

Spirituality of the 12 Steps for Treatment Programs

Group activities for presenting
recovery spiritual principles.

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2023 CRSS Peer Conference presentation proposal

“Having had a spiritual awakening...”

Goals of this Presentation

1. Hope for spiritual not religious group topics/dialogues:
Gain understanding of the difference between spiritual and religious
2. Spirituality is a developmental process:
Gain a brief understanding of human mental and faith development
3. Engage in creative presentation of topics using proven treatment approaches:
Gain resources and experience for treatment program conversations and activities in spirituality topics

Spiritual not religious

- It is possible to talk about spirituality without being religious in therapeutic contexts.
- Working definition of distinction:
 - Spiritual – principles, values and attitudes.
 - Religious – ideologies, rules, structures and rituals.
- Metaphors underlie much of our language meaning. We can talk about spirituality using analogies, images and illustrations that are open-minded toward individual spiritual development and respectful of different religious preferences of clients.

Faith and Cognitive Development

Faith development follows the patterns of cognitive, moral, and relational development of human beings.

It is a lifelong process.

The human brain is a complex network of interconnections:

Constantly organizing and reorganizing its connections

Billions of neuron connection ends and constant growth

Connected to whole body of senses

Particular areas of functioning

Different types of thinking/responding

A simple, general description of logic areas: Triune Brain Theory

Reptilian – instinct, survival, habitual, trauma trigger

Limbic – self-interests, dualistic, competitive/controlling

Neocortex – spirituality of love, compassion, empathy,
collaboration, paradoxes, interdependence, etc.



Spirituality is not a given.
It is earned in the savage fight for survival
between oneself and oneself.

Craig Naaken

Various Theories of Human Cognitive Development

	Infancy	Toddler	Pre-school	Elementary	Adolescent	Young Adult	Middle Age Adult	Older Adult
Triune Brain Paul MacLean	Reptilian Brain: survival instinct fear based, ritual/habits, self-protective	<i>Survival: fear based reactions and coping mechanisms</i>	Limbic Logic: dualistic, pleasure seeking, competitive, control, domination seeking	<i>Dualistic logic: comparative, judgmental and punitive, judgement is with bias, primary focus is self-interest,</i>	Neocortex development: symbolic understanding, meaning making (12-25)	<i>Neocortex: love, compassion, mutuality, interdependence, creativity, collaboration, common good, paradoxes</i>		But note that all three parts of the brain are still functioning in adult life and they do not work together well.
Mental Logic Jean Piaget	Sensorimotor: Object permanence	Preoperational (2-7 yrs): Symbolic thought [language skills]		Concrete operational: Operational thought	Formal operational (adolescence to adulthood): Abstract concepts			
Social Consciousness of Subject-Object and Self Robert Kegan	Incorporative: baby self and world undifferentiated	Impulsive: sense of needs	Imperial: I have needs	Interpersonal: Others have needs too	Institutional: values begin to guide interactions, one right way	Inter-Individual: Able to recognize and accept different expressions of values (dialectic)		
Perspective Taking Robert Selman	Egocentric	Simple		Mutual-Interpersonal	Mutual with group or class	Mutual with other groups	Mutual with commonwealth	
Moral Judgment Lawrence Kohlburg	Punishment/Reward	Instrumental hedonism: reciprocal fairness		Interpersonal expectations and concordance	Societal perspective		Principled higher law	Loyalty to being
Psycho-Social Eric Ericson	Trust/Mistrust	Autonomy/shame-doubt	Initiative/guilt	Industry/inferiority	Identity/role confusion	Intimacy/isolation	Generativity/stagnation	Integrity/despair
Faith Development James Fowler	Undifferentiated: reliable world	Intuitive-Projective: parental	Mythic-Literal: story based literalism		Synthetic-Conventional: authoritarian/conformity	Intuitive-Reflective: dialogic tolerance	Conjunctive: Commonalities	Universalizing

Faith Development – Fowler's stages

- Infancy Undifferentiated faith – mutuality, trust, pre-images of Being
- Early Childhood Intuitive-Projective – imagination, formation of images
- Childhood Mythic-Literal – narrative (story), community
- Adolescence Synthetic-Conventional – forming identity and shaping personal faith
(My God)*
- Young Adult Intuitive-Reflective – construction of ideology, values, “master story,”
vocational dream, dialogic with diversity (Our God)*
- Adulthood Conjunctive – paradox (vs dualistic), collaborative across diversity in
the world, commonalities (Universal God)*
Universalizing – a universal God others may know in different ways

*Beyond Theology's "Spiritual not Religious" video presentation has three stages of faith development approximately similar to a conflation of the latter of Fowler's stages.

