cut answers. But addressing these potential issues, biases, and emotions can lead to a more well-rounded individual and professional. Through this awareness a greater concept of empathy can be found, providing for opportunities to interact and learn from individuals different from ones' self. Knowing more about how words and actions can create a sense of discrimination, perpetuate biases, and harm those individuals being interacted with is a key concept within counseling. It is through the stories of others, interactions with those differing in culture, and a level of introspection that can help create a world with fewer instances of people being harmed through cultural incompetence (Sue & Sue, 2013).

Understanding how there is some complexity and controversy to the term multicultural is important to know when exploring the concept (Sue et al., 1992). The term multicultural can be considered both inclusive and exclusive in nature. When considered in exclusive terms it refers to visible ethnic differences between five cultural groups; African/Black, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, Native American, and Caucasian/European (Arredondo et al., 1996; Sue et al., 1992). It is understood that all people can identify one or more of these five cultural groups as the source of their heritage, but further definition can be made through specific race and ethnicity (Arredondo et al., 1996). This is also important to consider when thinking about the person being worked

with as an individual as the way they identify may not be visible and an assumption could lead to possible microaggressions. Multiculturalism as an inclusive term has a much broader view of culture than that of Sue et al. (1992) and has expanded greatly to include a wider concept of culture and its effects on individuals (Bassey & Melluish, 2013). Culture can include modifiers like socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender, religious affiliation, ability, and many more (Bassey & Melluish, 2013). The controversy which comes into the discussion is being inclusive may dilute the focus and make creating change regarding topics like addressing racism more difficult. The concept of gender identity can be considered an example of dilution as the terminology can cause confusion among individuals seeking to be an ally to those dealing with social justice within society (Adams, 2017). It is acknowledged counseling is cross-cultural in nature (Sue et al., 1992) and it is important to address clients seeking assistance in a holistic manner which addresses the multiple cultural identities they may have (Arredondo et al., 1996).

Spirituality as Culture

Addressing many dimensions of culture is an important aspect in the training of culturally competent professionals; yet some cultural components such as spiritual and religious beliefs have been ignored for years (Hage, et al., 2006). Initial perceptions of religious and spiritual beliefs were not the accepted norm in regard to the field of early psychology and mental health. In fact, individuals such as Freud and Watson presented psychology and mental health in direct opposition to these concepts. A minority of providers and researchers at that time were willing to explore areas of religion in their work of psychology. Identifying a shift has occurred in regard to the religion and spirituality is important to understand as to not miss possible areas of conflict or struggle with possible clients coming in for services (Zinnbauer et al., 1999). Although the number of active members of churches within the United States has dropped since around 1975,

there has still been a large majority of individuals which share a belief in a higher power, take part in spiritual practices, and believe in an afterlife (Pew Research Center, 2015; Zinnbauer et al., 1999). It is also worth noting the diversity in beliefs has increased within the country (Pew Research Center, 2015), creating additional areas of possible study for cultural competence. It is this shift in interest and attention which can continue to drive changes within the field of counseling.

Cultural Broaching

The term broaching was introduced within the counseling education community to help define the effort of counselors in exploring the complex cultural factors present within the client during the process of counseling (Day-Vines et al., 2007). By doing this, a counselor can consider how these factors play into the presenting problem of the client, while also creating a safe environment for the client to explore how cultural aspects of their lives interact with their daily experience. This strategy can be used to introduce the concept of culture and consider it within the process of work being done together (Jones, 2015). This strategy not only gives the ability to explore how cultural aspects affect the life of the client, but it also accomplishes the ethical duty to provide culturally competent services to the client (Day-Vines et al., 2007). The use of cultural broaching is not a technique only used once within the counseling relationship but is an attitude to be used consistently in providing an open and authentic experience to provide the client the opportunity to explore this aspect of their life. By using cultural broaching properly, societal norms promoting silence about possible oppression or marginalization of minority groups can be addressed and be corrected for.

The concept of cultural broaching can be understood across a continuum of awareness of the role of culture (Day-Vines et al., 2007). The first style with the least amount of awareness of

cultural aspects is avoidant where the professional disregards the aspect of culture in favor of a premise of equality and no forms of oppression existing. With this style there is an observed disbelief or possible defensiveness present ignoring the realities of society. The next style is isolating, where the professional acknowledges the role of culture in an individual's life and does so in a simplistic manner. Through this style there may be an experience by the client of insincerity or of obligation of culture to be addressed. This style of broaching is used in a fashion more perceived as a technique to be marked as completed and is used in a singular manner. The continuing/incongruent broaching style is understood through a more open relationship, allowing discussion of behavior relating to culture. Within this style the professional is eager to explore the cultural aspects of the individual, but the outcomes of this exploration may not enhance or lead the individual to feel empowered or to have a voice they can use outside of the professional space. The professional is able to broach culture but may be lacking experience to turn it into a productive strategy or intervention. The fourth style of broaching, integrated/congruent, is when experience of the professional creates an effective broaching strategy into their work with individuals. This activity also becomes more than just a strategy, but a way to work in the session consistently. The concept of the importance of culture and its place in the session becomes integrated within the professional's identity. The professional continues to be willing to hear about the individual's cultural background and how it fits into the situations presented. Finally, infusing is the last style of cultural broaching and is defined by the integration of cultural understanding not only in the professional session, but also in the professional's life outside of work. This style of broaching creates a commitment to equality, advocacy, and social justice within society. By providing this space and being willing to work with the client to understand how their cultural experience affects them, increases in positive treatment outcomes and decrease

stigmatization and bias related to cultural differences while working with diverse populations (Day-Vines et al., 2007).

Cultural Competence Within Counseling

Addressing multicultural counseling competency has been found to be associated with positive results within the clinical workplace through more cross-cultural contact, increased multicultural sensitivity, evaluating multicultural sensitivity, and increased levels of personal racial identity development (Vinson & Neimeyer, 2000). The importance of having a multicultural understanding has been found to be helpful to all future counselors, no matter the race of the individual.

Understanding clients' personal cultural identities can better prepare the counselor in choosing proper interventions to use within session (Schaffner & Dixon, 2003). Schaffner and Dixon (2003) focused on the relationship between religiosity, gender, and preferences in the use of religious interventions. Identifying spirituality as one of six life dimensions that is often disregarded, they focused on how addressing it could help some clients. They also identified how the mental health field is less likely to hold strong religious beliefs than the general population in the United States, another factor which could play into avoidance of addressing the spiritual components of the client. Through a sense of comfortability in their own spirituality, the counselor can be more affective with a client with a deep religious background. By being open to the exploration of spiritual components of the client, other interventions may make themselves present such as the use of prayer, spiritual language, or attending spiritual gatherings. It also may open the counselor up to the use of different collateral sources such as religious leaders in the community and lead to collaboration for the betterment of the client. None of these options are

viable if the counselor is not willing to have the conversation and understand the client's cultural background in regard to spirituality.

Cultural Competence Within Supervision

Polling data has shown that a majority of Americans find religion to play some type of role within their lives (Berkel et al., 2007; Schaffner & Dixon, 2003; Zinnbauer et al., 1999), leading to high likelihood counselors will be faced with a client who finds importance in religion and spirituality (Berkel et al., 2007). Due to the diversity present within those seeking services, a great importance in educating future counselors in aspects associated with addressing clients about their beliefs appears to be crucial. As counselors are expected to face these situations, it is also important to explore how supervisors are developing cultural competence within their field. Addressing these spiritual and religious situations are not focused on in an in-depth manner as many other cultural aspects within the counselor education process, leading to difficulty in understanding on a supervisory level. This is an issue that is being noticed by peers within the field believing that professionals are not properly prepared, have the knowledge, or the skill to address issues of a religious or spiritual nature (Berkel et al., 2007; Hage, et al., 2006; Pate & Bondi, 1992). It has also been found to be an area which is lacking in counselors and supervisors entering the profession wanting to receive further training and supervision, but not receiving it within their training programs or supervision (Berkel et al., 2007). If the level of competence is not present, it is important to address it in an effective manner to avoid a serious dilemma of an ethical nature (ACA, 2014).

Three components of multicultural competency that are emphasized across many different fields focus are self-awareness, knowledge, and skills (Hook et al., 2016). The act of supervision takes an individual within a senior role helping another individual in a junior role to

enhance their functioning, improve the quality of their services, and holding them accountable to the professional standards (Powell & Brodsky, 2004)**.** It is through the process of supervision in which the supervisee can be given direction and evaluation of areas of self-awareness, gain additional knowledge, and hone the skills they use (Hook et al., 2016). Through multicultural supervision a level of importance is placed on culture and diversity as a core component of the supervision process. Taking time to explore the components of multicultural competency might create opportunities for growth and development for the supervisee, as well as the supervisor.

Supervision creates an opportunity for the supervisor to model multicultural competencies with the supervisee and an openness to understand the supervisee as a cultural being (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009; Hook et al., 2016). Although a supervisor is often seen as the expert within the field, the supervisor can take on a role of not knowing and be willing to learn from the supervisee about their cultural identity and background (Hook et al., 2016). This act of learning from the supervisee about their identity and background is considered cultural humility. The key to cultural humility is a sense of openness to others' experiences and cultural identity that is important to the individual. By taking on this sense of humility in supervision, supervisors are more aware of their own identity, their limitations, and maintain a respectful position with the supervisee. To properly model this experience of cultural humility, the supervisor must strive to be open to the beliefs of the supervisees and to encourage an awareness that they are not an expert on every cultural aspect the supervisees may be a part of. This gives the supervisee something to emulate with culturally different clients, helps to reduce possible issues with cultural differences in the supervisory relationship, and lower the risk of microaggressions occurring (Hook et al., 2016).

Supervision

Supervision skills have been identified as being a critical skill for mental health professionals to develop as it has been identified as one of the more engaged in professional activities (Bernard & Luke, 2015). Because of the importance supervision plays within the mental health profession there is a great deal of literature which has been written on the subject of skills and the way it affects the supervisee and clients being served. Between the years 2005 and 2015, a total of 184 articles across 22 different journals were published on the concept of supervision. It is through this continued research that the importance of supervision is reinforced and continued developments can be promoted.

Supervisory Role

When considering the role of a supervisor, there are two central purposes that are present; to assist in the professional development of the supervisee and to make sure the client is getting the best care possible (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009). Depending on the model of supervision which one adheres to, there can be a distinct difference in roles, but these two purposes remain the same. Within the supervision process there is a natural hierarchical nature present where the supervisor takes on the role of the experienced professional evaluating the growth and work of the supervisee who takes on the role of the professional in training. This process extends over time, allowing for the relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee to grow and develop. This relationship also creates a parallel model for the supervisee to often model the work they do with their clients. It is also through supervision where the knowledge gained within the educational process begins to meet the practical experience within the workplace. This crossroads allows for the supervisor to take on the role of an educator, assisting in the development of skills and knowledge the supervisee may need to be successful within the

workplace (West & Hamm, 2012). The supervisor needs to be able to assess the needs of the supervisee, present material, create experiences to learn from, and give appropriate feedback.

Effects on Supervisee

Through the supervisory relationship the supervisee can learn, grow, and practice important skills which may play a role in their work as a counselor (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009). The relationship between a supervisor and a supervisee has many different factors which play into the development and strength of the relationship (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009; Powell & Brodsky, 2004). Supervision can also come in multiple forms such as supervision as a group, triad, or dyad (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009). These different types of supervision allow for the work of the supervisor to be given through different methods to more counselors. Through this work, the supervisor may use the working alliance within supervision as a way to frame the counselor/client relationship in therapy. This allows for the supervisor to model proper skills such as attentiveness, non-verbal communication, and the use of reflections within a session. It is also through the work in supervision which may help reinforce the use of setting expectations within a relationship, constructing healthy boundaries, and setting achievable goals. These skills can then be translated by the supervisee into the counseling relationship with clients and then review the outcomes of their uses with the supervisor. Parallel process, or situations which occur between the client and counselor playing out within the supervisory session, can also be observed, acknowledged, and worked through in supervision (Campbell, 2006). These components of supervision allow for the work of a counselor to be honed through the collaborative work between supervisor and supervisee (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009; Campbell, 2006; Powell & Brodsky, 2004). Considering the use of modeling within supervision, the use of

multicultural competence and being willing to broach the subject of culture can be another important aspect to be aware of as a supervisor.

Cultural competence within a supervisor has been found to be an important aspect to supervision, often improving multiple factors within the supervisees' abilities (Kissil et al., 2013; Soheilian et al., 2014). Observations have been made of supervisors who are uncomfortable or unwilling to address multicultural aspects often resulting in a negative experience with the supervision process (Soheilian et al., 2014). When working with foreign-born counselors within the United States, having a supervisor who is open and willing to talk about cross-cultural interactions, power, privilege, and overall culture was found to have a positive effect on the services the supervisee provides (Kissil et al., 2013). Through the supervisor's actions of multicultural competence, the foreign-born supervisee was found to have a more positive perception of self-efficacy within the work they did. This positive outcome to the multicultural competence of the supervisor was similar to other effects such as a stronger working alliance, satisfaction with supervision, willingness to be involved in cultural interactions, and perceived multicultural competence (Kissil et al., 2013). A supervisors' willingness to speak about the many different forms of culture not only helps to model multicultural competency for the supervisee, but it also tends to lead to impacts on work with clients (Soheilian et al., 2014). This supervisory practice also helps in expanding the cultural range the supervisee may have not considered in the past, allowing for possible changes in the way treatment is approached, creating a more cultural conception of the client, and building personal awareness in the supervisee as a counselor (Soheilian et al., 2014).

Supervision in 12-Step Substance Abuse Treatment

Within the field of substance abuse treatment, spirituality is a common focus which can come up within the services provided (Horton et al., 2016; Lyons et al., 2011). The perception of spirituality's place within the 12 steps of recovery, used in many of the peer-to-peer recovery programs (Mustain & Helminiak, 2015), is one which differs depending on the individual asked (Kelly, 2016). Assisting supervisees in their understanding of how the 12 steps are the basis and guide for many recovery programs (Alcoholics Anonymous, 2001) will continue to have effects on the patients they work with (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009). Spiritual aspects some individuals may be uncomfortable with in the 12 steps are addressed within the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous in a chapter titled "We Agnostics" (Alcoholics Anonymous, 2001, pg.44), but does not address every individualized concern. Concerns may arise with the supervisee's work with clients, leaving the supervisor to address concerns (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009) such as defining "power greater than ourselves" or "God *as we understood Him*" and "spiritual awakening" (Alcoholics Anonymous, 2001, pg.59-60). Having knowledge and willingness to address these concerns in a culturally competent manner which takes the spirituality of the supervisor, supervisee, and client into consideration can be uncomfortable (Soheilian et al., 2014), but can lead to positive outcomes with the supervisee (Kissil et al., 2013; Soheilian et al., 2014). The changes supervision can bring about within the lives of supervisees and clients places a responsibility on the supervisor to be willing to work through and identify different cultural aspects to promote growth and effective services to potential clients.

Summary

Many people begin to understand and develop their spirituality through objectifiable religious practices, but spirituality can continue to form into a more subjective understanding

through their experiences (Schaffner & Dixon, 2003; Zinnbauer et al., 1997; Zinnbauer et al., 1999). These differences in experience and development create diversity in beliefs, as well as understanding. The format of the 12-steps of recovery acknowledges this diversity in how it uses a God of the user's understanding (Kelly, 2016). Taking the time to listen, understand, and be open to differences allows room for those involved to learn and grow with each other (Sue et al., 1992; Sue & Sue, 2013). This openness and understanding are the basis of cultural competence. As cultural competence is a core area in counselor education (CACREP, 2024), it can be modeled and promoted through those in a supervisory role, such as clinical supervisors and counselor educators. To better understand how this is experienced, the structure and steps taken within this study will be presented.

Chapter III

Methodology

A critical component to the research process is putting the proposal to action by having a well-structured and properly defined research method, a specific population to study, and a way to analyze the data which is acquired (Heppner et al., 2016). With this definition and structure, possible replication of the study can be achieved and improved upon. To create this research method, the rational for a specific model will be presented, the method laid out, plan for analysis identified, and ethical considerations addressed. In following this structure, the research questions and experiences of the participants was explored, and themes identified. This chapter is dedicated to identifying the rationale for the use of phenomenological design, the methods selected to gather data, the proposed analysis which was used with the data to identify the shared essence of supervisors' experiences with spirituality in a 12-step program, and the ethical considerations acknowledged in the study. The research question and sub-questions explored through these means were:

What experiences do supervisors within substance abuse centers share and express when considering the concept of spirituality within their work?

1. What meaning, if any, do supervisors place on their own spirituality?
2. What meaning, if any, do supervisors place on the supervisee's spirituality?
3. How do supervisors experience their own spiritual identity in a supervision session?
4. How do supervisors experience a supervisee's spiritual identity in a supervision session?

Ontology

Through ontological perspectives, a definition of *what is* can define a situation before looking at what it means in the context (Crotty, 2020). Identifying what is reality can be complicated and is seen differently depending on an individual's belief. Realism is an ontological perspective stating reality is independent from conscious thought and can be observed by the researcher. In this current exploration of an experience, the observed situation takes place with conscious minds acting together to create an experience. It is through these observable or reportable experiences which reality can be derived through a constructivist lens, or shared reality and epistemological view (Mills et al., 2006). By exploring individual interpretations of human experiences, individual truths are extrapolated from these subjective experiences (Mills et al., 2006). These experiences can be captured through a qualitative research approach. Due to the subjective nature of spiritual beliefs for an individual (Berkel et al., 2007; Hage, et al., 2006; Zinnbauer et al., 1999), getting the defined experience from the individual participant connects this ontology with the focus of this research. Through collecting these experiences, multiple realities for these individuals are expressed through their words, perceptions, and experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Epistemology

Having a set epistemology allows for understanding *how* knowledge is made sense of and how we get to a point of realization of new information (Crotty, 2020). Through an epistemology, proper grounding of why specific methodology is used, whether findings are relevant, and steps are justified. The understanding of reality related to the ontological beliefs in this research is one of constructivism, where reality forms through the mind of an individual. The constructivist epistemology is also identified in the way realities come together to form a shared

reality, agreed upon by multiple actors in the process (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Crotty, 2020). The research followed a phenomenological approach as the observable phenomenon of supervisory work around spirituality is performed. A transcendental phenomenological approach was used as the specific phenomenon experienced is gathered, then presented for interpretation by the researcher and reader. Through bracketing, the researcher attempts to look at the phenomenon with fresh eyes, removing preconceived notions about the experience being investigated, and forming an initial reality from what has been lived (Laverty, 2003). Exploring the sensory experience of the supervisor and bringing out connections between individualized experiences to the possible shared experiences within the profession through synthesis of common textual and structural descriptions is the goal. Because there are multiple understandings around spirituality and its subjective nature (Berkel et al., 2007; Hage, et al., 2006; Zinnbauer et al., 1999), examining an individual's experience allows for acknowledgement of the subjectivity present, while also bringing out the objective points of commonality within this phenomenon. It is through this interpretation where underlying meaning of events become known.

