Abstract

This presentation overviews the newest approach to counseling and faith integration, the transformational approach. A discussion will ensue concerning the basic assumptions of the approach and its application to a clinical setting. The presentation will end with a discussion about the approach’s strengths, weaknesses, and applying it in a personal counseling and faith integration approach.

Introduction

The Basic Assumptions & Tenants (Part 1)
- A Definition
- The View of a Person
- A Definition of Health & Pathology
- The Goal
- The 5 Foundations
- The Person, The Process, & The Product
- The Clinical Setting from a Transformational Approach (Part 2)
- Change
- Assessment
- Phases of Counseling
- Toward an Integrative Christian Counseling Approach (Part 3)
What are the most important points?

A Transformational Approach: The Basic Assumptions – Defining Health

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

John 15:15 (NIV)
The Clinical Setting from a Transformational Approach – 5 Foundations Applied: The Product-Goals of Therapy

“…the ultimate human end…all human pursuits and activities, including [counseling], are a means to union with God by which one loves God and neighbor and glorifies God” (Coe & Hall, 2010a, p. 212).

A Transformational Approach: The Basic Assumptions – Defining Spiritual Pathology

- **Spiritual Pathology =**
  - Living separate from God
  - Life lived out of false or “ego” self
  - Living apart from the Tree of Life

A Transformational Approach: The Basic Assumptions – Defining Other Pathology

- **Other Pathology =**
  - Defined in the DSM
  - Maladaptive emotional, social, and vocational functioning

***Note: In the transformational view, the first point of reference for the evaluation is a client’s safety, pathology and health; however, additional and alternative perspectives for healthy living are also introduced (e.g., spiritual functioning; Moon, 2012).***
A Transformational Approach: The Basic Assumptions – The Foundations

- The “vision of the transformational model is...[for] each psychologist to do the work of counseling afresh in the Spirit, grounded in reality and faith, open to other and earlier traditions but not in such a way that limits or hinders the personal process of doing counseling for themselves” (Coe & Hall, 2010a, p. 201)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A Transformational Approach: The Basic Assumptions – 5 Foundations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doing counseling within tradition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doing counseling anew in the Spirit</td>
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<td>Doing counseling grounded in reality, known by faith</td>
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<td>Doing counseling as one single, yet complex study of reality in faith</td>
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<td>Doing counseling as a science, both descriptive and prescriptive</td>
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Coe & Hall, 2010a; Coe & Hall, 2010b

The Clinical Setting from a Transformational Approach – 5 Foundations Applied: The Process

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quantitative/Traditional approach</th>
<th>Qualitative/Transformational approach</th>
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<tr>
<td>Deductive and confirmatory</td>
<td>Inductive and exploratory</td>
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<td>Theory/Hypothesis Testing</td>
<td>Theory/Hypothesis Building</td>
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<td>Results from a sample generalized to a population</td>
<td>Purposeful/theoretical sample</td>
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(Rockinson-Szpakiw, Spaulding, & Sweazey, in press)
The Clinical Setting from a Transformational Approach – 5 Foundations Applied

- The Christian final-end thesis
- Transformational psychology thesis
- The spirituality – ethics of epistemology and science thesis

Coe & Hall, 2010a

The Product

The Process

The Person

Coe & Hall, 2010a

The Contours of the Transformation Approach

Level 5: Spiritual-transformational goal for the psychologist and training
Level 4: Praxis of psychology in the spirit as soul care
Level 3: Theorizing and development of a body of knowledge
Level 2: Methodology, research, and doing psychology in God
Level 1: The transformation of the psychologist by spiritual-epistemological disciplines and virtues
A Transformational Approach: The Basic Assumptions – The View of the Person (Willard, 2002)

Willard’s (2002) model provides a holistic way to conceptualize the human being.

Commune with God
Separate from God
choosing to live by the “ego” / “false self;”
the belief that a life away from God is good and desirable

Choice is the activity of the Spirit. It underscores the most fundamental decision of humanity.

The Clinical Setting from a Transformational Approach: What makes a person change?

2 predictors of positive outcomes in counseling:
- Client motivation
- The therapeutic relationship
- ** listed in order of importance

2 primary “motivators”:
- Pain
- when it leads to a willingness to abandon maladaptive patterns
- Love
- When a client believes that another (e.g., God, counselor, significant other) genuinely desires for him or her what is good
The Clinical Setting from a Transformational Approach: 4 Phase Approach to Therapy

"Each of these stages would focus on aspects of life and personhood that include patterns of emotion, thought, behavior, relationships and violation; focusing on how these aspects of life include God and spiritual dimension...The work...will be primarily concerned with journeying through numerous individual, community, academic and family issues...while looking for possibilities for enhancing (his) relationship with God" (Moon, 2012, p.146)

- What are the “muddiest” points?
- What are the strengths of this approach?
Strengths

- Bold, ambitious agenda
- Appreciates and respects the revelations of science
- Appreciates contribute of psychology.
- Embraces the Old Testament "sage" as an appropriate model to emulate.
- A clear commitment to biblical authority and grounding in biblical view of persons.
- It identifies love as the final and appropriate end for all our efforts.

Weaknesses

- Who is privileged to define what reality is?
- Sets aside wisdom from all prior work?
- A call to develop a new approach or a new approach?
Toward an Integrative Christian Counseling Approach

- Wesley purports that the church derives stability from the dynamic interaction of 4 forces:
  - Scripture
  - Tradition
  - Reason
  - Spiritual Experience

Moon (2012) proposes an integral, integrative view of Christian Counseling

- Prediction of Y from Xs

\[ Y' = b_0 + b_1 X_1 + b_2 X_2 + b_3 X_3 + b_4 X_4 + b_5 X_5 \]

- **Y’**: the predicted value for X
- **b_0**: the intercept or constant
- **b_1, b_2, b_3, b_4, b_5**: the slope; magnitude of the direction and strength of the relationship between the predictor and the outcome
- **X_1, X_2, X_3, X_4, X_5**: the predictors
Toward an Integrative Christian Counseling Approach

\[ Y' = b_0 + b_1 X_1 + b_2 X_2 + b_3 X_3 + b_4 X_4 + b_5 X_5 \]

Improved Functioning of the Human Being =
\[ b_1 \text{ View}_1 + b_2 \text{ View}_2 + b_3 \text{ View}_3 + b_4 \text{ View}_4 + b_5 \text{ View}_5 \]

References