Assessment of Spirituality and Meaning in Research and Clinical Settings

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Our Agenda

• A brief review of the impact of spirituality and the need for assessment
• Then we jump into some activities
  – The Ultimate Meaning Technique
    • Mark Young
  – The Spiritual Lifemap Activity
    • Leila Roach and W. Bryce Hagedorn

Measuring Meaning and Purpose in Life

• Quantitative
The Purpose in Life test (Crumbaugh & Maholick, 1964) has been used most often to assess meaning in research but it has been criticized for its mixture of existential constructs such as “freedom” in the questions. The definitions of meaning vary and therefore an appropriate instrument should be selected based on the needs of the client. Most measures of personal meaning have been negatively correlated with depression (cf. Debats, 1998).
Choosing a Measurement of Meaning

- Most tests measure dissimilar aspects of meaning
- The choice cannot be made simply on the basis of reliability and validity as they all are roughly equal (.7 - .8) and there is little validity data
- The choice should be made on theoretical grounds or when a particular kind of meaning is being tested

Qualitative

- Many researchers in the area of health and coping favor a qualitative approach to assessment of meaning (see Schawer & Knoll, 2003) because different medical diagnoses have such varied experiences associated with them. Among the most often utilized qualitative methods are the analysis of personal narratives and interviews (see Schwarzer & Knoll, 2005).

Commonly Used Measures of Meaning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Construct Measured</th>
<th>Brief Description of the Instrument</th>
<th>Citation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Views Survey (PVS)</td>
<td>Hardiness</td>
<td>50-item revised instrument (3 subscales, Challenge, Commitment, Control)</td>
<td>Hardiness Institute (1985)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sources of Meaning Profile (SMP)</td>
<td>Sources and strength of personal meaning in one's life</td>
<td>16-item scale which has been used with older adults</td>
<td>Reker &amp; Wong (1998)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pargament's Meaning Scale (PMS)</td>
<td>Meaning that spirituality provides in one's life</td>
<td>20-item scale that does not measure spirituality but the degree to which religion and spiritual practice add meaning.</td>
<td>Pargament (1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of Coherence Scale (SOC)</td>
<td>Sense of coherence</td>
<td>13-items on three subscales; Comprehensibility, Manageability, Meaningfulness</td>
<td>Antonovsky &amp; Sagy (1986)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose In Life (PIL)</td>
<td>Overall meaning and purpose in life</td>
<td>20 items. It is an attitude scale that measures the degree to which a person feels meaning and purpose in life includes existential elements</td>
<td>Crumbaugh, &amp; Maholick (1964).</td>
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</table>
Measures of Meaning (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Subscales</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life Regard Index (LRI)</td>
<td>Positive life regard, a synonym for personal meaning in life</td>
<td>Framework (the person has a meaningful perspective), Fulfillment (Am I fulfilling my life goals?)</td>
<td>Young, 2009; Battista &amp; Almond, 1973; Desroses, 1994</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal Meaning Profile (PMP)</td>
<td>Measures specific domains of meaning, as well as magnitude, breadth, and balance</td>
<td>Achievement striving, Relationship, Intimacy, Religion, Self-transcendence, Self-acceptance, Fair treatment</td>
<td>Wong, 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Purpose Questionnaire (LPQ)</td>
<td>Overall meaning and purpose in life similar to the PIL</td>
<td>20 item test, Agree/disagree format allowing geriatric and brain injured to respond</td>
<td>Hablas &amp; Hutzell, 1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking of Noetic Goals (SONG)</td>
<td>Overall meaning and purpose in life</td>
<td>20 Likert items</td>
<td>Crumbaugh, 1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaning in Suffering Test (MIST)</td>
<td>Multidimensional A 29-item scale with three subscales and one overall score</td>
<td>Starck, 1985</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Attitude Profile-Revised (LAP-R)</td>
<td>Multidimensional A 48-item scale, six subscales and two composite scores</td>
<td>Reker, 1992</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assessing Meaning in Clinical Settings

- Use logotherapy
- Reflect meaning and values
- Ask Meaning questions:
  - Why does this problem bother you so much?
  - What is the purpose of telling me this story?
  - How would you feel about your whole life, if you looked back and...?
  - Why did you come to this conclusion?
  - What do you intend to accomplish by this action?

