

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

**CHRISTIAN SOCIAL WORKERS AND THEIR SENSE
OF EFFECTIVENESS IN SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Social Work

Jennifer Lois Hare
School of Health and Social Services
Massey University Albany Campus
2010

ABSTRACT

Spirituality is an elemental part of humanity and the plethora of material emerging in the social work profession reflect the growing awareness of the importance of its place in social work practice.

While social work roots are undoubtedly firmly in religious soil, over recent years the emphasis has widened to include a more inclusive definition of spirituality that seeks to mirror the diverse society we now live in.

How social work responds to this increasingly complex environment is a matter of concern for social work educators, practitioners and academics, who all share the same aim of developing the most effective ways to deliver services to the client.

The evidence-based practice movement is an evolving response, seeking to offer quality research based solutions to be implemented in practice.

Missing in the equation to date is the ability to capture the spiritual aspects of practice both for practitioner (in terms of ‘use of self’) and client (in relation to spiritual assets that assist them).

To this end this qualitative study conducted semi-structured interviews with eight Christian practitioners as examples of spiritually motivated social workers. The research sought to explore how a Christian perspective contributed to a sense of effectiveness in social work practice.

The findings produced discoveries that concurred with the literature and revealed insights from the participants about the ways in which they sought to practice that were consistent with their most valued beliefs.

Using the findings and the literature, practical applications are suggested as a way forward for the inclusion of spiritual aspects in evaluating effective social work practice.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere thanks to:

- The study participants whose input was generous and enlightening.
- My supervisor, Associate Professor Mike O'Brien who patiently guided me through the research process.
- My husband Rod, along with family and friends who encouraged and supported me each step of the way.
- Leanne Menzies for her gracious help in formatting the document.
- My God and Saviour who motivated, inspired and sustained me in this project.

Jenny Hare

November 2010

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
ABSTRACT	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
CONTENTS	iii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
Definition of Terms.....	1
Spirituality, Religion and Christianity	1
Background to the Research Project.....	2
What Constitutes Effective Practice.....	3
Research Rationale	5
Professional and Personal Reasons for Research.....	5
Overview of Chapters.....	6
Conclusion.....	7
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	9
Christianity’s Place in Social Work.....	9
Use of Self.....	12
Religion, Spirituality and Faith.....	14
Transpersonal Theories	16
Spiritual Assessment	19
Effective Practice.....	21
Conclusion.....	26
CHAPTER 3: THE RESEARCH PROCESS	28
Applying Literature to Research.....	28
Research Strategy	30
Choosing a Qualitative Approach	31
Personal Bias	31

Identifying a Research Sample.....	34
Conducting the Interviews	35
Ethical Considerations.....	37
Confidentiality.....	37
Analysis.....	38
Verifying the Data.....	40
Limitations to the Methods Employed.....	40
Conclusion.....	41

CHAPTER 4: SPIRITUAL MOTIVATORS FOR PRACTICE.....	43
Introducing the Participants	43
Current Work Setting and Faith Orientation	44
Communication with God	47
Personal Prayer.....	47
Prayer for Difficult Situations	48
Communal Prayer.....	49
Prayer for Clients	51
The Bigger Picture	51
Image of God.....	54
Conclusion.....	55

CHAPTER 5: APPLYING SPIRITUAL MOTIVATORS TO PRACTICE.....	56
Beliefs and Values that contribute to the Therapeutic Alliance	56
We're all Equal.....	56
Non-Judgementalism.....	57
Empathy	59
Compassion	60
Hope	61

Spiritual Motivators for Practice and Sense of Effectiveness	63
Effectiveness and Spiritual Sensitivity.....	65
Conclusion.....	67
CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION	68
The Importance of Spirituality	68
For the Practitioner.....	68
For the Client.....	74
For the Social Work Profession	78
Conclusion.....	80
CHAPTER 7: PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS AND	
CONCLUSION	81
A Possible Way Forward.....	81
Spiritual Self Assessment Exercise	83
A Proposed Spiritual Assessment Model for the Social Work	
Practice Setting.....	84
Final Remarks.....	87
Recommendations	88
Conclusion.....	89
TABLE 1	
Parallel Spiritual Development Model	85
APPENDICES	
Appendix A: Participants Letter.....	91
Appendix B: Participants Consent Form.....	92
Appendix C: Interview Questions	93
Appendix D: Ethics Approval Letter.....	94
REFERENCES	95

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Spirituality is a fundamental part of being human. It needs to be considered in ‘use of self’ and included in evaluating effective social work practice.