Methods

Role of the Researcher

Within qualitative research, the researcher is the primary driver of the data through interpretation which brings to light the importance of addressing possible areas of bias the researcher may have (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This is an important aspect within qualitative research to keep in mind as the researcher has influence over the research project, as well as the interpretation of data which is presented to the reader (Postholm & Skrovset, 2013). Through building this awareness of biases, the researcher can than properly bracket these judgements and

preconceived notions in regard to the findings, thus modeling actions for the social world being studied (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Postholm & Skrovset, 2013).

Sharing experiences with this phenomenon and the researcher's own worldview is important insight for completing this research. The researcher's clinical experience is based in substance abuse and mental health setting in a tri-state area in Iowa. The researcher had interacted with a diverse population of genders, ages, ethnicities, and spiritualities while addressing the clients' concerns in individual, family, and group settings. The majority of the researcher's work has been focused on helping individuals find recovery through the use of a 12-step program. The researcher had found within many 12-step programs, the importance of having a spiritual connection to a *higher power* was a critical component to the process. The researcher had found this expectation has been a stumbling block for many clients they have worked with and could create a dilemma to be solved. This had led to the phenomenon of addressing these spiritual concerns with those in supervisory roles to help find ways of addressing the concerns of the client. The researcher noticed often one of two situations occurring; either falling onto the supervisor's own belief system to answer the question or finding something spiritual within nature to grasp onto. The researcher had not experienced a time where the client's spiritual beliefs or lack thereof have been explored in great depth by the supervisor to find ways to integrate the 12-steps or find an alternative peer support group for recovery. With the researcher's own background in cultural competence course work, they had either worked through this with the client in session or brought it up with the supervisor to expand the conversation. This developed the researcher's curiosity surrounding spirituality within the supervision process and whether it was addressed to the extent other cultural components are focused on such as gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation?

As a bi-ethnic counselor, the researcher found a great importance in addressing cultural components of the client and being open to hearing more about their experiences in the world. The researcher was also active at being open with their supervisor on how differences in culture have an effect on their work with clients. Having an awareness on how aspects such as appearing quite young, being a male, and being racially ambiguous has allowed for the researcher to address these personal aspects as necessary within the counseling experience. These aspects were first addressed within the researcher's graduate training and continued to develop through supervision experiences. Religion and spirituality were areas within the researcher's life not often addressed and were challenged when there was a conflict of belief in session. As a Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC), the researcher strived to provide effective care on an individualized basis and was motivated to become a better professional and practice in an ethical manner. The researcher also had some supervisory experiences within their doctoral program which created an interest in becoming an effective supervisor in the future.

The research questions being investigated are based on some of the experiences the researcher has had as a clinical mental health counselor within the substance abuse field and the spiritual concerns they have brought into supervision sessions. Having worked with the 12-step method and a diverse population when considering spirituality, there is a sense of importance identified when focused on aspects of cultural competency. It is the researcher's belief at this time there is an understanding of spirituality within the supervisors' lives, but there being little focus given to spiritual concerns within supervision sessions with supervisees.

Researcher Bias

Through initial reflection by the researcher, some areas of bias had been found when exploring the experiences of others. The importance placed on spirituality in the role of cultural

competency is an area of possible bias which needs to be taken into consideration. Identifying as Christian but having experience in learning about and interacting with other religious and spiritual beliefs gives the researcher additional insight into spirituality and religion. It has also been identified the differences some may have in regard to perception of spirituality, religiosity, and the role it may play in their lives. Bracketing personal religious beliefs and the importance placed on having an internal spiritual connection will help to give the data a balanced role. A further area of focus in regard to bias is the critical nature the researcher has put on cultural competency. Identifying as a Filipino Caucasian male, having a deep awareness of multicultural aspects and identities within the researcher's life, this level of importance may not be shared by the participants within the study and must be taken into consideration when exploring this phenomenon. Finally, the researcher practices from an existential lens, exploring the here and now and diving into introspective aspects by using the practitioner as the primary tool. Within the interviewing process, the need to remain as impartial and detached from the experience will be necessary, as to not contaminate the narratives of the participants. While working on this study, continuing to explore further awareness which may be found will be important to maintaining the boundaries set to keep the phenomenon explored in its own purist sense. By practicing epoche, the researcher can maintain a level of trustworthiness of the work, as well as the data gained through these qualitative interviews.

Participants

The research question related to addressing spiritual identity within clinical supervisors and the supervisory relationships. Through addressing this question, the researcher could gather experiences and understanding from the participants' work in the profession. To narrow the population being explored, supervisors were selected from substance abuse and recovery centers

who use the 12-step model for substance addiction and recovery. The focus on centers using the 12-step model allowed for spirituality to be explored through the presentation of the steps focused on a *higher power* and "God as we understood Him" (Alcoholics Anonymous, 2001, p.47), but remains inclusive to serve a diverse population by not setting a specific denominational understanding of *God*. This study sought to identify the diverse background of participants in regard to reported sex of the participants, age, years of experience as a supervisor, education, and spiritual/religious background for the purposes of further interpretation of similarities and differences in experiences presented. Through consistent coding as new data was gathered, data saturation was reached after interviewing seven participants and finding no new information for coding (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Purposeful sampling allows for specific criteria to be set and seek out initial participants for the study. Due to the specific participants sought for study, a criterion sampling strategy was used (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The criterion for the initial sampling was seeking a supervisor who works for a treatment facility focused on the 12-steps of recovery within the Midwest region of the United States. By using criterion sampling, quality assurance of the sample participants was ensured (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A focus on the specific region of the Midwest (Nebraska, Missouri, Illinois, and states to the north) was the target due to continued religious concentration, as well as religious diversity (Bauer, 2012). The criteria for inclusion within the study was to be practicing as a supervisor for active clinicians based in a substance abuse and recovery center in the Midwest which uses the 12-step model for substance addiction and recovery, who are licensed counselors, recognize having cultural competence, and reported having recognition of spirituality playing a role in the supervision process.

The following criteria for inclusion was provided to prospective participants during the initial email (See Appendix B): (a) self-identified as a supervisor working in a 12-step treatment facility in the Midwest, (b) were employed full time, (c) graduated from a CACREP accredited program or equivalent through education review for licensure, (d) recognize having cultural competence and, (e) reported having recognition of spirituality playing a role in the supervision process. Focusing the sample within a 12-step focused treatment facility enabled a spiritual component to be expected within the clients who were seeking services from the counselors there (Kelly, 2016; Mustain & Helminiak, 2015; Steiker, & Scarborough, 2011). Participants were also licensed counselors to ensure they have graduated from a CACREP accredited institution or equivalent through an education review performed by the licensing body. The participants were also asked if they recognize having cultural competence and recognize spirituality playing a role in the supervisory experience. To expand upon the initial sampling, recruitment through the suggestions of the initial key participants who had taken part in the research, or snowball sampling, was utilized until data saturation was met (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Snowball sampling is a widely used method of purposeful sampling which can allow for access to populations which may be hidden or marginalized, but also those which may be less often seen by nature or choice (Noy, 2008). This sampling style allows for additional cases of data-rich experiences to be provided by those actively in the field through networks which are already in place (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Recruitment

Supervisors working for treatment facilities focused on the 12-steps of recovery within the Midwest region of the United States were sought using the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) website. Prospective participants were contacted

first by email, whereby they were informed of the intention of performing research and seeking interested parties to respond. A description of the research was sent, along with a digital informed consent form to review, which addressed the expectations of the participant, possible risks, benefits, commitments from the researcher, and contact information for stakeholders of the study. Recruitment for this study was difficult due to the timing of the research. Recruitment began at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic and many agencies were busy finding ways to offer services during this time and increased utilization of services. Although there was interest in taking part in the research, often supervisors reported not having enough time to devote to the procedure. Initial contact led to few participants within the first year of recruitment (3 of 15). As agencies began to get policies in place to address the additional services through the pandemic, additional participants were recruited. Snowball sampling was utilized as the researcher asked participants in the study after completing the first interview for other possible referrals to supervisors they knew who may have further insight into this topic (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Recruitment of participants ended after seven participants had taken part in the study and data saturation was met through no new experiences being shared.

Data Collection

This study utilized two different sources for data collection to explore varying aspects of the rich experiences of working supervisors. Participants were asked to take part in two semi-structured interviews to seek out their individualized impressions on the utilization of spirituality. The semi-structured format was used to create a uniform experience between the participants during this process. Between the interviews, the participants were given two journaling prompts to write on regarding their individualized experiences within the workplace. This section presents in greater detail the format and data collection method for these sources.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Individual semi-structured interviews were completed with each participant to gain insight into their experiences with spirituality within their work. Individual interviews were performed in a semi-structured format to allow for consistency among responses given and allow the researcher to expand on ideas in areas where needed until data saturation was met. Interviews were performed in person or through a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) service such as Skype if the participant was unable to be met in a face-to-face meeting due to conflicts in travel or Covid protocols. Semi-structured interviewing allowed for the gathering of not only the answers to interview questions, but also the nonverbal and observable emotional aspects to the interview through observation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). VoIP services used for interviews will be selected to maintain the confidentiality of participants; Skype, as an example, has encryption active on the messaging between users (Microsoft, 2011). Saturation was met when new data is no longer found within the interviews (similar answers are being given consistently) and enough information has been gathered to form a model of the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Field notes, or hand-written memos of the researcher's perception of the semi-structured interview and internal observations were taken after the interviews completion to provide additional insight. Individual interviews were planned to be completed within an hour to an hour and a half for the first interview and 30 to 45 minutes for the second interview to allow for possible expansion and clarification of answers. The audio of these interviews was recorded through a Dictaphone audio recorder or over the VoIP software for physical transcription purposes to be later coded.

Journal Artifact

After completing the first interview, each participant was asked to keep a journal with observations or realizations they had over the following two weeks of supervision to be turned in as an additional artifact for analysis. Journals are categorized as a personal document, providing further information from the participant which can supplement the experiences shared within the interview (Creswell & Poth, 2018). he participant's journal entries, along with their interview experiences, will give further context into what the participant was trying to communicate and provided some insight into their development of pre-understanding (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The participants were given two journaling prompts to complete. The first prompt was given to the participant after the initial interview to be completed within the next week. The second prompt was sent after a week of receiving the first prompt, at which time a second interview was scheduled to discuss any further awareness they had on the topic and report about their answers to the journaling prompts. The information provided through the journaling process allowed for sharing experiences in the moment, allowing for the participant to share emotion, cognition, and behaviors of the day relating to the prompts (Heppner et al., 2016). Journaling closer to in the moment allows for the experiences shared to be fresh in the mind of the participant, facilitates introspection, and highlights possible developments present (Bennett & Eberts, 2015; Tarrasch, 2015).

Procedures

Interview One

The primary researcher conducted individual interviews with participants in a manner convenient to them in a one-on-one setting. Upon returning the digital consent form sent to the participant, the first interview was scheduled with participants, asking for approximately an hour

to an hour and a half of their time for the interview process. The interview questions were sent at this time to allow participants to formulate any questions they may have about the process before the interview took place. Before beginning the interview, the researcher greeted the participant and the overall purpose of the study was shared again with them, their rights as a participant reviewed, and the interview and recording process explained. A Dictaphone audio recorder was used to record the interview, or audio was recorded through the VoIP software, to ensure accurate presentation of the views and experiences the participants reported. The researcher stored all consent forms and data collected on a password-secured, private external hard drive to maintain security and confidentiality. The interview began with brief social conversation or a brief meditative activity to focus the attention on an experience or example of spirituality for the supervisor. The researcher continued with the interview in a conversational style, using semi-structured questions developed before the interview, to steer or prompt the interview in a direction to gather information focused on the phenomenon. Because there is a general structure to the interview questions, there is a level of validity the questions are exploring what is intended to be explored (McAdams & Zeldow, 1993). Through the semi-structured process, the researcher could present clarification questions throughout the interview to gain a fuller description of the experience if the interviewer was unsure or was interested in more information about the answer given. The researcher could cultivate a space through these steps where the participant could share freely, honestly, and comprehensively. The researcher took field notes, or hand-written memos, of personal perceptions and observations of the semi-structured interview. The researcher maintained these notes for additional insight. The utilization of a transcription service, Transcription Star, transcribed each interview after completion in preparation for the coding process and analysis. At the end of the first interview the researcher gave the participant

their first journaling prompt and plan to schedule a second interview with the participant in a week when the second prompt was given, considering their schedule for 30 to 45 days from interview one.

Journaling Artifact

At the end of the first interview, the researcher gave the participants a journaling prompt they were asked to complete in the following week. They were also reminded of a second prompt which was sent to them to complete a week later. Along with the prompt, general directions about the journaling process were provided informing them the journal can be a place where they can write any observations or realizations they had over the following two weeks of supervision. Considerations to take while journaling and best practices were presented to assist in maintaining confidentiality through the journaling process. The instructions further asked participants at the end of two weeks to provide a brief summary of the entries, identifying any final thoughts or changes in their understanding of the role of spirituality within their work in preparation for the second interview. At the end of the two weeks, the participant was asked to send their journal in a digital format to the researcher for coding and presentation at the second interview.

Second Interview

The second interview was scheduled within 30 to 45 days from the first interview or as close as possible depending on the participant's schedule. At the end of the first interview, the participants were informed of the objective of the second interview and were asked to set aside 30 to 45 minutes for the follow up. A week before the second interview date, the participant was sent a coded copy of the previous interview transcript, a coded copy of their journal, and the second round of questions for this interview. An explanation of the member check process was also laid out for the participant, sharing the process will ensure consistency of message and

proper analysis. Sending these items before the second interview was done to ensure the participant had all their questions answered and had clarity of what was being focused on for this follow up interview. The researcher began the second interview sharing their appreciation for the participants' continued involvement in the research. The interview focused on what the participant had journaled on between the interviews, any additional thoughts they have on the topic, and getting their feedback on the coding process so far. A similar structure to the first interview was used with basic prompt questions to direct the conversation, if needed. The interview was also recorded in a similar manner to the first interview and transcribed through Transcription Star. At the end of the interview, the participant was thanked for their time and informed how the member check process will be revisited, as the second transcript was sent to them for their feedback in three weeks.

Member Checks

After the researcher had read over the first transcribed interview and the participant's journal artifact multiple times, and the description codes had been identified within the data, the participant was contacted to explain the member check process to them a week before the second interview date. During this point of contact, they received the fully transcribed and coded first interview, as well as a coded copy of their journal. The member check process was explained as a way for them to ensure what is being identified by the researcher is accurate or if there needed to be any changes or clarifications made. Performing the first member check before the second interview allowed the researcher and participant to address any discrepancies in coding and interpretations of data during the second interview. The researcher took any appropriate actions in the coding if needed and repeated the process until both the researcher and participant were satisfied. The researcher informed the participant they would be contacted again with a transcript

of the second interview with description codes for viewing and review by the participant through confidential email in three weeks after the second interview had been transcribed and had been coded in a similar manner to the first interview. Similar to the first interview member check, the participant was asked to respond with any necessary changes needed or to agree with the coding. This process continued with any of the member checks either in person or by phone until a level of satisfaction was met and the phenomenon agreed upon by both parties. Through the member check process participants had shared some additional questions that came to mind during the process, but no discrepancies or corrections were reported.

An auditor who had previous experience with qualitative research and coding was selected and utilized from a local university's psychology department to provide an external point of reference. An auditor who also had no experience working in the field of addictions was also sought, to simulate a transcendental approach of having a fresh perspective on the experiences shared. An initial meeting was held to discuss what was expected of them and to build a timeline for the auditing process. The auditor was provided deidentified copies of the transcripts for interviews one and two, as well as the journals, for them to review. This review process took part after the collection of the interviews and journals, as well as the member check process. The auditor was met with twice during the auditing process to provide any clarification needed and once at the end to debrief. No major differences were found to reconcile between interpretations, but some general questions were found to explore in future research.

Data Analysis

Interviews were collected and transcribed verbatim through Transcription Star to maintain accuracy and clarity of the interviews. The transcribed interviews had any information which could have been identifying purged as to maintain the confidential aspects of the study.

The participant journal artifacts were also be collected for similar coding and purging as the interviews. Before analysis could be performed, the researcher organized and assessed the data for common elements, patterns, and overarching themes and coded to help consolidate the information. Interviews and journals were read over multiple times and important statements and lines were coded individually. Phenomenological analysis was then completed on the textual, structural, and textural-structural descriptions and developed a composite description of the essences of the phenomenon. It is through these interpretations a "fuller, more meaningful understanding," of the experience was achieved (Moustakas, 1994, p.10).

To prepare for the analysis of the total data shared by participants, the researcher organized the data through the deep exploration of the transcribed interviews along with their paired journals. The researcher took part in reflective journaling throughout the process of research, exploring what pre-understandings were present and how they had changed throughout the process. In exploring the interviews, the researcher paid close attention to the language used, experiences provided, and what meaning was presented by the participant (Laverty, 2003). Upon completion of the journaling process, the researcher included these artifacts in the reflection process and were read for further interpretation by the researcher. During this process, the researcher kept the phenomenon within their imagination as not to give it form yet and maintain an openness for its development through the act of exemplary intuition. This level of imaginative thinking remained as the researcher identified other possible situations or similar experiences which could occur by the use of imaginative variation. The final stage used by the researcher to maintain epoche, or proper bracketing, was the practice of synthesis. Synthesis was done through the researcher finding the essential structures of the phenomenon, then focusing on the concrete experiences to understand how the phenomenon is constructed (Laverty, 2003). The process of

epoche continued during the organization of the data. When initially exploring each of the transcribed interviews, the act of horizonalization was be completed. *Horizonalizing* is a process of reduction in phenomenological research where each experience, including the immediate pre-reflective experience, is understood as having equal value while being explored (Moustakas, 1994). Horizonalizing the data is related to the exemplary intuition in that it places all statements and answers to the questions as equal in value. The researcher then assigned meaning or meaning units to the statements found during the horizonalizing, allowing for them to be organized through a color-coding system to assist in organization. The statements were clustered into common categories or themes to begin the development of the textual descriptions of the experience by how it was explained by the participants. Through the textual descriptions and the method of synthesis, the structure of the phenomenon began to take shape in structural descriptions (Moustakas, 1994). The final synthesis of both the textural and structural descriptions into a textural-structural description was then completed through the analysis of the data. Each of these steps was completed with each individual transcript through envelopment into the transcription multiple times over two weeks until the formal textural-structural description was found for each participant.