Another approach is to look at values development.

John Bradshaw, *Reclaiming Virtue: How we can develop the moral intelligence to do the right thing at the right time for the right reason* (New York, Bantam, 2009)

Linda Kavelin Popov, *The Virtues Project Educator's Guide* (Torrance, CA, Jalmar Press, 2000) – this book has educational activities for children that may be adapted for group uses and with adults.

“Morality happens in relationships.”

- Much of the damage and chaos of SUD is in our loss of awareness and relational harms.
- The spiritual principles of recovery improve our capacity for healthy relationships.

The Spiritual Damage of Addiction

- **Self-centeredness** destroys ability to relate and interact with others with respect, compassion and empathy. It isolates. **Spirituality is about how we relate.**
- Obsession to use replaces **awareness** of all other personal values. Addicts violate their own values when using.
- **Illusions of personal control and power** are created by the mind, at least until the chaos is unmanageable and it all collapses. This creates fragile/false sense self-esteem.
- The mental illness of addiction causes spiritual harm.

G - Good
O - Orderly
D - Direction

Keep it Simple

God and me.
God and us.
God of all.

Real
Relevant
Relational

1. “If it does not work, it probably is not spiritual.” (What needs to change?)
2. “The only suggestion is that your HP be loving and caring.”
3. EXPECT that your spirituality will continue to grow in new ways as you experience life on life’s terms, for the rest of your life.

Interactions with Clients

- Physical age does not equal stage of mental development or level of thinking in the present moment for anyone. (We still have all three voices in our heads!) **REALITY**
- Age of onset of SUD affects continued brain maturation rate and using can regress it.
- Past traumas or failed development do not necessarily prevent new growth. **HOPE**
- Faith crises are **OPPORTUNE MOMENTS** for reflection on old beliefs and change. Change is not necessarily a compromise. It may be for growth and maturation.
- **LISTEN.** Listen to their stories. Listen to the language used. Listen to their questions. Their stories and perceptions are not debatable. Listen for the commonalities of experiences and respect honest questions by giving honest answers from your own experience, strength and hope; not religious doctrines.
- Judging will shut down spiritual dialogue. **MODEL OPEN-MINDEDNESS** as you listen to their spiritual journeys. Share stories, briefly and as appropriate - how recovery has changed your understanding of your Higher Power, your values and relationships.

Enriching Your Therapeutic Groups with 12 Step Spirituality

Spiritual not Religious
therapeutic groups
ARE possible!



From the Chaos of Addiction to Spiritual Principles

What landed you in this chair? When does the chaos stop? Where can you break or stop impulsive actions? [change context, think twice before act]

What picture (metaphor) describes how you feel about the consequences of your using?

Metaphor of working a puzzle (jigsaw puzzle).

Together, more fun, help of experience, start with easier parts.]

Making a decision to try something different in a program of recovery.

There are many spiritual principles to work on all at once: Start where client is.

Metaphor of disc golf – progress, not perfection; and practice, practice.

What does it feel like not having a Higher Power/not having a personal relationship with the God of your understanding?

What changes when you find a Higher Power?

How does a person find a Higher Power and develop a relationship with a God of your understanding?

People get to know us
in many different ways.



Judging each other's different
perceptions/naming will cause
conflict and miss the whole truth.

Finding your HP through your experiences and your naming.