Some Meaning Questions

- Why does this problem bother you so much?
- What is the purpose of telling me this story?
- How would you feel about your whole life, if you looked back and...?
- Why did you come to this conclusion?
- What do you intend to accomplish by this action?
Other Methods

• Helping Clients Find a Vocation
• Benefit finding and Benefit Reminding
  – One way of finding meaning

Activity

• The Ultimate Meanings Technique

Research on Spirituality

• Spirituality is an integral construct in several wellness models (Roach & Young, in press)

  • Meditation and prayer as potentially healing

  • Intrinsic religion more predictive of health indicators than extrinsic religion
Assessment in Research and Clinical Settings

• Concepts and measures related to health and well-being (Hill & Pargament, 2003)
  – Perceived closeness to God
  – Spirituality and religion as orienting forces in ones’ life
  – Religious support systems
  – Religious and spiritual struggles

Assessment in Research and Clinical Settings

• Some assessments measure religion rather than spirituality
• Quantitative Assessments
• Qualitative Assessments
• Assessments often utilize existing frameworks of systemic assessments that focus on spirituality

Why Should we Assess?

• Two primary goals for an initial assessment (Hodge, 2005):
  – To identify the effect of clients’ spirituality on service provision and client care (a holistic view).
  – To determine whether an additional, more comprehensive spiritual assessment is required

  • When to proceed to a comprehensive assessment:
    – When the norms of the client’s faith tradition relate to service provision/client care (e.g., the Pentecostal Christian).
    – When spirituality plays a central role (functioning as an organizing principle) in the client’s life (e.g., frequency of practice)
Sample Initial Assessment Questions  [Hodge, 2004]

- I was wondering if you consider spirituality or religion to be a personal strength?
- In what ways does your spirituality help you cope with the difficulties you encounter?
- Are there certain spiritual beliefs and practices that you find particularly helpful in dealing with problems?
- I was also wondering if you attend a church or some other type of spiritual community?
- Do resources exist in your faith community that might be helpful to you?

Comprehensive Spiritual Assessments

- The Spiritual History
- The Spiritual Genogram
- The Spiritual Ecomap
- The Spiritual Ecogram
- The Spiritual Lifemap

Spiritual History

1. Despite the developmental stage in which you grew up, you believed basic aspects of family values were your spiritual foundation. How might these values be reflected in your family background?
2. Do you draw on your family’s spiritual experiences to help you understand your present-day actions? How do you feel your family’s spiritual beliefs and values have shaped your present-day actions?
3. How do your current spiritual beliefs and values influence your family’s spiritual life? How do you and your family members share your spiritual beliefs and values?
4. How do your family members deal with spiritual challenges or problems in their daily lives? How do your family members find spiritual support or guidance in their daily lives?
5. Are there spiritual beliefs or values that your family members hold in common? How do your family members maintain their spiritual beliefs and values?
6. How do your family members deal with spiritual challenges or problems in their daily lives? How do your family members find spiritual support or guidance in their daily lives?

Adapted from: Chark, 2006
Activity: Spiritual Lifemap

- Depict the spiritually significant events that represent your spiritual journey on a path, a roadway, or a single line.
- Using hand-drawn symbols, cut-out pictures, or stickers, mark the key events along your journey (e.g., birth, death, loss of a job, spiritual crisis, spiritual encounter, etc.).
- Indicate on your lifemap the various trials you have faced along with the spiritual resources you have used to overcome those trials. You may want to depict hills, bumps and potholes, rain, clouds, lightning, and so on, to portray difficult life situations. Feel free to use words that you write or stickers to highlight these events.
- Indicate your age at the various spiritual milestones along your journey.
- Somewhere on the lifemap, indicate three spiritual strengths that you have developed while on your journey.

Activity: Spiritual Lifemap

- Present your spiritual lifemap to the group – share the symbols you used, why you chose what you did to represent various events, and what your journey has been like for you.
- What patterns do you notice?
- Who have been the significant figures along your spiritual journey (both human and transcendent)?
- What strengths emerged from your lifemap?
- What are some successful strategies that you have used in the past that can suggest options for overcoming some of your present struggles?
- What was this process like for you?
Thank you for your Attendance!

- For copies of the handouts:
  - http://pegasus.cc.ucf.edu/~drbryce/PRESENTATIONS.htm
- Follow-up questions:
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  - Leila Roach: lroach@stetson.edu
  - W. Bryce Hagedorn: drbryce@mail.ucf.edu