To promote dependability of the analysis procedure (Heppner et al., 2016; Meriam & Tisdell, 2016), an auditor was used in the process of organization of the data within interview and journal transcripts. The auditor used is a professional from a different field of study who has little to no experience with the 12 steps of recovery to emulate the practice of epoche by the researcher. The auditor was required to have a graduate degree and prior knowledge of research methods. The auditor was given the coded transcript to assess if the codes are appropriate to the statements associated within the transcribed interview. The auditor was asked to inform the

researcher of any discrepancies with the codes assigned and suggestions for possible changes. The researcher would then compare the meaning units, clusters, and description changes suggested by the auditor to their own findings. If there are severe disparities in the comparisons, the differences were to be taken into account and further exploration of the data would be performed. This procedure also created a level of triangulation between the findings of the researcher, auditor, and member check with the participant. Finally, an external auditing process would be performed throughout the research through the supervision of the researcher's dissertation chair and dissertation committee at the end of the research process. This external auditing process played a role in the finalization of the interview protocol, the organization and analysis of the data, and the conclusionary findings of the research to assure proper design and rigor was implemented.

Following the phenomenological approach to data analysis, a co-construction of data between the participant and researcher was engaged in, while reading and writing was utilized to produce meaning of the data (Laverty, 2003). This co-construction began within the interview process and brought life to the experience. By taking part in the journaling process after the interview, the participant was returning to the explored experience and working through their pre-understanding to the point of summarizing their thoughts at the end of the two weeks. At this time, the researcher would also take part in a member check of the textural, structural, and textural-structural descriptions found within the participants interview for possible additions, corrections, clarifications, or acknowledgement of what was identified. This communication between the researcher and participant would continue until no further action is needed and the identified descriptions were agreed upon.

Upon reaching a point of data saturation and once all of the interviews had an agreed upon textural-structural description between the researcher and individual participants, the final aspect of synthesis began by creating a composite description of the phenomenon. The composite description was formulated through the comparison and synthesis of common aspects found in the textural-structural descriptions identified through earlier exploration and analysis of the interviews. The composite description was the final goal of analysis, where the essence of the shared phenomenon had been developed to a point of understanding for the researcher to share with others.

Trustworthiness

Bracketing

Bracketing, or epoche within qualitative research, allows for the phenomenon being explored to stand on its own without the expectations from the outside (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). By completing epoche, the use of phenomenological reduction through returning to the essence of the experience being studied and focusing on the phenomenon, treating all data as equal in nature through horizontalization, and exploring the data from alternative perspectives with imaginative variation can be accomplished effectively.

Field Notes

Throughout the process of analysis, the researcher maintained field notes to continue the process of epoch and practice reflexivity to increase the credibility and conformability of the research (Anney, 2014; Laverty, 2003; Noble & Smith, 2015). This procedure aids in supporting the information identified is coming from the participant rather than by the researcher's bias or constructed narrative. This promotes the confirmability aspect of trustworthiness. Field notes

will also assist in ensuring thick and rich descriptions can be offered to assist in identifying aspects which may be generalized to others and creating a sense of transferability.

Audit Trail

An audit trial was also maintained to help provide a general structure to the research process to build upon the dependability of the research and share a guideline to others for possible replication (Anney, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Noble & Smith, 2015). A final check of validity and reliability within the qualitative process was using the rich and thick descriptions through participants' direct quotations within the information shared on themes and phases describing the phenomenon. By maintaining the rigor of research procedures, multiple aspects of trustworthiness can be reinforced, such as confirmability, dependability, and transferability. Confirmability is strengthened by identifying the steps taken by the researcher to bracket aspects which could alter the descriptions found. Dependability is supported through recording the steps taken throughout the research project, allowing others to possibly replicate the design to further expand upon the phenomenon. Finally, transferability can be identified through the use of the direct quotations of the participants, allowing others to relate to the participants in the research.

Auditor

The use of an auditor, or peer review, is another strategy to promote validity and reliability in the research (Meriam & Tisdell, 2016). The use of both internal and external auditors is found to be appropriate for descriptions and core ideas, while having an external auditor for assurance in the rigor of the research is desirable (Heppner et al., 2016). One internal auditor was utilized who had very little knowledge of substance abuse counseling/12-steps to emulate the thinking processes of the researcher performing epoche. When selecting an auditor, the researcher required a graduate degree and prior experience with research methods. As this

research is associated with dissertation work, there is a built-in aspect of external auditing done by the dissertation chair, and later the dissertation committee. Through the process of working through multiple drafts of the research method and design with the dissertation chair, an aspect of oversight would be expected and a level of rigor adhered to in development and action.

Member Checks

Within the design of phenomenology, the participant being investigated and interviewed takes on the role of a co-researcher and an expert of their own experience (Laverty, 2003; Moustakas, 1994). Through this process, the participant was asked to take a role in the descriptive analytic process by confirming or clarifying the descriptions found based on the interviews and the journal entries they have participated in (Moustakas, 1994). Through these member checks the aspects of confirmability and transferability were reinforced (Meriam & Tisdell, 2016) through ensuring what was identified was from the participants experiences and not from the researcher. This also aided in holding onto the thick, rich descriptions and quotations the participant may had felt strongly about.

Triangulation

By looking at more than two points when thinking about data, triangulation can be used to enhance confirmability and credibility of the data (Meriam & Tisdell, 2016). A triangulation of sources will be done through gathering data from the interview, a journal collected two weeks after the interview, and through the field notes taken by the researcher. By using multiple sources of data, credibility of what is being identified and how it fits within the reality being presented. This also allows for any changes in understanding of the phenomenon to be indicated in the data. A triangulation of analysis was utilized to assist in confirmability of the descriptions found. This was done through the initial analysis of the researcher, an internal auditor's analysis, and a

member check of the descriptions. This is another check to reduce possible bias from the researcher to come through the findings of the research.

Ethical Considerations

When constructing a research project, it is important to consider the ethics of the work as well as the considerations of the sample being addressed, with the focus being on the fundamental principles of the ACA code of ethics (ACA, 2014; Heppner et al., 2016). To ensure the methodology and overall study was being done in an ethical manner, approval by an institutional review board (IRB) was sought and necessary training was performed by any individuals taking part in the research. Due to the nature of the qualitative methodology and seeking the experiences of professionals in the field, this research was determined as human subjects research. The required Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) program for social behavioral research was completed and maintained during the timeline of the research project. Because the methods being used were expected to be of minimal risk to participants, an exempt research application was completed and turned into the IRB for consideration. Informed consent forms were developed through the use of provided exempt research forms through the IRB. All paperwork was submitted to the Office of Human Subject Protection to be considered for approval (Appendix C) and research began after. These multiple steps helped to ensure the methodology maintained ethical standards and provided protections to any possible participants for this research.

The preparation for IRB submission focused on four out of the six principles addressed within the ACA code of ethics (2014). These four principles were nonmaleficence, veracity, fidelity, and beneficence. Nonmaleficence is a crucial point to be considered when doing research with human subjects. No matter the amount of information obtained through research, if

participants are harmed in a physical or mental way ethical standards have been broken and the individuals who took part in the research have been taken advantage of. With the research being proposed, there was a low risk of harm to the participants outside of individual's being triggered by the content of the questions asked and participants were given the option to discontinue their participation at any time. Fidelity in ethics is honoring the commitments and promises involved in the professional interaction between the researcher and participant. Confidentiality is one of these professional commitments addressed with the participant and is a critical aspect which needs to be met faithfully. By maintaining these commitments and promises, the ethical principle of veracity was met. The ethical considerations of nonmaleficence, fidelity, and veracity were addressed within the informed consent. Beneficence can also be considered when performing research. The questions being considered within this proposal could have lead to possible support for individual and societal improvements in mental health, identity development, and overall wellbeing.

Summary

Through the experiences shared by supervisors in the field, a better understanding of how spirituality is experienced within the supervision session. Through the steps laid out within this chapter and keeping best ethical practices in mind, common themes and phases may be observed in the experiences of the participants. With these commonalities, the phenomenon can be more readily identified, while possible strengths and weaknesses can be addressed in other professionals' lives. This insight may also be relatable to both supervisors and supervisees who may use these findings in changing their supervisory relationship to better the experiences of the clinician, and thus the clients they help. Finally, the themes found may open up further possible

directions for future research within supervision, counselor education, addiction studies, and cultural competency to continue to grow breadth of information in these fields.

Chapter IV

Results and Analysis

This chapter explores the process of data collection, the finalized data will be reviewed, and a discussion of the data analysis will be provided. The review will begin with an overall description of the sampled participants and data collection. A brief introduction of the participants will be presented to provide some background on who shared their experiences while maintaining no identifiable information and a pseudonym of their choice. A discussion of the coding process of experiences shared and themes found by the researcher and an external auditor will then be presented.

The process of data analysis will be presented, starting with the construction of the textural and structural themes built from the coded interviews and journal artifacts. Experiences of the participants will be offered to provide some further insight and weight to the presented themes. Finally, the combined textural-structural themes will be offered to shed light on the phenomenon shared between the participants and addresses the initial identified research question: What experiences do supervisors within substance abuse centers share and express when considering the concept of spirituality within their work? The question was addressed through answering the following sub-questions:

1. What meaning, if any, do supervisors place on their own spirituality?
2. What meaning, if any, do supervisors place on the supervisee's spirituality?
3. How do supervisors experience their own spiritual identity in a supervision session?
4. How do supervisors experience a supervisee's spiritual identity in a supervision session?

Sample and Participant Descriptions

Participants

Seven supervisors fit the criterion for participation, which were currently working as a supervisor within various treatment agencies using the 12 steps in the Midwest, were employed full time, graduated from a CACREP accredited program or equivalent, recognized having cultural competence, and recognizing spirituality playing a role in supervision. Six of the participants identified as female, one as male, and all participants identified as Caucasian. The experience as a supervisor ranged from six months to 10 years, with an average of approximately 5 years. All participants identified having a Christian background while growing up, four of the seven participants identified having either no association with a religious background or being agnostic. After the seventh interview saturation of data was found due to no new information being provided which did not fit within previous themes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). All the participants took part in the initial interview, completed and submitted a journaling artifact, and then finished with a final follow up interview.

Through the selection process of participants, the use of specific criterion was used to ensure some basic similarities and increase the probability of experiencing the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Ensuring similarities within the workplace, educational background, and general professional roles assisted in narrowing the focus of the questions and produce stories of experiences looking at the interactions with spirituality. All the participants reported having a background with spirituality and shared different ways in which they utilized these experiences. Some basic information will be provided about the participants, identified by the pseudonym they chose before their first interview.

Phoenix. Phoenix reported having 2.5 years of experience as a clinical supervisor. She shared her family was not really spiritual or religious but did attend a Methodist church and was expected to take part in the church rituals (baptized, confirmed, etc.). She identified questioning organized religion and her views shifted as moved from her small community and attended college. Although sharing a resistance toward organized religion, Phoenix shared of spirituality:

> I think of the peaceful part, the gem of it." Of her experience in supervision, she reported working with, "a variety of people from all different walks of life. All different types of … spirituality, religion, minorities, those kinds of things.

Olivia. Olivia reported having four years of experience as a clinical supervisor. She identified as having a Christian background, but a poor early experience of organized religion. She shared being expected to be baptized and confirmed within the church. She also shared finding it to be very strict. She identified finding more spiritual understanding in her undergraduate years. Olivia shared, "my spirituality tells me that you can make bad decisions or mistakes and that's okay, because… your spirituality is still going to care about you and understand that." She identified how it helps to know the level of importance spirituality plays in a supervisee's life as they may "follow certain paths due to that."

Willy. Willy reported having only recently started providing clinical supervision and had 6 months of experience. He shared growing up Lutheran, but recently explored more deeply his religious beliefs when he became Catholic to get married to his wife. He shared "spirituality to me is an understanding of… a spiritual experience, not a religious experience, more of a spiritual experience that helps us understand a lot of things we can't explain." He shared how he felt his exchanges regarding spiritual experiences with his supervisee has led to their spiritual growth as

well as his own personal growth. He also shared his experience as a individual in recovery and how he has used spirituality personally within his life.

Ruth. Ruth reported having seven years of clinical supervision experience. She shared she grew up in a very dysfunctional family and lived among multiple families from age 12 to her graduation. During this time, she had experienced Christianity within a Southern Baptist viewpoint, a Catholic viewpoint, and a Methodist viewpoint. She identifies as having a very strong faith and shared how it helped her find peace in having a terminally ill son. Of this she shared "I experienced something when my child was extremely ill that I feel very blessed for having experienced. … It felt like there was presence there with use. And when we went to be with our son, he was not breathing. And as we were holding our son and praying, why then our son came back." She identified spirituality as being a tool that supervisees can use in their job.

Beth. Beth shared having five years of experience as a clinical supervisor. She shared of spirituality, "I think of it as sort of this all-encompassing idea, bigger than myself, bigger than you, bigger than any one person… a guiding force, if you will, in a person's life." She reported having grown up within the Catholic faith and questioned a lot of things while in high school. She shared her focus a lot more on differences she could see between spirituality and religion while developing her idea about spirituality. She shared about the experiences of keeping her spirituality to herself while trying to support her supervisees through their own questions and concerns regarding spirituality and religion.

Ann. Ann shared having seven years of experience within clinical supervision. She shared being raised as a "very strict Catholic" and started exploring other religions in her teens. She shared her spiritual beliefs started to develop and expand in college when she "learned just different beliefs, different worldviews, things like that when it came to spirituality." She shared

"I personally believe in a higher power, believe in God, but I don't really have a strict religion that I follow." She initially shared the importance of spirituality in supervision as only if the supervisee is requesting attention or if there were some interferences with the supervisees' professional experiences in counseling.

Frankie. Frankie reported having the longest amount of experience within clinical supervision with 10 years of experience. She shared how she did not separate the concepts of religion and spirituality early on in her life growing up in a Catholic household. She identified her experience within the mental health field opened up her thinking. She shared "having to separate my own idea of spirituality versus religion versus what I want and who I am as a person." She shared things became more of a fluid process. She spoke about the importance of having an openness, or vulnerability, to explore in supervision and be able to grow through this.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Six out of the seven interviews were completed over the VoIP service Zoom due to current infection reduction protocols for COVID-19 and convenience for the participants. The online interviews were conducted with participants in the Midwestern states of South Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa, and Illinois. One participant in Iowa requested to have the interviews done in person due to feeling uncomfortable with the online interview. Semi-structured interviews were completed with each participant to gain insight into their experiences. The interview questions were sent prior to the interview, with interview one (Appendix D) consisting of 10 prompts and interview two (Appendix E) consisting of five prompts. All interviews were audio recorded and were submitted for transcription. Interview ones ranged from 35 to 54 minutes, while the second interviews ranged from 19 to 37 minutes in length.

Journal Prompts

Participants also provided a journal consisting of two prompts (Appendix F) completed between the first and second interview. Including the transcribed semi-structured interviews, a total of 156 pages of data were read through multiple times, forming codes within the comments on participants shared experiences and answers. These codes were then sent back to the respective participants for member checks, ensuring the researcher's perspective on the participant's experience is an accurate representation (Meriam & Tisdell, 2016). All participants reported agreeing with the comments/overall message identified by the researcher and no changes were made.

Data Analysis

To find a full understanding of the experiences shared, phenomenological analysis was completed using the suggested framework of Moustakas (1994). Through interactions with the data collected, units of meaning were assigned to the statements using horizontalizing, attempting to maintain equal importance of all statements. The statements found were reduced to themes to develop and explore the textual and structural descriptions. Five common experiences of *what* was occurring, the textural descriptions, for these supervisors were identified through the analysis process. Textual descriptions will be introduced through their initial presentation from the first interview and then observed changes seen in the follow up journaling and second interview. Information will be presented in this manner to express how the researcher observed clear developments between the initial interaction and participants' later involvement within the follow up process. By asking the participants to be mindful of possible interactions with spirituality following the initial interview, the participants had more focus on how spirituality played a role in their professional roles and internal reactions to events between interviews.

Through this manner of presentation, the development identified can be used to guide the reader through the researcher's process of understanding the phenomenon. Four themes were identified to explain the influences of the experiences, the structural descriptions or *how*, for the supervisors to be considered through the variations of experiences an individual may have when they work. These common themes will be reinforced using the supervisors' own words and the commonalities found between them. Finally, the phenomenon will be given further structure through the synthesis of these common aspects building a shared textural-structural description.

Coding

The coding process began with the original transcriptions, identifying the initial messages presented by the participants. The initial 156 pages were reduced to 680 codes across 23 pages. The interviews were gone through by the researcher addressing each response and comments on the participants statements were marked within the margins of the transcript as codes. The researcher then read through the codes multiple times, focusing on the interview questions they were received from, being combined or eliminated as themes began to appear. The researcher condensed the transcripts by the questions asked, combining the codes found into these sections based on the question being answered. This led to interview one to be broken into 11 sections, the journal into two sections, and interview two into five sections. These themes were produced through similar language, wording, and experiences presented by the participants. As an example, codes mentioning the concept of spirituality were combined to form an overall spirituality code. Themes could be reused within differing question sections as well, such as a spirituality theme within question one and question two. Codes were only dropped when they were repeats from the same participant within the same question section. Through this process the number of codes were reduced from 680 codes to 50 codes. These 50 codes were then

compared to one another, finding five common and repetitive themes within the experiences shared. These final codes and themes were then used to construct the textural description (the essence of what is occurring within the phenomenon), the structural description (the situation or context which may influence the phenomenon), and the textural-structural description (the synthesized common experience of the phenomenon) (Moustakas, 1994). The final textural-structural description is then used to find the underlying foundation of the phenomenon found across the participant's shared experiences. The coding process was running concurrently with the data collection process, allowing for the point of saturation to be found once no new information was being found.