Comforter	Friend
Father	Mother
Creator	Healer
Redeemer	Wise
Holy	Alpha & Omega
Ancient One	Lamb
King of All	Shepherd
Savior	Provider
I Am	Peacemaker
One	Lord
Peace	Love
Protector	Rock
Corrector	Strong
Nurturer	Comforter
	Guide

Universal	Truth
Giver of Life	Rest
Miraclemaker	The way
Higher Power	Helper
Caring	Listener
Director	

Suggestion that your
H.P. be
Loving &
Caring
(NA)

Hateful	'Bell Hop Times'
	'Happy Times'
	Wrathful/Angry
	'Godfather'
Unaring	Tribal (limited to some)
Liar	Garbage man
	Avenger
	Random
	Untrustworthy
	Excuse
	Servant
	Weak Fake
	Unauthentic

Personal Character

Diversity is essential for an ecosystem to be sustainable.

Personal character is not about being right or wrong. It is about the unique contributions each person brings to the community for its wellbeing as a mutual support system.

Character traits can become liabilities when misused. They are often misused or abused when one is under stress or wounded. Awareness can offer suggestions for getting back to our best self.

DEER

love & compassion
Beauty
grace
gentleness & caring
curious
innocence

rock
hard
mean
lack of fear

Dog

Noble
Loyal
Protector
Compassionate

W d



Frog

cleave
change
non-violent
peace

3/11

 A small drawing of a frog, likely a toad, sitting on a patch of grass. The drawing is simple and uses green and brown colors.

Skunk

nonviolent
self-respect
lover

assertive
respect
walks the talk

 A small drawing of a skunk, showing its characteristic black and white stripes. The drawing is simple and uses black and white colors.

SWAN

graceful
surrender + acceptance
flexible

trust
H.P. plan
awareness
listen to gut feelings

 A drawing of a swan, showing its long neck and elegant form. The drawing is simple and uses black and white colors.

Inti
Imp
Hone

What can Meditation do for Me? (Video)

- Awareness – countering use of substances that numbed awareness
- Serenity, sense of meaning, purpose, self-esteem, hope, calmness, peace,
- Values clarification and balancing values conflicts
- Insight, discernment, guidance/direction, wisdom
- Physical, mental and spiritual health interconnected
- ... and many more benefits which clients may list from short video presentation

Regular time (daily)

Make room for self

Non-distracting context

Relax/Stretch/Breathe

Find what works for you

Have alternative meditation options

Use creative activities:

art, music, writing, aroma, walking, reading, etc.

Personal Balance

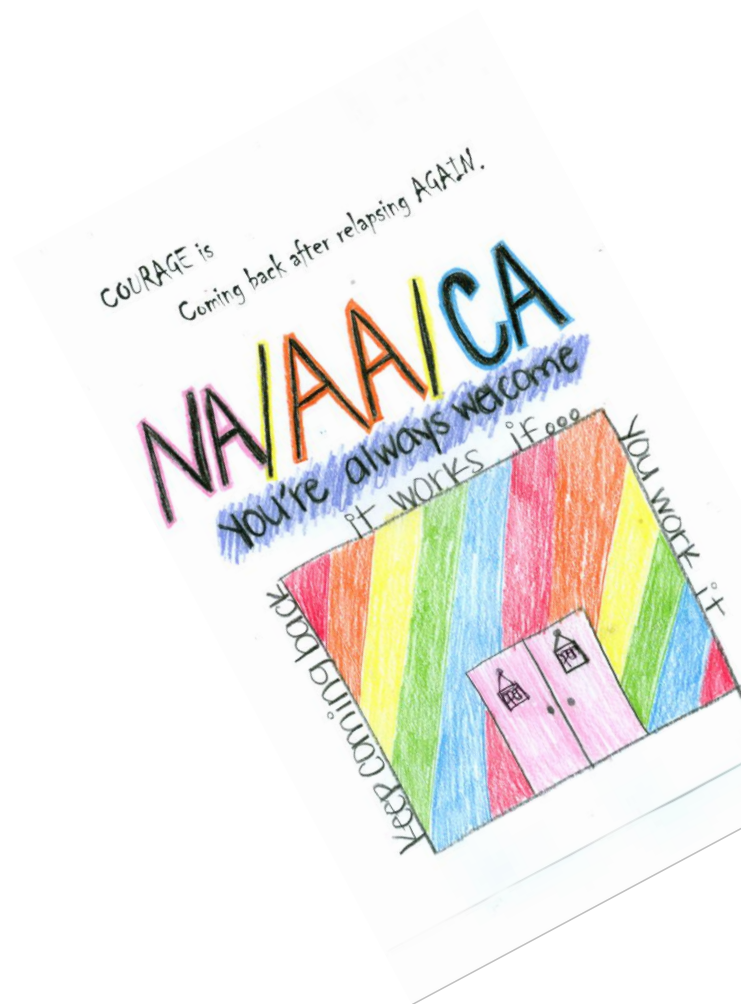
Values
Clarification

Emotional Health	Education	Work
Physical Health	Spirituality	Communication
Safety	Family	Civic Responsibilities

