

**Christ-Centered Model of Spirituality and Trauma:
Empirical Validation with a Community Sample of Vietnam Veterans
and Recommendations for Treatment Integration (9/13)**

Presenter: Margaret Nelson-Pechota, PhD

Individuals working in healing ministries have long recognized the importance of spirituality in the healing process. Researchers have paid scant attention, and methodological problems have resulted in conflicting results. There is some empirical support for the efficacy of prayer, meditation, forgiveness, and religious coping in improving health for individuals suffering from a variety of adverse conditions. The current model reconceptualizes the approach to assessing spirituality, and forms its basis in the central teachings of Christianity. Factors that contribute to long term distress, as well as factors that promote healing are included in this paradigm. Specific constructs include religious behaviors such as prayer, the nature of one's relationship with God, guilt, forgiveness, and the meaning of suffering. This comprehensive approach was validated using a predictor model with a nationwide sample of Vietnam combat veterans recruited primarily through clergy veterans and a Christian veteran outreach organization.

Workshop objectives:

- * Present a comprehensive, Christ-centered model of spirituality and trauma
- * Provide empirical evidence validating the model
- * Application of the model (using Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy if you like)

Questions:

1. Have you ever struggled with your faith in times of distress, and how did that affect your relationship with God?
2. How do you address the issue of suffering with your clients?

Frankl, a holocaust survivor, discovered within himself the human potential to turn tragedy and suffering into personal triumph through his own purposeful living while imprisoned in a concentration camp:

“...never forget that we may also find meaning in life even when confronted with a hopeless situation... to bear witness to the uniquely human potential...to transform....one's predicament.. When we are no longer able to change a situation...we are challenged to change ourselves.”

As Christians, we are called to bear witness to the suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ, who taught us how to endure extreme pain and humiliation through his suffering and death on the cross:

“To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.” (1 Peter 2:21)