Textural Descriptions

The textural descriptions were defined through exploring *what* was occurring within the experiences the participants shared. This process seeks to describe in a fresh and holistic way the essence of the phenomenon through transcendental phenomenological reduction (Moustakas, 1994). These descriptions attempt to share what the participants have gone through by using the intricate details of lived experiences, while also capturing the richness and complexity of the subjective phenomenon. Five of these themes were pulled from the shared concepts presented in the interviews and represented what experience spirituality brought out within the situations shared. A total of 33 separate themes were brought together through similarities in content and description to form these five primary themes to describe the phenomenon. Through the external auditing process, the codes and themes found were supported through the similarities between the interpretations and meaning found within the experiences shared. Each of these themes was described and explained through the lens of the participants so the commonalties can be highlighted in the following section.

Acknowledging Resistance and Consideration

Resistance toward addressing spirituality or taking great consideration when doing so was a theme present within the experiences shared ($N = 7$). Often these statements revolved around feeling uncomfortable with the situation, feeling concerned whether it was professional to bring up, and worries it could create conflict within the relationship. To avoid feeling uncomfortable, different considerations actively being taken in the work which was being done by these participants. This theme was far more present throughout much of the first interview, spreading across five of the 10 questions and developing into 41 different codes. The identification of resistance was much less present during the follow-up interactions, only appearing in one question and in four codes.

Initial Interviews. Resistance toward addressing spirituality and being considerate of the situation was a common theme among all the participants within the study. The resistance could be identified on multiple facets of the experiences shared, including the supervisor, the supervisee, and the clients being served. Willy shared his experience of client resistance, "my supervisee is struggling… with patients absolutely not wanting anything to do with spiritual higher power business at all in the 12 steps because they just don't believe in it," and supervisee resistance, "I (the supervisee) don't want to talk about it because I don't want to get stumped." These are areas of resistance which can present moments where spirituality is front and center in the supervisory relationship, providing an opportunity for a supervisor to model healthy spiritual interaction. This can create further uncertainty when the supervisor has their own resistance to opening up about their own spirituality. Phoenix shared her own personal conflict with this resistance when asked about spirituality as a tool within supervision:

> Hmm, that's tough for me because like I said, I don't use spirituality as a guide, either professional or personal life. And when I say that, that's even hard for me to say, because it's always that dissonance, because we're attaching almost the mindfulness, the spirituality, and religion with being moral.… Like, I almost felt shame for saying, 'No, it really doesn't (play a role in work).'

Phoenix identified how she has not only a resistance to allow spirituality into her professional life or personal life, but also an internal struggle with spirituality's lack of presence. Much of this resistance for participants is presented due to a tendency to maintain a separation between spirituality and professional ethics, or a focus on the standards of privacy which may be emphasized by work standards.

Considerations were also being taken when thinking whether it was appropriate to address spiritual topics or share personally. This focuses more on the action of taking consideration before using spirituality rather than aspects being considered, which will be addressed further in the structural descriptions section. The considerations shared often led to hesitancy to act regarding spirituality due to a lack of perfect timing, facing defensiveness, and avoiding assumptions. Creating a tense environment was also a reason for hesitancy and was highlighted by Willy and Frankie. Willy shared how "a lot of times when people argue or differentiate between spiritual views, it's because they don't have the same goal. They're trying to prove something." Frankie identified how the enmeshment of spirituality and religion can sometimes cause issues or general tension and it is important to "flush out where the transference might be happening or triggers…, because that then impacts the clinical work we do, the relationships that you build with other coworkers." This statement was similar to another consideration present, not imposing their own beliefs onto others. Ruth reported, "I try to be very

conscientious and aware of what other people's beliefs are so that I'm not offensive. … it's not my place to minister to them, it is my place to find positive, supportive ways of encouraging them forward, no matter what we're working on." Ruth shared how she considers who she is working with and was not looking to change their beliefs, but to give them a supportive environment to explore concerns they may bring.

Follow Ups. Although there were still considerations which were being identified, there was much less resistance to addressing spirituality. Phoenix identified a general mental block initially present due to her own personal experiences at times and a general bias that bled into her professional life creating this resistance, while Ann shared a general annoyance with taking time to journal about spirituality due to the busyness of work and life. Frankie had a similar experience to Ann, where she reported being "trepidatious" about the introspection within the journaling process, "because it is a personal thing." With the three reports it became more of a personal resistance rather than one which was outwardly focused on the supervisee.

Using Spirituality as a Coping Tool

A common theme which appeared throughout the interviews with supervisors was focused on spirituality's uses ($N = 7$). The statements provided would often speak of spirituality as a tool or a resource which can be used personally for the supervisor, or it can be utilized by the supervisee. Often when mentioned, spirituality would be brought up as a guide, structure, or direction which can be used to help settle a moment in time. What was noticed in the experiences shared was that spirituality often was used in times of emotional stress, traumatic situations, or times of uncertainty. This theme appeared to become more evident in the journaling process and second interview, appearing a total of 38 times compared to 21 times in the first interview,

suggesting the participants were more mindful of the uses spirituality was playing within their daily lives.

Initial Interviews. The uses for spirituality were present within two of the 10 questions asked in the first interview and made up a total of 21 codes associated with spirituality's use such as *spirituality as a tool, leaning toward spirituality during times of intense emotion,* or *meaning and sense of purpose can be provided through spirituality*. Although directly asked about within question five and asking about how spirituality has been used as a tool, more participants identified spirituality's uses within the question about the importance of spirituality. When speaking about the use of spirituality the perception was generally positive and appeared comforting. When asked about specific situations or times when they felt more drawn towards spirituality, Phoenix shared, "during times of adversity, grief, joy sometimes. Those moments of just joy, like, this is just such a wonderful moment." Regarding the importance of spirituality within her own life, Ann shared:

> I think it's very important in my life as far as how I see myself in the world, how I see the world in general, and how I understand good and bad, horrible and wonderful things that happen in our lives, in my life. So, I would say it's fairly important.

Ann expanded upon this concept of spirituality as a guide:

> I think that most people look to spirituality and or religion, whatever it might be, to make sense of things. So, when something tragic happens, I think spirituality can play a role in guiding how you move through that. … But I think a lot of people do utilize that spirituality and I'm no different, to make sense of things and to understand and hope for a greater purpose than what's happening right now.

The essence of spirituality as a guide for a person's actions, reactions, and perceptions of the world around them was a common statement across the participants' shared experiences. Both of these examples identified the presence of spirituality in times of more intense emotions and finding a path to some personal meaning.

Follow Ups. The use of spirituality participants provided appeared to expand in scope through the continued focus found within the journaling experience and second interview. Frankie shared how it was easy to lose focus when busy, but it was important to understand the power of the tools which could be provided through spirituality. Frankie's insight presented the general impression taken regarding the use of spirituality, if there is no attention paid to spirituality it can get lost in the work. Beth had initially reported keeping her own spirituality to herself often when working, but she shared a very open experience through her journal:

> When talking with a counselor I found myself saying 'you were put in this person's life for a reason' and 'there is a higher power at play here' when discussing a client that is having serious medical issues. I know the counselor I am talking with is a highly spiritual person and I believe this provided some kind of comfort in the moment. It felt good to share our common spiritual beliefs and tie this into the work the counselor is doing with their client – it made sense for the situation.

Beth stated in her second interview regarding the journaling, "there were times where I might not have said certain things or whatever, but because I knew I was journaling for this (study), I was like, 'I'm just going to go there with this person.'" The power of using spirituality within the right moment and with the right people present within these examples was a commonality among participants.

Acknowledging Differences and Diversity

Participants acknowledged differences and diversity within their experiences regarding spirituality in both their personal and professional lives ($N = 7$). This ranged from questioning the differences they saw within what they were taught in consideration to spirituality in their early lives, diversity with those they may work with, and personal growth through the differences experienced through interactions with others. This primary theme was composed of 6 original themes and 58 total codes, where 33 were in the initial interview and 25 were present in the follow up interactions.

Initial Interviews. The differences within experiencing diversity were just as diverse as the topic. The initial acknowledgement of experiencing these differences could be seen in the participants early interactions with spirituality and religion. The stories shared often spoke of seeing contradictions in what they were being taught and the actions observed. Phoenix shared how her differences in expectations of religion changed her experience and led to further personal development. She reported:

> I started questioning organized religion probably when I was a junior in high school. I didn't like some of the things that I was seeing from organized religion, I suppose. And as I got out of the small community, went to college, started talking to people, my views shifted, which then caused a rift with my parents.

Beth shared a similar experience when questioning what was being taught within her early experience of organized religion:

> I questioned a lot of things when I was in high school, a lot of things that I learned about Catholicism. And I questioned a lot of the things that I was learning when I was in high school and got reprimanded for it. Asked to leave class one time, just different various

> things that really put a bad taste in my mouth about Catholicism. … As I got older when I went to college, I actually took a world religion course. And that is what really opened me up to the idea that spirituality and religion are definitely not the same thing at all. And there's so many different varying beliefs out there.

These early forms of conflict regarding differences in thought revolving around spirituality had some wide-ranging effects on a person's life. Ann shared about her experience in questioning teachings, "that doesn't necessarily sit well with family members, and clergy and people like that, that it's just kind of frowned upon to thing that there's other ideologies out there." With such negative consequences for differing views, it can be surmised that a natural avoidance of this conflict would be expected. This could be seen later on within professional life through the statements and a consideration which was mentioned previously by Ruth and trying to be aware of others' beliefs as to not offend them.

These differences can also bring a similar resistance as was mentioned before within the supervisee. Olivia shared a supervisee's concern with this quote for them, "I don't think I can work with this person, because it goes against… (pause) I feel like maybe I don't know enough about *it*." Olivia shared this opened the supervisee to learning more about different thinking, belief systems, and meeting the client where they are at in their world. These differences were of interest to her, and her family was supportive of this, yet still had a similar experience to the previous examples. Olivia shared:

> We look at different cultures, like not everybody looks the same. Native Americans practice different cultural and religious practices too, and I was always intrigued by those. … My family was okay with it, but the church is, 'No, this is what we're teaching you. This is just the only way to get there.

These differences were often found between the concept of spirituality and the dogma present within religious teachings. The connection between differences and resistance in addressing spirituality was much more present within the first interview then seen in the follow up questions.

Follow Ups. Beginning from the journaling process, the experiences shared by participants begin to show a shift in focus when looking at the diversity experienced within the work supervisors do. The differences are acknowledged, but they become more associated with considerations rather than resistance. Phoenix identified the possible conflict which could occur but focuses on planning around it. The necessity of a supervisor planning around these differences can be associated with the need to practice in an ethical manner and to avoid any potential issues which may perceived or brought to the agency. Olivia shares her thoughts about the reactions which may be present with differing ideas, while Ruth reports preparing for the unknown. All these impressions of differences in points of view are less avoidant in nature and appear to be more willing to actively address them when presented. This creates a more proactive stance for supervisors addressing situations regarding spirituality while also reducing any potential conflict with the supervisee.

The second interview found similar reflections on the differences in ideas and diversity of opinions. Moving forward with addressing differences, even when feeling uncomfortable, appears to be the active practice rather than avoidance. Phoenix shared this experience:

> Where I work, we really focus on cultural competency and a part of the cultural competency is of course respecting religion, spirituality, and how that plays a part in our clients' lives. So sometimes it (spirituality) does get brought up and we staff those cases. … Now, sometimes it presents this conflict for my supervisees if they're not in alignment

> with whatever the client is talking about. And then we have to discuss some of those barriers. And sometimes, to be honest, as a supervisor, it is difficult for me because it really doesn't align with my values as well.

Phoenix's experience showed the importance of facing the conflicts which can come up and that there can be similarities in the struggles faced by both the supervisor and supervisee. She continued to share how addressing some of these diverse concerns as being pushed by the agency due to some of the current events, so there are more moments where these critical beliefs are bleeding into the work that is being done and needs to be addressed. Beth shared a specific example of addressing a conflict within the workplace directly with a supervisee. She shared how the supervisee was feeling like a coworker was making a derogatory comment toward their religion or spirituality. Through this interaction, Beth learned more about the supervisee and was able to create a safe space for this issue to be addressed. She shared, "I was glad that they came to me, we talked through how to handle the situation and next steps in regard to how to remedy the situation with the peer, be able to express themselves." Beth shared how she was much more willing to address the differences seen within the work she has done and the experiences her supervisees were going through.

Observed Growth and Development

The shared reasoning for addressing spirituality was primarily growth of not only the supervisee or those working with them, but also the supervisor. The experiences of growth could be seen through interactions, learning from mistakes, and seeking out personal development to provide better care. These themes were consistent throughout the study and the experience of them were richer in nature as the (participants progressed within the study. The opportunity for growth and development was acknowledged and appreciated through what was shared. The

theme of growth was comprised of eight separate themes. There was a total of 39 codes within the first interview in addition to 25 codes found in the journal and second interview.

Initial Interviews. The concept of growth was mentioned within five of the 10 questions ($N = 7$) asked in the first interview. Keywords that denoted this theme were identified such as learning, change, expansion, and growth. The description of growth was made throughout the initial interview and was expressed by all the participants. Growth was presented personally, within the supervisee, and within the clients being served. Willy shared about his experience learning more about a religious denomination that he was joining but had little knowledge of beforehand:

> Once I understood the meaning behind these rules, it actually let me see from a spiritual standpoint why they was doing it. So yeah, it did help me grow spiritually. There was a lot of stuff that I didn't believe in, and the reason they didn't believe in it because I didn't know nothing about it. It helped me learn why they did some of the stuff.

This knowledge allowed for him to become a part of this group and have a better understanding of why the rules and dogma present were so important to this group. He identified how these questions initially skewed his thoughts on the religious group. Phoenix shared a similar situation where she found it was important to do some research to understand a religious group better so she could provide better services. These experiences tied in with a point Frankie made about understanding bias and personal growth:

> I think we all have baggage we bring to the profession, and if we're also going to be honest, it's not like we go into being therapists and counselors and whatever for no reason. We all have a reason. …Sometimes that baggage can come from, whether its

> religious experiences or, I mean, feelings of origin, but we all have this stuff that we need to flush out and so we can limit our transference.

As supervisors continue to grow in a personal and professional manner, they are able to bring this growth to those they work with, perpetuating growth within others in the process. Ruth presented this idea of modeling in supervision and encouraging growth:

> We can all get the job done and we can all be open to the clients because not everyone… have our beliefs, or if they have our beliefs, they might not have them to the extent that we have them, so we have to keep an open mind for everything. … And as we meet them where they're at, we get to encourage them to grow in whatever direction they choose to grow. But we hope they choose to grow in healthiness and to have a better quality of life.

Growth was expressed as an important aspect of the supervision process, whether the growth was internal for the supervisor or external in the supervisee or client served. The process of initial growth also continued to create further growth elsewhere through modeling or connecting to other areas of life. Growth was also presented as individualized and not to be done in a specific manner, allowing for what works best for the individual who is participating in the growing process.

Follow Ups. Through the researcher's analysis of the data provided by the journaling process and second interviews, participants identified growth within themselves and the supervisees. The growth participants described begins to be internal in nature through their experiences with the supervisee and a two-way road of development is formed. The participants began to acknowledge how the exchanges of information in the moment was creating a space for them to learn and try new things. Willy identified how he could learn from others spirituality, specifically from his supervisee. Ruth reported how seeing supervisees use their spirituality in

services and doing so with the clients' needs in mind as having a strong effect on her as it "brings chills to the spine as you witness it." She shared, "it ends up being a time of praise for such an awesome team and their individual skills." Opportunities for supervisors to address spirituality were more likely to be utilized to show where further growth can be achieved. Beth shared an experience she had with a supervisee which highlighted these types of interactions:

> The counselor discussed how frustrating it was for them when the client was so negative, and this opened up a good conversation about how the client likely touched a nerve for the counselor given their own spiritual beliefs. We discussed the counter transference and being aware of our own beliefs and how they impact our responses to clients – even if they did not overtly share their frustrations with the client, could the client have been aware due to tone, body language, etc.

Phoenix identified how important it is to being sensitive to the backgrounds of others within supervision to create a safe and comfortable place to present issues similar to the previous example. She reported how balancing the differences between supervisees in group settings is also important to be aware of and can be used in a manner for learning.

In the second interview, participants also recalled experiences of growth in their journaling. Willy shared how he is always learning within the supervision process through the exchange of ideas between him and his supervisee:

> I think what happens in the supervisor field, part of it, is there's always things that the supervisee can teach me. … There's a lot of things that I can show her and how to do these things without feeling, 'Oh, we didn't learn this.' To feel more comfortable doing it. But there's also a lot of things that she did learn that maybe I need to listen to. So, it is a neat experience, worked both ways.

Ruth connected with the power of seeing the spiritual growth within an individual and watching newer professionals grow in their work, “even when they make the wrong decisions and they’re basically getting burned.” She expanded on this growth into caring for others and doing what is best for the clients, “to being the best that they can be in the position that they’re in.” This growth and sharing with others connected to Ruth’s description of spirituality being expressed through actions. Frankie identified more of this growth as personal, where she was able to find a more concrete understanding of her own viewpoints and how they interact with others but putting words to her beliefs.

Many participants (n = 5) shared appreciation for taking time to explore spirituality through these interviews and feeling like it helped to create further development within themselves. Ruth explained,

> I think it’s needed. I think when you utilize spirituality within the programming and within your staffing, I think you allow everyone to grow. I also think you eliminate some of the burnout and you allow people to share what they really need to share instead of feeling like they’re more limited or that no one is listening. I think it gives opportunity. It leaves the doors open.

Beth spoke on how through the process it challenged her to break out of her comfort zone and grow through it. She explained:

> Knowing some of the spiritual beliefs of the people that I supervise, and kind of going out of my comfort level and saying things or bringing up topics that maybe I wouldn’t have normally brought up, it’s been good. I mean a little strange, but also I think it was a positive connection with people.

She expanded on the situation:

> I felt like I could take the opportunity to just share some things on a deeper level with this. … It was a good opportunity to have that kind of discussion. I think I learned a lot about that person and hopefully they learned something about me too.

Frankie shared how she felt spirituality and addressing it isn't really taught, so it is instead learned through experience. She also shared how sometimes that experience is thrust upon you and you learn and grow in the moment. She identified that although she was resistant to the experience and interaction, she found it was helpful and brought growth through an increase in awareness.