Negotiating
Values
Conflicts

Courage for STARTing Recovery

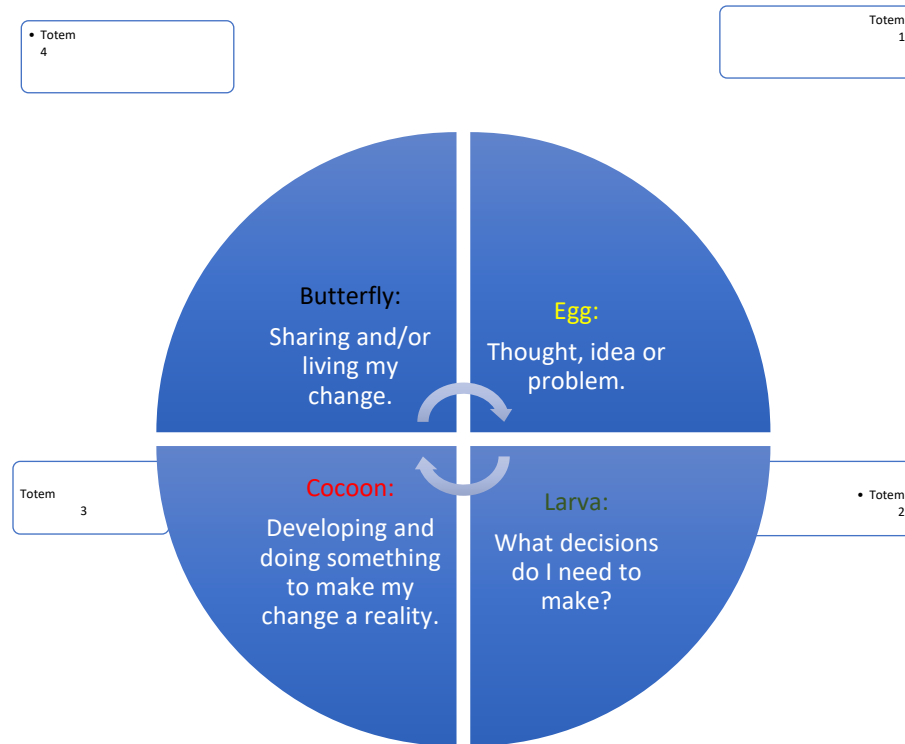
Courage is ...



Change Process

Butterfly Totem

PCPAM



Pre-contemplation

Unaware/denial

Contemplation

There is a problem
Name/define it

Planning for Change

Decisions to make

Action

Implement Plan

Maintaining the Change

Continuing to Live
and Share the Change

Why am I willing to make and maintain a change?

Treating The Core of the Disease: Self-Centeredness

Overcoming the isolation of addiction. Asking for help.

The subtle things we do in a recovery program:
introductions in a meeting and friendliness,
respect and rules (policies) for the safety of all,
service work and unity.

Gaining understanding of principles behind the rules.

The Core Transformation of Recovery

is a change in our mental thinking which shifts
from self-centeredness and judging
to love, compassion and mutuality.

This is a spiritual change
in attitudes, behaviors and relational patterns.

Motivational Interviewing Art Activity

The Road to Your Dreams: Start with Serenity Prayer and best foot

What are your long term goals/dreams?

What steps do you need to take to get there?

What steps will lead you away from reaching your goals?

What can you do to get back on the Road to Your Dreams?

What new perspective does this activity give you on your recovery?

my dreams: [Are to have a happy family] To succeed all the things my granma came to accomplish. & more. Such as [being a pediatrician] & to travel around the world.

THE BEST ME!!

U A

To ask my grandmother for advice, guidance, & help.