Participant's Awareness and Presence of Spirituality

Awareness, openness, and mindfulness was one of the most widely identified codes throughout the study ($N = 7$). The importance of having an awareness of the role of spirituality, a personal understanding of spirituality, and the presence of a supervisee's spirituality was present within the initial interview process but nearly doubled within the follow up interactions. Whereas the initial descriptions of awareness were informative in nature, what was shared at the second half of the study was much more experiential and personal to the participants. In other words, awareness was more preparatory in the first interview, and it was put into action through the second phase of the study. There was a good mixture of personal awareness and situational awareness within the work being described. The awareness theme is comprised of seven different themes and as mentioned above, it was comprised of 31 codes in the first interview compared to 57 codes in the follow up interactions.

Initial Interviews. In the first interview the term openness was the initial theme mentioned, which was associated with greater awareness. The participants described this openness as a way to be aware of others' experiences, as well as the personal role they may have

in a situation. Beth identified an openness to the experiences of others to see how she can adapt to those experiences and make sense of them. Beth's openness has the potential to prepare her for future interactions with others sharing similar views, a greater base of knowledge, a can provide confidence in the work she is doing with the individual. Frankie reported how she looked at the importance of having an awareness of her own role within situations. Frankie shared:

> I feel like sometimes there's only so much you can control and the more you try to tighten that control, the more it oozes out, it's not going to work. It's holding wet sand, if you're holding it so tightly, it just kind of plops out in between your fingers. … It's kind of letting go of what you have and then seeing what comes up.

It was an openness to the conversation within the interview that had Olivia noticing a new awareness. Through her participation within this study, Olivia was able to talk openly about her experience with spirituality, take time to be mindful throughout her day to observe where it continues to be present, and then reflect in the second interview about her increased awareness through this exploration. She had stated she was happy to be talking about spirituality and that she felt it wasn't talked about often. Willy also identified his spiritual experience being increased through building his own awareness and sharing experiences in supervision. As mentioned earlier, growth was often associated with the openness and increasing awareness the participants spoke about. Personal awareness was described when working with supervisees to be mindful of personal biases. Phoenix share having interactions with supervisees who are connected with a religious group she struggles with and needing to maintain compartmentalization. She also shared similar situations when she relates to similarities in beliefs with supervisees. Olivia shared a similar thought, "We have to be aware of our own stuff in order to work with different types of

people." These examples of awareness were similar between participants and nearly all related back to working appropriately with their supervisees.

Follow Ups. Awareness was mentioned nearly double the number of times as in the initial interview. The increase in the participants' awareness of spirituality was intended through the journaling process and appears to have carried on after the journaling concluded. Within the journal the participants reinforced the original message within the first interview about being mindful of the differences they may have with their supervisees and those they serve. Phoenix shared, "I have to be particularly sensitive, neutral and aware of how I present myself and frequently discuss their (supervisee's) own levels of comfort/concern during our weekly supervisions." Olivia identified considering the possible reactions toward differing ideas and the importance of awareness in those situations, while Willy directed his attention toward understanding differing points of view or perspectives. An experience Ruth journaled about was having an awareness of what a supervisee was going through and providing encouragement and support in a time full of unknowns. This led her to stop and take more time with this supervisee to encourage and support the choices made, thus practicing her own spirituality in the moment. Beth shared a similar experience:

> When talking with a counselor I found myself saying, 'you were put in this person's life for a reason' and 'there is a higher power at play here' when discussing a client that is having serious medical issues. I know the counselor I am talking with is a highly spiritual person and I believe this provided some kind of comfort in the moment. It felt good to share our common spiritual beliefs and tie this into the work the counselor is doing with their client – it made sense for the situation.

Frankie summarized her thoughts on this mindfulness, “What it has come down to is being respectful and understanding perspectives from each person, how it can influence the therapeutic process, along with relationships you build within supervision.”

Being more aware of how spirituality was involved with the work the participants were taking part in was also very present within the journal entries. Olivia shared:

> Following the initial interview, I felt incredibly aware of spirituality and was almost looking for this when meeting with others. The topic did tend to come up occasionally within sessions and with my own supervisor (as relates to personal things going on in my life at the time). I did tend to focus on intentions when interacting with others, more than usual.

Olivia’s shared an increase in her own awareness of the moments where spirituality could be addressed and an increase in her own intentions in situations. This experience was shared by Willy who shared having a greater awareness that led to further conversations within supervision sessions. Frankie found it notable how important mindfulness is within the supervisor role and being careful with things such as word choices and perspectives. She also shared how mindfulness itself can be experienced as a tool for spiritual practice and assist in keeping herself and her supervisees in the moment. She identified how easy it can be “easy to drift off when having back-to-back appointments” and using mindfulness can assist in staying focused.

Taking part in this research project led to more awareness of how spirituality was active within the participants’ experiences. Olivia shared how she felt she “focused heavily on spirituality, but not mine. Well, mine, but a lot about the people around me.” She shared through this process she was looking more often for cues of when she was shifting her focus and it started to be on the forefront of her mind. She identified finding herself questioning whether her

spirituality was aligning with her actions. It was Ruth's experience in reevaluating her actions and conversations through the journaling process to dive a little deeper. She shared it was a "chance to explore" and identified it as "kind of a reassurance that we were going the right direction and that we're doing what we need to do, not only for the staff, but the clientele." Taking time to reflect back on situations and reassess the validity of actions empowered Ruth within the process and provided self-care. She shared:

> I think for me it was a good reminder to make sure that I continue to keep my own balance because I need to continue to encourage and to educate others. I'm like everybody else. We all have our good days and our bad days or our good moments and our bad moments.

Frankie suggested some similar thoughts to Ruth, addressing the importance of compartmentalizing your own experiences but taking time to de-compartmentalize to integrate experiences with others together through journaling. She found pinpointing and vocalizing aspects of spirituality as having an impact on her and finding additional depth. Spirituality was more easily identified and acknowledged by participants, whereas the was a level of avoidance present within the initial interview. Ann reported how she noticed spirituality more often and in new places in this manner:

> I think I noticed that it was more prevalent than maybe I even thought. I could see a lot of just comments, even on social media, of just, 'I'm praying for you,' 'Thank God,' or the thoughts and prayers thing and 'It's God's plan,' or things like that. Just comments that I'm like, 'oh yeah.' … Just connecting moments, I suppose, that I never probably would've thought of as connecting moments with spirituality.

Structural Descriptions

The structural descriptions were defined through exploring *how* the experiences were affected by a variety of variables reported through the interviews. The process of imaginative-variation explores the many ways the experience can be connected with the environment and conditions around it, creating the multiple differences which may be experienced within the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). By exploring how the subjective phenomenon connects with the environment, social interactions, and other variables out of the participants' control, the researcher is better able to find patterns and features that characterize the phenomenon. The researcher identified four themes while exploring the data within the interviews gathered and, within these themes, the participants shared some of the ways in which their experiences reported were affected and influenced by outside forces. A total of 11 separate themes were combined to form four shared influential themes which played a part in how supervisors experienced spirituality. The identified themes had a greater focus on environments the participants were a part of and the role these settings played on what the supervisors experienced. Some examples of the themes which were combined were *natural in work, observed, requested,* and *necessity*. Many of the codes used to form these themes used similar words, terms, or identified similar experiences and were combined to form four themes. These four influential themes were focused on within the next section as a consideration for possible differences in perception and experience.

Diversity of Experience with Spirituality and Religion

There were quite a variety of experiences shared by participants ($N = 7$). Although many of the overall backgrounds were similar in nature, there were very different experiences

presented. How spirituality or religion interacted with the participants' life played a part in the perspective shared. Phoenix shared of her early life growing up with spirituality around her:

> I grew up in Northwest Iowa and we had two predominant religions, Catholicism and Methodist Presbyterian. Well, I grew up in a family where we went to Methodist Church. Not really a spiritual or religious family, but it was expected that we were to be baptized, confirmed, Sunday school, those kinds of things. But growing up in a small community, religion was everywhere. Organized religion, per se, not so much spirituality.

It was through these early experiences of holding to the general expectations of religious interactions created some of her negative feelings toward organized religion. She reported identifying aspects of negativity within her religious experience, pointing to feelings of shame, guilt, and judgement being present. She shared how her views of spirituality changed as she matured, separating religion from spirituality and creating some conflict within her earlier family life and community:

> I started questioning organized religion probably when I was a junior in high school. I didn't like some of the things that I was just seeing from organized religion, I suppose. And as I got out of the small community, went to college, started talking to people, my views shifted, which then caused a rift with my parents.

It was through an exploration of her own beliefs and the interactions with a more diverse community in college which shaped how she saw and interacted with religion. She reported seeing, "organized religion as a scam." With the rift between her family and past community, the feelings of shame and judgment felt through religion could be reinforced through the disagreements and conflict. This internal development led her to have a more positive view of spirituality and drawn more to that concept. She reported of spirituality as "more of the peaceful

part of it, … as in there's less shaming," and related to the more positive virtues that religion may strive for. Phoenix identified spirituality not being the motivator or guide within her life but did report how her spirituality may "wax or wane because there are times where spirituality kind of plays a factor," in her life. She shared most often turning to spirituality, "during times of adversity, grief, joy sometimes."

Beth identified some similar aspects of her early experiences with religion and spirituality. She shared:

> I grew up Catholic. I went to a Catholic private my whole life. From grade kindergarten to graduating high school, I was in a private Catholic school. So doing the whole nine yards, church services, accepting the Eucharist, everything Catholic. I feel like the Catholic church is very stringent on its beliefs. I questioned a lot of things when I was in high school, a lot of things that I learned about Catholicism. And I questioned a lot of the things that I was learning when I was in high school and got reprimanded for it. Asked to leave class one time, just different various things that really put a bad taste in my mouth about Catholicism.

Beth reported how there were a lot of things which had her question the early learning she had and was pushed to continue to follow the dogma present. She identified how this strict adherence to the beliefs and close-mindedness of the people and teachers around her left her wanting to get away. It was in college through learning about other spiritualities which gave her new light on the concept. She shared these experiences, "really opened me up to the idea that spirituality and religion are definitely not the same thing at all. And there's so many different varying beliefs out there." This different way of looking at these differing concepts allowed her to develop her own view of spirituality and separate it from the negativity of her past religious experiences. She

shared of spirituality, “I think it touches all aspects of our life. I think it’s like a foundation. It’s part of your family, it’s part of your inner being, it’s your health, your wellness, your mental wellbeing.” Unlike Phoenix, Beth appeared to have a greater use for spirituality throughout her life as a foundation rather than it being present more often in the emotionally charged times of life.

Willy shared begin his spiritual development at a “very young age at home.” He reported starting his spiritual development with his mom and her teaching them about, “faith, like believing in something that we can’t see or can’t’ feel, … how to treat other people, and how to treat them the way you want to be treated.” He identified how spirituality was based on morals and values at that time. He shared how he has found that religion is objectifiable through teachings, traditions, and formal signs. He shared finding spirituality being more internal and feeling it inside of yourself. He also reported how it was an important tool within the sobriety he has built within his life:

> I couldn’t be where I’m at, I wouldn’t even be alive without my spiritual program. I personally am a recovering addict alcoholic, the big book of Alcoholics Anonymous merely states and let it be of how it works, ‘Probably no human power could have relieved us from our alcoholism.’ I believe that we need a spiritual being, it doesn’t have to be a Christian spiritual being, but our belief in something bigger than us that we can ask to take away the obsession, and the desire to use, and to drink, and to do the right thing in general.

The similar understanding of spirituality being an internal force creates a similar foundation to the one described by Beth, while also having a similar external force to religious beliefs which can be turned to as a tool for Willy’s sobriety is another way for past experiences with

spirituality can create a new factor to affect how spirituality is used. For all three of these examples, there is an initial external force which provides an experience as the seed and then over time the concept of spirituality is developed further internally to create a direction or lens to view the world.

Role of Community for Supervisors

The community the participants live and work in was found to play a role in how they considered and interacted with spirituality. This concept was brought up by many of the participants (n = 5) when sharing about their early background with religion and spirituality. The community first plays a role in how spirituality is experienced in the early developmental stages for participants. This could be seen in Phoenix's or Beth's reports of growing up in and around the Catholic church. The community continues to play a role when considering the population which may be being served through the agency. Phoenix identified using some of the spiritual leaders of the community as a resource which can be called upon in tough times. She shared of a priest in her community and how he worked with them, "We had a suicide at a high school last year, right before COVID and he was nothing but fantastic. So, we worked with them and that situation." She continued, "Also other debriefings that we've had, we've worked with ministers, pastors, but priests mainly because it's a pretty big Catholic area." Phoenix worked along with leaders within the spiritual community, although she reported often keeping spirituality separated from the work she did with others. Phoenix reported a greater awareness of the often Christian based social services offered within the communities she works. She was able to identify her own hesitancy to refer for services but opened her up to learning more about these organizations. She shared how this has led her to doing more research on the organizations which has alleviated

some of her bias, informed her of which groups are legitimate and the ones she remains uncomfortable working with on an administrative level.

Ann also shared where she could see the importance spirituality within the community could play a part within the lives of the clients served:

> It is very important and is actually a pretty important, crucial part of their treatment honestly. I do actually work with Native American individuals and their families. And that's one of the places where I would say talking about spirituality and how they exercise their spirituality is very important to their healing and their treatment, things like that. It's something that I've had to learn more about, read more about things like that.

Being aware of the cultural diversity within the community helps the professional know how and when to be more open to learning and working alongside the clientele. In a similar sense, Ruth talked about how her spirituality connected with offering opportunities to those served in the community, and this was a way in which spirituality and community connected when appropriate. Beth presented her thoughts on a smaller level of community, within the agency. Similar to other participants, Beth shared how knowing, on a general level, the basic beliefs of the providers within her team helps her to interact with them in a way which is congruent to how they want to be worked with. She also shared how this can lead to fewer conflicts and providing a comfortable setting to address possible issues which may arise regarding spirituality. This understanding of spirituality within a community, whether in depth of a general sense, helps to inform the supervisor on the *how* and the *when* in addressing spirituality.

Effect of Workplace Culture

Like the spiritual beliefs of the members of the community, the workplace can have an overall culture which was spoken about by many of the participants (n = 5). Beliefs on how

spirituality is used, how it is addressed, or whether it should be addressed at all can come from the policies in place or the way the workplace presents itself to those it serves. Olivia presented it in this way:

> Motivation, what is your motivation, my motivation for doing what we do? Because ultimately, somebody knows that. We can say it's one thing and it can be something else. … But really also how we treat people, how you watch people interact. Not so much directly interact, but indirectly interact. … Because how we treat people when they're not there is probably … the true determinant of who we are as people, how we see others.

Olivia identified this being true of everyone involved within the workplace and how this represents the culture of the agency. The way she spoke of this idea presented spirituality, both positive and negative, being seen throughout all levels of work. Willy shared a similar frustration with how clients served are not always treated with the respect he would expect through his spiritual beliefs. Willy shared:

> We have to really be able to use our spirituality that they can get better. That hope, that faith that this person can get better. I'm not going to say a lot of times, but I have had instances, very, very recently as a matter of fact, that it was more of a numbers game, let's get this person out of here to get another person in because then he they can get better and the whole mirage of different reasons.

Willy identified using his spirituality in spite of what may be asked of him as a provider, but through his experience it presents as a struggle he faces in situations similar to his example. Yet, the culture of the workplace can also produce some changes and openings for growth in a spiritual manner. Frankie reported how her work within mental health and at agencies which utilized the 12 steps opened her up to look beyond what she had known spiritually and pushed

her to be more fluid within her beliefs. Beth identified how the use of the 12 steps can often become a part of how an agency functions:

> I think in leadership meetings, there's kind of what I would say guiding spiritual foundation that is 12-step based in all of the meetings that I'm in too, so I feel like it's kind of always there. And then obviously we used to have somebody coming in to do fifth steps. And so, we've talked about what would that look like and how could we incorporate spirituality more into our 12 step programs in an inpatient setting and all of that stuff.

Within Beth's experience there is a supportive work environment which is open to the use of spirituality and identifies where it can be utilized and expanded upon. Noticing where spirituality is and how it is used can help to promote this continued growth. But the opposite can also be seen, where there is hesitancy to address spirituality or differences in beliefs. Phoenix shared an example where she needed to address a supervisee about their personal spiritual beliefs and how they did not align with the ethical practice required within their agency. She shared, "You have to be careful as a supervisor on how you have those discussions, because it can really turn into an HR issue." But she shared how it was important to ensure the counselors' own belief system, which was often rooted in the religion of their upbringing, bleeding into their sessions with clients. It was experiences like these which presented a position of perceived danger in addressing spirituality which was often held by a figure in human resources or the agency as a whole. A balance needed to be struck in these workplaces, as these issues did need to be addressed, but often in a way which avoided spirituality and looked more at the objectifiable nature of ethics or policy. Depending on where a given workplace stood on spirituality played a

part in how often and what level of detail the participants addressed the spiritual backgrounds of those they supervised.

Holistic Nature of Spirituality

A common theme which was present in how the supervisors worked with others regarding spirituality as the holistic nature which seemed to be present and how it was a natural part of the work done in recovery ($n = 5$). When discussing the meaning of spirituality for the participants, there were multiple statements made identifying their belief that spirituality is integrated into the whole person and the environment they are a part of. Ruth shared when asked what spirituality means to her, "It's the mix of just getting the whole mind, body, emotions, the whole spiritual, just finding that peace that is with one's self and in one's nature with nature." She identified how she saw it interplaying with all aspects of the person, but also how it can interact with the environment. When Willy was asked the same question, he shared how having an understanding of your own spirituality helps and how, "when it comes to recovery, when it comes to supervision, I don't believe it's all complete until you enter the spiritual context of it, I believe you need spirituality involved in it." Willy agreed with the idea that spirituality is a part of the whole, whether it is the person, the experience, or something else. These shared ideas were found to be best explained through Beth's understanding of spirituality:

> Well, when I think about spirituality, I think of it as sort of this all-encompassing idea, bigger than myself, bigger than you, bigger than any one person. I think of it as like a guiding force if in a person's life. Something that gives meaning to experiences.

When asked to share what she meant by the term "all-encompassing" she shared, "Like, I think it touches all aspects of your life. I think it's like a foundation. It's part of your family, it's part of your inner being, it's your health, your wellness, your mental wellbeing. It's like always there."

Not only was Beth sharing how spirituality is integrated into the person and how they experience the world, but spirituality can play a part in the direction a person goes, decisions they make, and can be seen as a possible guide through life. With the possible natural integration of spirituality in areas of life for a client, supervisee, or supervisor, there becomes a similarity with the work done in substance recovery work's integration with the spiritual concepts in the 12 steps. Beth shared how she found spirituality comes up often due to the way spirituality becomes a part of recovery through the 12 steps. She shared her thoughts:

> I think that is because if you look at the 12 steps, the word God is so integrated into the 12 steps, it's just a common topic of conversation that comes up with clients, with staff, with supervisees. It comes up way more frequently than it does in my own personal life. … But in this setting, it just comes up much more. I believe that is because if you look around, we have the 12 steps hanging up everywhere and the word God is everywhere. the 12 steps are a spiritual based program. So, it definitely is a lot more present.

Willy had a similar impression of spirituality's role within the 12 steps and the work done within the agency. He identified how you can try to avoid or keep out spirituality and its themes through removing the words *higher power* or *God*, but the programs of Alcoholics or Narcotics Anonymous, and the 12-steps, are "very, very, very spiritual based programs." The ideas of spirituality being incorporated into individuals' lives and spirituality being enmeshed with the work done in agencies utilizing the 12 steps were brought together by Frankie. She identified how the role spirituality can play within recovery often becomes connected with a person's understanding of religion, causing some general murkiness in the work done and personal understanding. She shared this:

> Things aren't really cut and dry with some of that stuff and it can bring up a lot of things that you weren't necessarily aware of that were issues where you feel a certain way. And then, that's where the spirituality can come up in and fleshing out where you actually stand.

An individual may not know how a person holds spirituality within their life, it being positive, negative, or indifferent, some conversations may need to be had with spirituality being part of the holistic picture of the person and naturally addressed through the work of the 12 steps. Spirituality can be used as a resource or tool for growth and guidance within supervision or therapy, just as much as spirituality can be a roadblock or place of conflict which may need to be worked around and addressed. The common message which was presented by participants was spirituality should not be ignored or pushed aside.

Textural – Structural Description

The textual-structural descriptions were built through the synthesis of the experiences presented texturally and structurally (Moustakas, 1994). The combination of the five textual themes and the four structural themes provided an understanding of the phenomenon which begins to answer the research question, "What experiences do supervisors within substance abuse centers share and express when considering the concept of spirituality within their work?" These textural and structural themes were developed through the sub-questions to further understand the meaning placed on spirituality within the work done and the experiences which came to mind regarding the use of spirituality. Through the researcher's summarizing the *what* of the textural descriptions and the *how* found in the context of the structural descriptions, a more succinct understanding can be found of the presented phenomenon.

The experiences shared by participants can be summarized into two ideas: spirituality as a resource and consider spirituality in everything. The first idea consolidates what the participants see as spiritualities role within the work they are doing, while the second idea identifies how spirituality should be worked with. These consolidated concepts will be explained further below.

Spirituality as a Resource

Throughout all the interactions with the participants, there was a common understanding of spirituality as having a place and role in their work. The way supervisors used spirituality may have been different depending on the situation, but the use of spirituality as a resource remained. Phoenix specifically identified how spirituality can be used in times of difficulty and in celebration, while Willy, Ann, and Beth all identified spirituality being a guide which can be used to make decisions. Participants also identified other components of spirituality which can be used as tools such as forgiveness, balance, and open-mindedness which are related to spirituality by the participants.

As spirituality can be used in such a variety of ways and in different situations it has a versatility which can be utilized. Every participant reported in their experience of growth being a result of utilizing spirituality in some fashion. This growth can be seen within as Willy and Ruth identified through learning about another's beliefs which differ from your own and practicing continuing education. Olivia identified how growth can be seen through a spiritual sense of forgiveness in making mistakes, learning from experiences, and bringing the same sense of grace into the work done with supervisees. In a similar sense of having supervisee's grow, Frankie identified how a supervisee can be challenged in their own beliefs to promote more open-minded

thinking with their clients. Yet, this growth would not happen if there was a lack of awareness and willingness to initiate this work.

All the participants found a greater sense of awareness regarding the presence of spirituality within the work they do through being a part of the research process. Ruth, Beth, and Phoenix shared a level of appreciation for the conversations had within the interviews and the journaling process opening a place of introspection. Phoenix shared, “This is why I wanted to do this with you is because selfishly… I knew it would provide me a moment to pause and provide some maybe introspection, which is what I need. I wanted some insight.” Beth shared about the journaling process, “It’s always interesting to journal anything because I have so many interactions with people every single day.… But doing this forced me to actually think about these interactions a little bit more.” Ruth shared a similar experience with the journaling, identifying it as a way to find balance and calm in an occasionally chaotic space. This awareness was welcomed even when initially met with resistance.

Ann shared some general annoyance with taking time to reflect due to the busyness of work and life, similar to Frankie who was initially resistant to the interactions. Through the process Ann found the discussions created deeper awareness and growth through asking herself questions and having greater communication with others through the resistance. Frankie also found the experience to help bring about greater personal understanding of her own beliefs and a greater confidence in how they can be utilized. The experiences the participants were able to be a part of and share were identified as traits or challenges which could be modeled for their supervisees. This would then allow them a space to explore their own experiences and resistances in a safe, non-judgmental environment.

Finally, participants were able to acknowledge and explore the differences in beliefs and the diversity that was present in their work. There were stories shared about differences in their teams' beliefs, struggles in supervisees' work with clients, as well as some diversity within the communities served. Through the stories shared, using spirituality as a resource led to growth, awareness, openness to diversity, and a challenge toward resistance.

Spirituality in Everything

As previously addressed, spirituality has the potential to play a role in all aspects of a person's life. Through the holistic nature and focus of counseling, spirituality is a component which requires acknowledgement and exploration. This idea could be seen in the words of Willy, "I don't believe it's all complete until you enter the spiritual context of it," Ruth, "It's the mix of just getting the whole mind, body, emotions, the whole spiritual, just finding that peace that is within one's self," or Beth, "I think it touches all aspects of our life. I think it's like a foundation." Knowing how spirituality can be integrated with other life experiences can lead to further considerations in the work done with others. This consideration connected closely with the importance of a greater awareness of personal spiritual beliefs. Ruth identified not trying to change a person's beliefs, but instead creating a supportive environment. Frankie presented a similar statement about knowing yourself and the possible effects it can have on work, "I think part of good supervision is to flush out where the transference might be happening or triggers or whatever it is, because that then impacts the clinical work we do." Ann's experience was similar, although she also expanded on how she can see herself as a partner in spiritual work:

> I suppose what I'm most cautious of is not imposing my beliefs or the way that I see things on anybody, whether it's in supervision, with clients or anything like that.

> …However, if a supervisee or a client have specific beliefs that they want to utilize, then I can join in that with them.

Ann reports how she can model how to use spirituality in an appropriate nature, without pushing her own beliefs as the way things should be seen, while also being open to address spirituality when requested. She reported how she could become a partner in developing the use of spirituality for the work done in therapy. She shared a specific example of how this was seen in her life:

> I had an intern who specifically wanted to go into spiritual counseling. So yes, that was a very specific time that we talked about spirituality, and religion, and some of the things that she had seen because she actually grew up in a family of missionaries. She grew up in a different country with a family of missionaries. And so honestly in that case, we did discuss what role that would play in counseling, and it would have to be very specific type of counseling.

The spiritual needs of those served need to be considered, while also keeping personal beliefs in check, to understand the effects on the client, supervisee, supervisor, or the agency at large which may be present.

How spiritual experiences and concerns are addressed can be affected by the environment of the workplace or the community served just as much as the individual involved in the services provided. Depending on the policies in place or overall culture of the workplace may promote or dissuade a supervisor from interacting in a more objective manner regarding spirituality. Phoenix and Willy identified areas where they felt the way their agency worked affected the way the approached spirituality and could create potential issues. In contrast, Ruth could point to the agency being more aligned with the openness and supportiveness of her own spiritual beliefs

providing continued support and a place for individuals served to return for continued care. This opened up the conversation to how individuals could work with the community served and their spiritual background. The spiritual resources provided by the community was addressed and some focus on continued education and research into these resources was mentioned. It was identified by Ann that the cultural assumptions about a community can also create some possible conflict or bias in the way services are provided. While talking about her thoughts on the culture of spirituality in her agency and community she shared this, “I think it’s very dangerous for us to presume. So having said that, I think that’s not a good thing either especially in our profession.” As mentioned before, it is through interactions and discussions in which greater awareness can be built and fewer assumptions are made. The common theme throughout the interviews and journals was to provide the best care to the clients served and to promote growth in their supervisees. In conclusion, by investigating the experiences shared by the participants it was found that spirituality can be found in all parts of supervision and is difficult to address or interact with if it isn’t seen as a resource to be utilized.

Summary

Through the stories and life events of multiple supervisors shared, we have found a better understanding of the phenomenon experienced regarding spirituality. The results and analysis of the participants’ reports were presented, as was the process of data collection. The participants were introduced briefly before exploring the textural and structural descriptions. These descriptions were then consolidated to find the textural-structural description to better understand the phenomenon being explored. Amidst participants' narratives, acknowledgement of resistance towards spirituality emerged, yet through integration of spirituality fosters inclusivity and transformative opportunities. By acknowledging the diverse spectrum of spiritual beliefs,

participants highlighted the importance of cultivating an inclusive environment that respects individual journeys. As supervisors engage with spirituality, they observe personal growth and authenticity, emphasizing its role in enhancing leadership effectiveness and fostering holistic well-being within organizational cultures. Through this description a sense of why spirituality is addressed, and areas of possible growth can be better identified. Finally, further questions can be raised about this subject which can be potentially addressed through future research and study.

Chapter V

Discussion

Introduction

This chapter will provide a discussion of the points of focus found within the results of the study. This section will briefly review the study, interpretation for the themes identified, and connections made between the results of this study and previously mentioned research. The implications of the findings will be presented, the limitations observed within the research, and some considerations for future research within the field will be suggested.

The Study

The phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of supervisors who use spirituality and oversee the work of counselors utilizing the 12 steps method. The primary research question addressed what experiences supervisors within substance abuse centers share and express when considering the concept of spirituality within their work. The question arose through the work of the primary researcher as a counselor in the addictions field and the exploration of spirituality for clients. The focus of the question provided insight into how spirituality is experienced within the supervisors' lives, how the topic is brought to supervision, and how it is addressed in the supervisory space. Through the described experiences of the participants, general interpretations were identified through comparisons with past research mentioned in chapter two.

Interpretation

Through the exploration of the experiences provided, interpretations can be gleaned to answer the questions which directed this research. The interpretations presented were brought back to two aspects of the initial research question and their relationships to the themes presented

in the previous chapter. The themes were developed initially through the primary researcher's understanding of the experiences shared, confirmed through the member checks of the participant, and reinforced using an auditor.

Supervisor's Personal Experiences of Spirituality

Participants shared personal experiences which had a mixture of similarities and differences throughout. Specifically considering the experienced background of the participants in spirituality, all participants were raised with a background of the Christian faith. How they experienced their time at a younger age differed and for a majority of the participants their outlook on religion shifted to a less dogmatic form of spirituality as their spiritual identity grew. Phoenix, Olivia, Beth, Ann, and Frankie all shared their concepts of spirituality change after leaving home, often while meeting a more diverse community through their time in college. Willy also reported a change in his spiritual understanding as his religious beliefs shifted from the Lutheran denomination to Catholicism as he was preparing for his marriage. Like the findings from D'Andrea and Sprenger (2007) showing a movement away from religious beliefs, these interviews identified four out of the seven participants no longer identified as religious and would often shy away from topics of spirituality initially. But, unlike what Lopez-Tarrida (2021) and her colleagues found regarding the importance of addressing spirituality, participants often had a greater awareness of the diversity of spiritual beliefs and would often take this into consideration to avoid any possible conflict.

As identified by Fowler (1981), or by Cartwrights (2001), faith by nature is often subjective and is based upon an individual's life experiences, social environments, and identity development. What the participants shared during their interview process connected with these findings, showing an initial introduction to spirituality through their family background, shifts in

view explored by changes in the social makeup and environment, then continued through greater awareness of how their identity interacts with the world around them. Frankie had shared how spirituality was not as present as her experience with religion, creating a form of conflict when she began to recalibrate into her own understanding of spirituality when she left home. This was similar to what McKenzie and Jensen (2017) identified when addressing the changes of conceptions that occurred as individual matured, environments changed, and moral models became increasingly complicated. Frankie identified her own process of differentiating spirituality and her religious upbringing, as well as how working within the profession sped up the process of expanding her concept of religion, spirituality, and her relationship with both.

Participants who identified more with their spirituality than a religious background also shared Fowler's (1981) presentation of the subjectiveness of faith rather than the objectifiable nature of religious dogma. Willy identified within his experience the difference he found between spirituality and religion, as well as how he grew spiritually through learning more about his wife's religion. He initially shared, "Well, spirituality to me is an understanding of, just as it says, a spiritual experience, a not a religious experience, more of a spiritual experience that helps us understand a lot of things we can't explain." Before marrying his wife, he took part in Catholic education to join the church and have a better understanding. Willy shared how with a better understanding of his wife's beliefs he could integrate his own and feel more confident in entering this space with her. This appeared to be similar to what Hage and his colleagues (2006), as well as Schaffner and Dixon (2003) found when looking at the importance of having a greater understanding of the diversity of spirituality to be more confident in the work done in counseling. Willy also presented as a great example of Fowler's 2nd and 3rd stages of

development (1981) through his assimilation of the stories, beliefs, and his own experiences to further grow in his understanding of spirituality.

It is through this internal growth and further awareness of one's own spirituality that can become a great resource for individuals. Multiple participants shared how they found spirituality to be a strong guide and direction for their own behaviors and interactions with others. Olivia identified how spirituality is a guide, but like the subjective nature mentioned before, there is little rigidity to it:

> It's just believing that there's something bigger out there to help guide some of my moral decision making and just like a path to follow, in some respects. Pretty fluid. There's open-ended room to make it my own. It's not super strict.

For others, their use of spirituality as a resource comes as a comfort through difficult times. Willy shared this idea as "Jail house religion" and asking God to help make a situation go away in exchange of doing things differently the next time. Ruth, on the other hand, pointed to the use of prayer in times of difficulty for not only herself, but for others who are in need. Her willingness to use prayer as a possible technique or resource fit with how Schaffner and Dixon (2003) pointed to an increased openness to use spiritual components of the clients such as prayer, more spiritual language, or attending spiritual gatherings.

The stories shared presented an image of understanding the role spirituality plays in life that can be used to further develop a better understanding of the participants themselves. Frankie identified how working through introspection can give a better understanding of her own perceptions and be better enabled to work with others of differing beliefs or to help model this skill to other professionals (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009; Hook et al., 2016). She shared how it was important to examine her own beliefs and be mindful of her own learning through

understanding her perspective. Through this role of not knowing and a willingness to learn more about this spiritual component, if this were to be presented or the process explained to the supervisee, the supervisor becomes the role model in developing a stronger understanding of spiritual self (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009; Hook et al., 2016). Frankie shared how she was able to explore her own point of view so she could be more open to the ideas of others. She was able to expand more upon how this was further used as a tool in her personal and professional life. It is through similar actions and activities like these which can help bring an individual's personal experiences into the professional world.

Supervisor's Experiences of Supervisee Spirituality

After learning more about the participants' own experience with spirituality, it was important to learn how they saw it within their professional lives as they worked with counselors who were involved in the use of the 12 steps of recovery. Hook and his colleagues (2016) identified addressing multicultural competency through the emphasis on areas such as self-awareness, knowledge, and skills. Ann was able to share how she could use her time in supervision with a supervisee to both teach and learn in the moment. She shared how they were able to share their differing opinions and was able to model the skills of acceptance and openness (Days-Vines et al., 2007; Jones, 2015). Ann shared her thoughts on how the supervisee could be best serving their client by, "being able to utilize her experience, and understanding, and knowledge in a way that does not, again, impose or impede upon the individuals that she's working with and their treatment." She ended by acknowledging her confidence in her supervisee's abilities:

> Just observing her with clients, I already knew that she had very good boundaries when it comes to that. And she had a really good sense of self-disclosure and when it was appropriate when it was not appropriate, which is really difficult to do.

Ann's work with her supervisee showed her own level of spiritual awareness, encouraging the supervisee to explore their own awareness, and ensured the best care was being provided to the client. Beth shared a similar level of importance placed on how supervisees can bring their own spiritual identity into services and how jumping to conclusions can create issues. But it was her insight into how her own focus was lost in the moment when she was interacting with a fellow supervisor rather than a supervisee and felt she had overstepped regarding some bias she has toward her Catholic upbringing. The example which was presented connected deeply with identified importance found within some of the literature which states the importance of having an awareness of possible biases which can affect those that are worked with and around (Schaffner & Dixon, 2003). This also was similar to what Sue and Sue (2013) reported about how having a greater personal understanding of possible biases can create a greater sense of empathy for others, which seemed present in Beth's reaction to upsetting her colleague. Through these experiences and similar situations, the individuals who took part in this study were able to present ways in which they were able to help their supervisees develop as professionals and continue to grow personally within their own lives. There was a consistent presentation of the importance of modeling appropriate behaviors and ensuring the supervisees' beliefs were respected as well.

As had been mentioned in chapter two, there is a wide variety religious groups and diverse spiritual beliefs which professionals may encounter (Pew Research Center, 2015). Although the participants in this study had grown up with a Christian background, the

differences in their view of spirituality differed due to their interactions and growth. Participants consistently identified and addressed differences that might exist between them and the people in which they provide services. In the initial interviews this looked like a level of avoidance of the topic to ensure there was no conflict or the possibility of pushing their own beliefs onto the supervisee.

Phoenix shared a similar reaction to Catholicism as Beth, having a general negative bias, which she pointed to in interacting with a supervisee who would put out little hints about her spirituality. She reported how she needed to keep this in check so it would not cause issue. She then looked at her situation the other way, indicating she needs to keep this view in check as well when working with another supervisee who would have similar beliefs as her through identifying as a "recovering Catholic." Points like this seemed to reflect on the nature of the workplace culture and finding a balance of beliefs in an often-diverse space. Yet, through the participation in the study and focus on spirituality, the supervisors appeared to become more willing to address some of these spiritual differences and learn more about supervisees' use of spirituality. Olivia found herself a lot more focused on her own spirituality, but more often catching too little cues to others around her and their use of spirituality. She identified initial thoughts about how topics such as spirituality and religion are avoided as to not be judged or not fitting into the workplace. She then reported how these topics can be addressed through effective communication. She shared:

> It's not an argument. It's just, "Oh, here's what I think." And then we have a really good discussion about it. Like, "Oh, I never thought of it that way. Let me let this soak for a minute and come back.