Talk to Higher Power



BE HONEST

LOSE Family or Friend

[graduate High School]
[Start Nursing School & figure out what school I want to go to.]



Friend

DRUGS

Doing Drugs Isolating Lying Not Study my

birth
Wisdom
life
ance

Taking Responsibility for Your Recovery

Using recovery literature and

Role Playing: Be Proactive - medical crises examples

Plan ahead so not deciding in crisis

Accountability Partners – support system

Deal with reservations

HP will not do what you can and need to do for yourself.

Binary - Luck

- Luck – Impersonal, blind, no HP or other power involved
- Coincidence – Something happened at a time or in a way having some meaning
- Karma - Actions have consequences, choices influence outcomes
- Opportune Moments - Attitude and actions make a difference in outcomes

Serenity Prayer

Pro-active – taking responsibility for choices and actions

Preparation – part of creating change process, purposeful

Pray for recognition of opportune moments – awareness

- Manipulating options using binary logic

Relational Healing

- This topic is **advanced**. There is a reason that Amends are placed later in the 12 Steps process. Shifting from limbic to neocortex thinking.
- It is also **a process of change**. It involves changing the dynamics and structures of relationships to become more respectful, mutual and fair.
- This **process of healing** requires use of many spiritual principles, from the basics of honest, open-minded and willing to capacity for empathy, love and compassion. It takes time and practice to learn to apply the principles learned in recovery consistently enough to initiate and maintain the changes necessary for healing broken relationships.

Spiritual Principles and Healing Broken Relationships

Honesty – admitting a problem

Caring about the Relationship – loving others and self

Willingness – because of caring

Humility – admitting mistakes, admitting feelings, being vulnerable

Responsibility and Accountability – for one's own actions, inventories

Open-mindedness – listening to the other and willingness to change

Compassion – empathy and desire for healing; not judging, resentful and punitive

Generosity – willingness to forgive and believe that others can also change

Flexibility – to negotiate a new relational pattern that is fairer to all

Respect – regard for self and for others needs and perspectives

Boundaries of safety

Patient and Persevering – Hope and Courage to be Vulnerable

Trust, Mutuality, and Collaboration

Common Good in Interdependence in community

Sincerity and Integrity in good faith

**Practicing these spiritual traits and values,
the ACTIONS in a full reconciliation process
create space to begin a healing process.**

Creating a safe space for the process to occur;
Mutual Dialogue and truth telling;
Confession, Apology and Amends;
Forgiveness;
Rebuilding Trust and Accountability;
Negotiation of new relational structure that is fairer/more just for all.

Spiritual motivations matter for everyone:

Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders, Stakeholders

Meditation Reflection Activity: Healing a Broken Relationship Formatted as a Process of Change

Two scenarios:

1. A Relationship with someone else
2. Relationship with self

Serenity Prayer applied to a life situation

Powerless over others: principle and own inventory

Applying the spiritual principles of neocortex thinking

Transition from judging, blaming competing, control,
self-centered logic to

Empathy, compassion, mutual respect, collaboration,
interdependence, and solution seeking
for the common good (healthier relationships).

Creating a safe space – RESPECTful Guidelines.

Open-mindedness – cannot write scripts for others.

Planning and preparing for change process actions –
taking responsibility for one's own part.

Gratitude

Gratitude is both a feeling and a principle.

Feelings come and go.

Honesty and open-mindedness are factors.

Be mindful of client issues.

Trauma makes gratitude difficult.

Ability to use/apply spiritual principles.

Perspectives, honesty, fears/resentments...

The 12th Step begins: “Having had a spiritual awakening...”

- **Having treated a mind stuck in reptilian and limbic thinking,**
- **Having grown beyond self-centeredness, fear, and dependence on substances,**
- **Having matured in human neocortex thinking and problem solving,**
- **Having gained skills in applying the spiritual principles of the neocortex,**
- **Having found and formed new relationship patterns that repair damaged and broken relationships and create healthier ones,**
- **Having a developing relationship with a loving and caring Higher Power,**
- **Having made this amazing spiritual journey of recovery so far and just for today...**

With this beginning, we can more effectively carry the message of recovery to the still suffering addict wherever we are and in all we say and do.