Beth had a similar report, of how she often avoided any information about her own beliefs coming out to her supervisees and how she became more willing to engage in discussions or interactions about spirituality. She expressed this as a way of learning more about the supervisee's beliefs, how they use spirituality as a resource, and to create a welcoming space to have these conversations. Where spirituality or religious focus was initially avoided, more opportunities to address these points were found and utilized after taking time to see where it is present in the workplace.

The interviews showed an increase between the initial interactions to the follow up, where an increase in awareness of spirituality within the supervision process was present. Although there was an acknowledgement of the place spirituality holds working with the 12 steps, there did not appear to be as much acknowledgement of how differences were addressed. Phoenix shared how she would often model not addressing areas of focus such as religious or spiritual points unless they were brought up directly. Although this was still the model she presented in her second interview, she identified the importance of addressing the differences which could be present within the work a supervisee does with their client. This continued to emphasize the findings of Sue and Sue (2013), presenting some level of avoidance on the topic of spirituality while still acknowledging the possible role it may play within a client's life. Although this model is addressing spirituality within the life of the individual worked with, it does not promote joining the individual within the spiritual space and utilizing their own spiritual identity.

Finding this balance of working through the resistance and creating a space to address the possibly taboo topics can create a space for development for all parties involved. This example related to what was found within the research of Soheilian and colleagues (2014), of the

importance of having knowledge and willingness to address spiritual concerns in a culturally competent manner and takes the spirituality of the supervisor, supervisee, and client into consideration although it may be uncomfortable. Working through the discomfort can be a modeling process as well and can lead to positive outcomes with the supervisee (Kissil et al., 2013; Soheilian et al., 2014). By using the 12 steps, a better understanding of spirituality can be found as it works from the user's understanding of higher power. Mustain and Helminiak (2015) pointed to the emphasis in the wording of the steps helping to direct individuals to find a God of their understanding, but also a way to identify a power outside of themselves which is larger than them in nature. Ruth shared, "You can take [spirituality] whatever direction you want. That's up to each individual as to how they develop that. And how it is they utilize a higher power, or don't utilize a higher power in that growth. The 12 steps can be used as a series of steppingstones for development as Ruth shared with her observations of how they are utilized in services. She highlighted the principle that one's belief can be "as simple as if you believe that cup of coffee's going to keep you sober, then that's your belief for right now." She supported her supervisees to validate and encourage the individuals worked with to gradually construct their own path towards recovery and spiritual understanding. Simultaneously, there is a concerted effort to guide the clients in cultivating forgiveness towards themselves and discovering inner peace through this process.

Ruth shared how the use of spirituality can be a tool to provide clients with hope for a better future, rid themselves of toxic shame, and build a more positive concept of self. Similar to the subjective nature of spirituality, its uses can vary between the individuals who acknowledge and begin to use it throughout their time interacting with the 12 steps (Kelly, 2016; Mustain & Helminiak, 2015; Steiker, & Scarborough, 2011). This example also identified the importance of

trying to meet the client where they are at, rather than pushing a specific idea on them. If the clients' spiritual identity or religious choice is not acknowledged, possible conflicts can arise by leading them down a path that may not align with their beliefs and create a schism between client and counselor (Mustain & Helminiak, 2015; Steiker & Scarborough, 2011).

It was through the internal processes of introspection and the external processes of addressing spirituality within the workplace which created a level of development within the supervisor and the supervisee. These experiences aligned with the work done by Bronfenbrenner (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998) showing how development occurs through both proximal and distal processes, as well as the work of Broderick and Blewitt (2019) which focused on the internal thinking and cognition's role on development. Participants' experiences with the world around them as they grew up, the community they live in, the workplace culture present, and the holistic nature of spirituality within the stories they shared presented how spirituality can be a part of everything. Although it may not be the primary factor in a person's story, spirituality may have been part of the development of how a person acts, how they make decisions, or why they may be experiencing a situation or emotion. In regard to the outcome of the study for participants, it was clear through their follow-ups they appreciated the time to speak about their experiences with spirituality and found their own sense of growth. The process of this study allowed for them to continue to develop their work and professional identity through the supervision process and exploration as presented by Reiner et al. (2013). Olivia shared, "I felt like it was almost a comparison thing. Like, "Oh, does mine..." Not that it's super important, but "Does mine line up to theirs? And if they're doing well, maybe I should pay attention to differences." Olivia identified how she felt she could be more open to integrating the positives she saw in others into her own life and build upon her current spiritual identity. Frankie

shared “I think it was just I think becoming more aware of what I would actually do and making it more concrete versus being theoretical. I model different behavior. Think it just made things more concrete.” Where Frankie identified in her initial interview having a very fluid concept of spirituality, she found she could identify what it meant to her more after the opportunity to talk about spirituality and observe it within her profession. She could put words to what she believed and how it relates to her work. Ruth shared the reassurance she received through her reflection, and acknowledging the role her own spirituality can play in offering the best care to those she works with.

This opportunity for these supervisors to answer questions and explore their spirituality through the initial interview began the process of reflection on their life and interactions within the profession. Through the journaling process they were more attentive and mindful of where spirituality presents itself in their lives. While the final interview solidified the experience and appreciation for the opportunity continue their growth in their spirituality and profession.

Implications

The implications of this research are primarily focused on supervisors, but the findings can also be implemented by administrators within counseling agencies and counselor educators. The findings suggest spirituality plays a role within individuals’ lives, as well as the importance of creating an open environment for it to be explored and work through possible resistance. Through these steps more culturally competent services can be provided and the diverse populations can be best served.

Implications for Supervisors

Four implications are provided for supervisors. These implications invite supervisors to explore their own experiences within spirituality, recommends providing a space to explore this

concept for supervisees, to model how to appropriately have these conversations, and to acknowledge the role spirituality can play in many areas of people's lives. Through these steps, spirituality can be better addressed and integrated into the further growth of helping professionals.

First, it was found to be important to take time to address the supervisor's personal spiritual beliefs in an introspective manner. This process was promoted throughout the study in multiple manners. The supervisor was given a place to discuss their beliefs, reflect on their development, and explore how spirituality can be used as a tool. The journaling experience allowed for the supervisor to be more mindful of how their own spirituality can play a role within the work they do and how they interact with the world around them. The participants shared their appreciation for the experience and to have taken the time to focus on themselves and how spirituality was related to their identity. They also reported feeling like the time they did take was inspiring to continue exploring further growth.

Although the role of supervisor can be considered a pinnacle of a profession, there is always room for growth and development (Broderick & Blewitt, 2019; Schaffner & Dixon, 2003). The process of personal growth and inner exploration allows for an individual to have that continued development in different areas of life. Different concepts of identity can be better understood and utilized in a positive manner, rather than continuing to stagnate in contentedness. Even if the individual does not hold any personal spiritual beliefs or an importance in this area, it can have a negative impact for the supervisor to not have a proper understanding of how their own belief system can affect their work (Schaffner & Dixon, 2003). Identity is a dynamic component which has the potential to affect how a person interacts with others due to the multiple factors present within different roles (Kaplan & Garner, 2017).

Second, through the supervisor's own exploration and identifying the benefits of understanding their spirituality, they can create an inviting space for supervisees to address spirituality and potential conflicts they experience within the field. By doing this, the supervisee can be best prepared to identify and address possible cultural differences they might experience with clients. As the role of the supervisor is to ensure the continued growth of the supervisee and best practices for clients, utilizing the supervisory meeting to provide the space to be vulnerable and attentive to spirituality should be promoted.

By promoting this type of development within the supervisory environment a more inviting space is created for supervisees' identity development (Schaffner & Dixon, 2003). This space has the potential to mirror what can be accomplished within the therapeutic setting the supervisee is creating with their clients (Day-Vines et al., 2007), rather than responding with avoidance, hesitancy, or concern they may make a mistake when faced with existential questions of spirituality (Lopez-Tarrida et al., 2021). When reactions such as these occur in a working relationship such as that of a helping professional, possible reactions such as distress, confusion, or even hurt have been observed from those worked with. By addressing differing cultural experiences more positive results within the clinical space by promoting cross-cultural contact, sensitivity, and identity development (Vinson & Niemeyer, 2000).

Third, the supervisory meeting can also be enhanced through modeling proper openness and introspection through the supervisor's own experience. So long as the supervisor has taken the time to address their own spirituality and are in a place where they can be aware of any potential biases present, modeling the appropriate amount of self-disclosure, an openness to hearing others' experiences, as well as inviting the supervisee to explore their spirituality can create a more well-rounded clinician.

As mentioned previously, the supervisor has the opportunity to present a model for identifying and addressing differences in culture, in this case spirituality, so the supervisee has a better understanding of how they can utilize this ability for their own therapeutic work they provide (Day-Vines et al., 2007). Through the supervisor's modeling practice, the supervisor utilizes their leadership identity (Hall, 2015). We can observe aspects of the second and third stage of leadership development as the supervisor is seen as a mentor and they can perpetuate the growth within their supervisees. The fourth stage of leadership development is then seen as the supervisor passes this leadership role over to the supervisee as they work with their clients (Hall, 2015). Through this model of providing a safe space to explore, the introspective aspect of understanding can be considered by both parties and aspects of culture can be addressed appropriately (Jones, 2015).

Finally, through the interviews it was important to acknowledge that spirituality can play a role in all aspects of life. Not everyone has the same experience with spirituality and not everyone finds spirituality to be important, but it often plays a role in direction and motivation for those who have a connection with their spirituality. Identifying spirituality as an aspect of culture would allow for it to be addressed on equal footing as other cultural aspects such as ethnic background. This would also break through some of the resistance and taboos around talking about spirituality.

As suggested within the literature, spirituality in some way plays a role in the lives of the majority of Americans (Berkel et al., 2007; Zinnbauer et al., 1997; Zinnbauer et al., 1999). As there is such diversity within spirituality and the level of importance a person places on it (Zinnbauer et al., 1997; Zinnbauer et al., 1999), it is important to build a stronger understanding of different beliefs to utilize appropriate interventions with those worked with (Schaffner &

Dixon, 2003). It is important for supervisors to create an open experience regarding spirituality as it can play a part in issues faced, but often there is little education or opportunity to address these topics within a learning environment, such as supervision (Berkel et al., 2007). This has been found to be often avoided due to the concern of strong beliefs regarding spirituality and the taboo nature of addressing the topic (Schaffner & Dixon, 2003), but this is also an area that is avoided by other helping professionals by delegating the topic back to mental health professionals or spiritual leaders (Galek et al., 2007; Poncin et al., 2019). It thus becomes important to acknowledge the potential holistic nature spirituality plays and address it in a timely manner when it is presented (Berkel et al., 2007; Zinnbauer et al., 1997; Zinnbauer et al., 1999).

By implementing these actions within the work of supervision, continued growth and development can be promoted within both the supervisor and the supervisee to provide more well-rounded, culturally sensitive service.

Implications for Agencies

Two implications were identified for agencies which utilize the 12 steps. The implications offered recommend agencies take time to identify the diverse populations which may be served and to offer training focused on the needs of these diverse groups. Through these steps agencies can have a better understanding of how they can offer the best care and to provide learning opportunities to others so this insight can be shared.

First, time should be taken to identify the diverse spiritual populations within the community to have a better understanding of what may need to be offered in services. As was mentioned in the interview process, some general assumptions are often made about the makeup of the community regarding spiritual beliefs. These general assumptions can create some miscommunications, general resistance, or complications if the individual being worked with

does not align with the assumed spiritual community. By understanding the spiritually diverse make-up of the community, the agency can provide proper resources to their staff to address this. Initially, agencies should perform a community needs assessment by identifying the population to focused on, developing an appropriate sample, using data collection tools (surveys, focus groups, existing data sources), and then analyzing the data to understand what further steps can be taken to prepare services for the needs of the community (Astramovich, 2011).

Similar to the way support groups utilizing the 12 steps of recovery have worked at transcending differences of diversity found by those who attend these meetings (Mustain & Helminiak, 2015; Steiker & Scarborough, 2011), it is important for the agencies to identify the diversity of the populations served to be as welcoming and accommodating as possible (Astramovich, 2011; Steiker & Scarborough, 2011). Although 12 step groups may not be able to address all the needs of different clients and may be shunned by those who do not have a connection to spirituality as it is presented (Kelly, 2016), this presents further reasoning for agencies to have a solid understanding of the diverse populations who come to service so proper resources can be recommended and appropriate interventions employed by clinicians. Agencies and stakeholders can better understand how to connect to diverse groups through the data collected by a proper community needs assessment, information collected through intake or screening interviews, and potential discharge surveys. Agencies can use this data to offer culturally appropriate services, perform outreach, and offer training to help educate others.

The other implication found was upon exploring the makeup of the community and the possible needs of the staff, the agency can provide cultural competency training with a focus on spirituality. Some examples of these trainings could be how to open up and listen to other belief systems which may differ from your own, how ethnic culture and spiritual culture often connect,

or how spirituality can be used as a tool for growth and success in the therapeutic space. These trainings can challenge the staff to be exploring ideas outside of their usual perspectives and to be given a space to practice learning or ask questions about new ideas and beliefs. This also shows the community within the agency is open to differing beliefs, the use of spirituality within the work, and begins to deconstruct the often-present taboo around spiritual beliefs.

Providing trainings regarding cultural competency and continued education opportunities helps to develop the skills of those employed by the agency (ACA, 2014; CACREP, 2024), yet spirituality is still an area that is often disregarded or not recognized at all (Berkel et al., 2007; Hage et al., 2006). By taking the time to recognize the differences clients may be attending to due to their different spiritual backgrounds a more inviting space can be presented for services which can address their needs without less concern of being unheard or unseen (Schaffner & Dixon, 2003).

Implications for Counselor Educators

Three implications were identified for the realm of counselor education. These implications look toward inviting students to explore the role spirituality can play within different areas of counselor education. The implications begin through the classes focused on culture, then expand into how spirituality can be seen within courses such as crisis intervention. Finally, providing proper modeling through the educator is suggested to allow a space for students to practice having conversations about spirituality.

First, taking time to address how spirituality fits within cultural competency by introducing it within the classrooms, clinics, or other opportunities to be open to discussions. As the topic of spirituality is a common focus within the counseling field, especially with a focus on substance abuse, it is recommended time be taken to address spirituality's place in cultural

competency. Through the introduction of the many forms of spiritual beliefs which may be present in counseling, this would be an initial introduction to beginning these conversations through peers and the instructor. By having these conversations there can be a demystification on the topic and provide opportunities to feel more comfortable addressing potential differences in beliefs. Educators and programs can take this a step further by challenging students to take part in a service, practice, or research into a belief different from their own. As each participant identified experiencing differences in spiritual beliefs, there were also some aspects to avoidance of the subject presented as well. By addressing this within the classroom or clinic, students can build their confidence in speaking on these differences, joining someone else in theirs, and have a better understanding of their own beliefs.

Both the ACA guidelines (ACA, 2014) and CACREP standards (CACREP, 2024) point to the importance of cultural competence to ensure no harm is being done to those being served. Appropriate training is necessary to avoid any potential ethical dilemmas due to a lack of competence in core areas (ACA, 2014; CACREP, 2024). It is important to be aware that there will be conflict which can arise due to the differences in beliefs, but this does should not dissuade educators from addressing these differences within the classroom (Berkel et al., 2007; Burton & Furr, 2014; Hage, et al., 2006). Educators including spirituality within a class focused on diversity, identity, or even having a class focused solely on the topic. Programs offering classes such as these would provide ample opportunity for future clinicians to connect with their own understanding of spiritual identity and areas of further growth or awareness. Educators would be able to use general grading to observe students' learning, topics to explore more in-depth, and possible gatekeeping for potential issues observed through class interactions.

Second, considering the holistic nature, which was described by the participants, another possible implication of this study is to introduce the concept of spirituality more actively within other coursework, potentially when addressing multicultural competency. Not only would this provide some insight to new professionals as to how spirituality can be integrated into other topics, but it would also continue to provide further opportunity to have conversations as mentioned in the previous implication. An example of this in practice could be presenting how spirituality can be present from a human growth and development point of view as an individual ages and matures. This could be done by having a discussion about the differences in how spiritual beliefs or questions may have changed as the student has matured. Another example of this could be how spirituality can be utilized within a crisis intervention course, highlighting how it may be used as a resource for clients who connect with their beliefs or a way to build connections with others within a community for further support. A possible lesson plan could begin by recognizing spiritual diversity, ethical considerations, and assessing a person's spiritual needs in a crisis situation. The class could then move to the practical applications and interventions which could be used such as integrative approaches of the individual's spiritual background, mindfulness, and contemplative techniques like meditation, and ensuring the practitioner is not forcing the subject on resistant or hesitant clients. By taking a mindful approach to addressing differences in spirituality within multiple courses, future counselors and supervisors may be more likely to be mindful to the potential moments where the subject of spirituality can be broached with a client or supervisee.

As mentioned before, competence in the core areas as presented through CACREP (CACREP, 2024) is important to address in graduate programs and a requirement for accreditation of a program. The holistic nature present within spirituality can encourage

educators to show how it can be integrated into other areas of counseling (Jones, 2015). Doing this could address two areas of concern found within past research by Berkel et al. (2007) and Schaffner and Dixon (2003) for example. Again, Berkel et al. (2007) found many providers were faced with dilemmas regarding spirituality and felt under-prepared for them by their past educational experiences and their current supervisory experience. Schaffner and Dixon (2003) had found that individuals had a difficult time addressing situations regarding spirituality due to the expected strong beliefs individuals can have about the topic and wanting to be cautious due to the taboo nature of bringing up spirituality.

Finally, like a previous implication for supervisors, educators can also enhance the learning process through modeling proper openness and introspection through the educator's experiences and examples. Again, it will be important for the educator to have taken the time to address their own spirituality and are in a place where they can be aware of any potential biases present, modeling the appropriate amount of self-disclosure, an openness to hearing others' experiences, as well as inviting the students to explore their spirituality in a safe setting.

The process of modeling is a powerful tool for learning, as it can normalize situations, promote openness appropriately, and nurture a safe environment for growth and risk taking (Day-Vines et al. 2007). This should not be mistaken as an opportunity for educators to be learning more about themselves, but instead be sharing the insight they have built over time and through introspection (Sue & Sue, 2013). This level of sharing and modeling provides for a level of empathy and opportunities to learn from others' experiences, creating a more collaborative environment in the classroom.

Limitations

While this study provides valuable insights into the experience of spirituality by supervisors in a 12-step substance abuse agency, it is important to acknowledge the limitations that may impact the transferability and depth of the findings. First, there is a notable limitation identified within the relatively homogenous sample of participants with respect to their spiritual backgrounds. All of the participants identified having a background in Judeo-Christian traditions early on in life and many continued to practice these into their adult lives. Although some of the participants did not continue to be active within these spiritual groups, there is still a potential difference which could have been found through interviewing a wider range of supervisors with differing spiritual backgrounds. Although this lack of diversity may not affect the findings, there may still be something that has been missed regarding the experiences of supervisors and possible differences in feeling comfortable addressing spirituality. A fuller picture may be possible through the integration of interviews with individuals who draw from differing religious traditions or hold non-religious worldviews.

Another potential limitation pertains to the relatively narrow range of experience levels among supervisors. The average amount of experience between the supervisors was 5.2 years, with about a year of experience at the low end and 10 years of experience at the high end. This may have implications for the transferability of the findings to supervisors as their experiences may change over time within the role they take at work. Having a more focused range of experience (e.g. first year supervisors, veteran supervisors) may have provided additional similarities in experiences or challenges faced. Additionally, having a broader range of experiences levels among the supervisors would have possibly shown a broader perspective on this phenomenon as well as possible growth seen within the differing experiences.

Another limitation of this study is the imbalance in gender representation among the participants. Of the seven individuals interviewed, only one identified as male, while the remaining six identified as female. This disparity may introduce a potential bias in the findings, as the experiences and perspectives of male supervisors may not be adequately represented. Consequently, the findings may not fully capture the range of experiences related to spirituality within a supervisory role, particularly from a male perspective.

Although a narrow sample was utilized for this research, there is a possible limitation in regard to transferability of these findings. As has been mentioned above, the sample is focused primarily on female supervisors from Midwest states during the Covid-19 pandemic who have a Christian background. There are many changes which could be made to the format of this research to look at other communities, populations, and cultural backgrounds. Although this limitation was intended in the case of this research, it could be addressed within future research.

Finally, the reliance on virtual interviews conducted through Zoom may have been a methodological limitation. Although this was necessitated due to the COVID-19 pandemic (2019-2022), it may have influenced some responses within the study. Full face-to-face interactions can create a greater sense of rapport building and non-verbal communication, which can be a critical component to the qualitative interviewing process. Due to the virtual space's constraint to internet functionality, some technical difficulties were also experienced in two of the interview sessions. The pandemic also created a boom in the therapeutic spaces due to need and addressing changes in how therapy was being executed. The additional stress on the participants time and additional stress of coping with Covid-19 through the virtual interviews may have made a difference in the time and focus devoted to the study.

Future Research

Through the research process some additional areas for further research were identified through the participant interviews, external auditor, and questions remaining after data analysis. Continuing to explore some of the shifts regarding religion and spirituality allows for possible areas of conflict, struggle, or development to be found regarding counseling services (Zinnbauer et al., 1999). Continuing to expand upon the literature also continues to open the field to more discussions around the topic of spirituality.

First, some additional research is recommended regarding possible differences in the demographics of participants. Identifying what possible differences can be found within different regions of the United States, or elsewhere around the world, could provide further context on how spirituality is experienced in the supervisory field. This would also give a more well-rounded understanding if this were a Midwestern phenomenon or is more transferable in nature. Other possible demographic areas to consider exploring in further research could be generational differences, other religious/spiritual backgrounds, or if the supervisor has experience in recovery. These are demographic considerations which were not areas of focus within this study which could bring about a different sense around the phenomenon explored.

Another topic which was brought up throughout the study was the perceived nature of discussing spirituality. Often the topic of spirituality within the supervisors' lives were covert in nature and not addressed often. Many of the participants shared how their spirituality is present within their perceptions, motivations, and actions, yet they were rarely ever brought up with others in their daily lives. Shedding some additional light on the *taboo* topics within counseling and supervision may be worth exploring to understand if this is done in a healthy manner or out of avoidance of being uncomfortable (Schaffner & Dixon, 2003; Sue & Sue, 2013). As an

example, multiple participants talked about their resistance to talk about spirituality within their work and equated it to talking about politics or political differences. These are common cultural divides which could occur within a therapeutic relationship and how to address these differences can be modeled within the supervisory relationship. Further information in this area could provide some possible solutions for addressing these potentially difficult topics.

As was mentioned in the implications for educators, a possible area for further research could be focusing on how prepared new clinicians feel about addressing spirituality after coming out of their respective programs. Looking specifically at CACREP accredited graduate programs would be an ideal place to start as social and cultural diversity is one of the eight core curricular areas addressed in their standards. These findings could also be compared to non-CACREP accredited institutions to see what discrepancies may be present for recent graduates. There are also CACREP accredited religious programs which could be a model for further investigation. Although most of the accredited programs found were Christian seminaries, there were a few Jewish focused programs to explore as well. Seeing how these religiously focused programs address the diverse makeup of spiritual belief could provide direction in how other programs develop spiritual awareness in their students. Finally, the concept of education and the highlighting of the spiritual component within the lives of others can also be explored through the continuing education space. Looking at what training is offered that may shed light on spirituality or open the topic to supervisees, as well as supervisors.

Finally, there were some general recommendations which were provided in the interviews about when and how to address spirituality in the supervisory role. Some consistent times to address spirituality shared by the participants were when addressing trauma, when working with specific cultures (Native/Indigenous American), 12-step work, or when extreme

viewpoints are being expressed. Providing further research and data on the possible benefit of addressing spirituality within different areas addressed in supervision could provide further guidance in the supervisory field. Some of the directions of how to address spirituality revolved around the importance of having strong boundaries, intentionality, and being present when it is brought up by the supervisee. Again, having more research to help guide the supervisor to feel more competent and comfortable in addressing the topic of religion or spirituality could promote further growth and inclusion.

Summary

Through this study spirituality was brought to the forefront of a group of participants and their experiences were recorded and many similarities were found. These experiences begin to fill in the gaps present within the previous literature and the lack of research devoted to focusing on how spirituality is addressed in supervision. By focusing on how these supervisors experienced their own spirituality and the spirituality of those they work with, a better sense of what occurs during supervision and how spirituality plays a role in the field can be seen more clearly. Many of the participants reported having a better understanding of their own sense of spirituality, how it is utilized within their life and work, as well as how it can be utilized as a tool with those they supervise. The findings within this study reinforce the nature of spirituality as a resource for the supervisor, supervisee, and the clients served through the agency. By promoting the exploration, discussion, and further training in diverse spiritual beliefs, a greater number of staff and clients can be served in a manner that is fitting for their cultural background relating to their spirituality. It was also identified through the interview the prolific relation spirituality has on nearly all aspects of life, whether there is a strong connection to a spiritual concept or the effects of a negative outlook of spirituality. Depending on how a person perceives the role of

spirituality within the world can influence whether they will be willing to address or be resistant toward it. In conclusion, it is important to acknowledge experiences with spirituality can be as important culturally as those experiences of ethnicity, sex, gender, or socioeconomic status. It is therefore a critical area of focus which needs to be introduced and addressed in supervision by supervisors who have done their own introspection and development of their spiritual identity.

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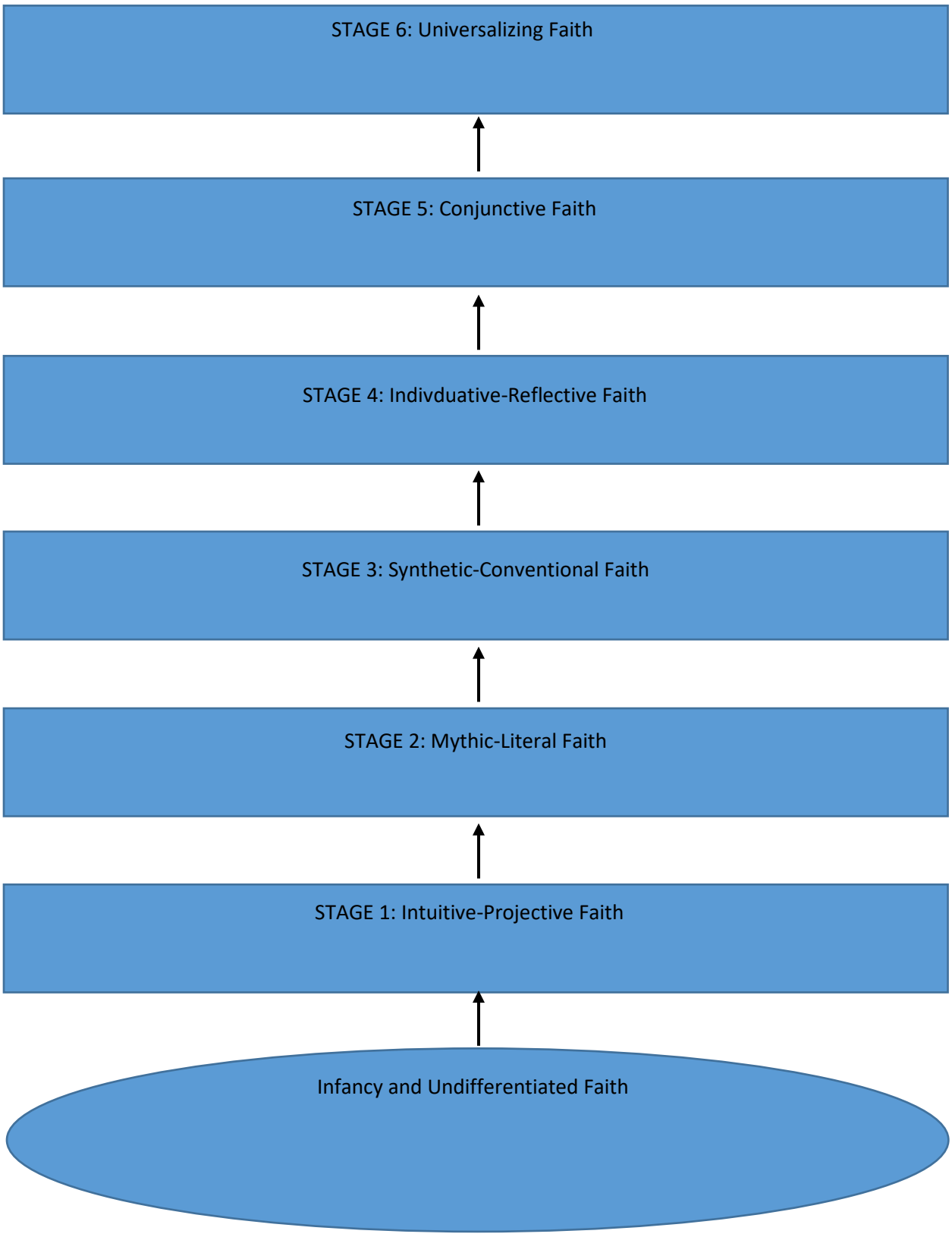
APPENDIX A: FOWLER'S STAGES OF FAITH



APPENDIX B: INVITATION LETTER AND INFORMED CONSENT

Experience of Spirituality in Supervision

You are invited to take part in a study exploring supervisors experiences with spirituality within the supervision process. This is a two-part research study aiming to find individualized truths and relatability between individuals. Through the collection and exploration of data, the goal is hearing stories and experiences from substance abuse center supervisors about in what ways, if any, they identify spirituality within their own lives and in the work they do.

Upon giving your consent to being a participant, you will be asked to complete a demographic form asking for basic information about you and your time as a supervisor. By giving your consent and demographic information, you may be contacted to be a part of either A) a focus group of substance abuse supervisors to discuss your experiences on spirituality or B) a personal interview about spirituality in your life and work. Both opportunities will be a semi-structured interview performed through questions which may bring discussion within the focus group or further clarification questions individually. This research experience will be performed over the course of a year. Finally, if at any time you feel unable to complete the study or feel uncomfortable about how it is being conducted, you may withdraw from the study at any time.

All data gathered through the research process will be kept confidential. No names of participants or employers will be shared; only general demographics and quotations. Data from the research will only be accessed by the researchers. Data will be destroyed after an appropriate period of time after the completion of the study.

If there are any questions or comments about the experience, method, or further concerns about how the experience is conducted, please contact the researcher or dissertation chair professor:

Mr. Andrew Gerodias (Student Researcher)
Ph.D. Candidate
(712) 281-0304
Andrew.Gerodias@coyotes.usd.edu

OR

Dr. Daniel DeCino (Primary Researcher)
University of South Dakota
(605)677-5840
Daniel.DeCino@usd.edu

I, the undersigned, have read the above statement and have been advised of what I can expect and what is expected of me during this study. I have been given sufficient opportunity to ask questions concerning the procedure. I likewise understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time.

_____	_____	_____
Signature of Participant	Participant Name Printed	Date

APPENDIX C: IRB Approval Letter

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA

Date: August 25, 2020

The University of South Dakota
414 E. Clark Street
Vermillion, SD 57069

PI: Daniel DeCino
Student PI: Andrew Gerodias
Re: Initial - IRB-20-113, *ADDRESSING SPIRITUALITY IN THE SUPERVISION RELATIONSHIP: EXPLORING THE CULTURAL PICTURE*

The University of South Dakota Institutional Review Board has rendered the decision below for this study. The approval is effective starting August 25, 2020 and will expire on August 25, 2021.

Decision: Approved
Category: Expedited 7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Associated Documents: Advertisement, Informed Consent, Waiver of Documentation of Consent, Interview Questions

Dear Daniel DeCino,

The study submission for the proposal referenced above has been reviewed and approved according to the procedures of the University of South Dakota Institutional Review Board.

Your study has been granted a waiver of documentation of informed consent. As a replacement for a signed consent you must provide your subjects with a informed consent document without signature lines. You must document this informed consent process in your study records. Attached in your file is the original consent document that has been stamped with IRB approval and expiration dates. Please use this original document to make copies for subject enrollment. If appropriate, please give a copy to your subject.

Prior to initiation, promptly report to the IRB, any proposed updates/amendments (e.g., protocol amendments/revised informed consents) in previously approved human subjects research activities.

Any research-related injuries (physical or psychological), adverse side effects or other unexpected problems encountered during the conduct of this research study needs to be reported to the IRB within **5 days** of notification of the occurrence.

Any modifications to the approved study must be submitted for review through Cayuse IRB. All approval letters and study documents are located within the study details in Cayuse IRB.

You have approval for this project through August 25, 2021. When this study is completed please submit a closure form through Cayuse. If the study is to last longer than one year, a continuation form needs to be submitted through Cayuse at least **14 days** prior to the expiration of this study.

If you have any questions, please contact: humansubjects@usd.edu or (605) 658-3743.

Sincerely,

The University of South Dakota Institutional Review Board

Ann Waterbury

Ann Waterbury. M.B.A
Director, Office of Human Subjects
University of South Dakota

APPENDIX D: FIRST INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

First Interview Questions

1. What does spirituality mean to you?
2. Please tell me about your experience with spirituality?
3. What level of importance, if any, does spirituality play within your life?
4. What difference(s) in importance do you find, if any, between spirituality in your own life and within your professional role as a supervisor in an agency utilizing the use of the 12 steps?
5. Please share an experience where you have used your own spirituality as a tool within your work as a supervisor?
6. What level of importance or meaning, if any, do you place on a supervisee's spirituality and/or experience?
7. Please share an experience where you have observed addressing a supervisee's spirituality/experience within supervision?
8. Please share how you address differences in spirituality between you as the supervisor and the spirituality of the supervisee?
9. Please describe anywhere else within your profession where you can observe spirituality and/or spiritual development?
10. Is there anything else you would like to share on this topic or something I may have missed?

APPENDIX E: SECOND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Second Interview Questions

1. Please share about what experiences or areas of awareness you found during the two-week journaling process.
2. What was your take-away or highlight from the journaling experience?
3. After looking at the coding process of the first interview, what clarifications or revisions would you like to share with me, if any?
4. Please share what it has been like to take time to discuss spirituality and focus on it within your work.
5. Please share any final thoughts you might have about this research experience.

APPENDIX F: JOURNALING PROMPTS

Journaling Prompts

First Journaling Prompt – Week One

Thank you for participating in this journaling process as an additional way to explore your experience with spirituality. This journaling process can be initiated by writing notes throughout the day and compiling them into a digital format (word document) at the end of the day or end of the journaling week. Within the digital copy of your journal, please expand upon your ideas noted during your week and answer the prompt to the best of your abilities.

Keep in mind some of the risks of journaling, as putting any thoughts or awareness onto paper or digital format can be obtained by unintended individuals if not cautious. Please refrain from writing confidential information and avoid identifying information while journaling.

Over the next week, take time to journal on the prompt presented below.

Please be mindful of when you notice aspects of spirituality within yourself as a supervisor. Please share what you notice and observe, highlighting certain aspects of note or sharing situations where spirituality comes up within your professional life.

Second Journaling Prompt – Week Two

Thank you for your continued participation in this journaling process as an additional way to explore your experience with spirituality. This journaling process can be initiated by writing notes throughout the day and compiling them into a digital format (word document) at the end of the day or end of the journaling week. Within the digital copy of your journal, please expand upon your ideas noted during your week and answer the prompt to the best of your abilities.

Keep in mind some of the risks of journaling, as putting any thoughts or awareness onto paper or digital format can be obtained by unintended individuals if not cautious. Please refrain from writing confidential information and avoid identifying information while journaling. Please journal on the prompt below.

Over the next week, please be mindful of when you notice aspects of spirituality within those you are supervising. Please look for and consider how your supervisees are addressing differences in spirituality within their work and how you are addressing these points. Finally, explain what type of emotional, behavioral, or cognitive reaction(s) you are having toward any spiritual experiences during this week.

Please, at the end of your journaling process, provide a brief summary of the entries over the past two weeks, identifying any final thoughts or changes in your understanding of the role of spirituality within your work. Finally, please send your digital journal back to the primary researcher within a week of completion.