This research investigates how a Christian perspective contributes to a sense of effectiveness in social work practice. The nature of effectiveness is taken up briefly below. The focus is specific but its goal is to contribute to the broader discussion concerning the place of spirituality and its application and relevance in the social work practice setting.

This chapter opens with the background and rationale for choosing this topic with a brief explanation of terms that will be frequently used. The overall structure of the thesis is summarized giving signposts for the way ahead as the project commences.

Definition of Terms

Spirituality, Religion and Christianity

Before beginning this journey, it is useful to identify what is meant by the above concepts as they form much of the basis for the discussion that follows.

Spirituality according to Canda & Furman relates to;

...a universal and fundamental aspect of what it is to be human-to search for a sense of meaning, purpose, and moral frameworks for relating with self, others and the ultimate reality (Canda & Furman, 1999, p.37).

Religion they state;

... is an institutionalised pattern of beliefs, behaviours, and experiences, oriented towards spiritual concerns, and shared by a community and transmitted over time in tradition) (Canda & Furman, 1999, p.37).

The concept of Christianity has been left to the participants to define, as it was important that their own perception of their faith was the foundation for the research. This would allow for a freedom of expression that would better suit the qualitative methodology. Without the rigidity of a closed definition it was likely that a greater depth of meaning would emerge from the findings. It was important to discover how the participants viewed what their faith meant to them within the work setting. This is attended to in the first findings chapter, as part of the participants' responses.

Background to the Research Project

The literature revealed the genesis of social work emerging from a faith-based environment, reflective of the culture of that time. Specifically, Christian-Judeo principles guided the development of charitable works and set about meeting the needs of "*the least, the last and the lost*"¹(Tirrito & Cascio, 2003).

British, American and New Zealand records of Christianity's contribution to social work indicate a fundamental investment of spiritual capital that paved the way for the intricate structures that form our social welfare system today (Canda & Furman, 1999; Tennant, 2007).

Intervening years saw the development of a secular framework for human problem resolution based on a growing identification with the social sciences and ethics centred on humanism.(Bowpitt, 2000). This voice has held sway for a good part of the twentieth century but in the last twenty years there has been something of a renaissance in social work which has seen a marked increase in discussion around the application of religion and spirituality both for the client and the social work practitioner (Furman, Benson, Grimwood, & Canda, 2004; Furnam, Benson, Grimwood, & Canda, 2002; Stirling, Furman, Benson, Canda, & Grimwood, 2009).

The upsurge of interest in spirituality and religion is largely a response to a world-wide mobile population who, in its ability to permeate international borders, brings

¹ Quote from research participant

with it a plethora of religious and spiritual beliefs, many of which are fundamental to a person's life and living. The imperative to attend to diversity in client populations acknowledges an important component of ethical practice, namely a culturally competent and anti-racist orientation that is cognisant of the spiritual dimension within populations (Stirling, et al., 2009).

Social work practitioners, when honouring a person in context, are beholden to explore and appreciate those differences in culture, ethnicity and belief in order to undergird the therapeutic relationship with understanding and empathy. The diversity of spiritual beliefs and values are a crucial part of the holistic picture as they lend meaning to a person's world (Cornett, 1992). The holistic approach is further attended to in the later discussion chapter.

New Zealand is an example of a small but diverse society with indigenous, Pacific and other cultures that embrace the spiritual as an intrinsic part of life. Commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi and the social work code of ethics requires from the social work practitioner the ability to not only appreciate a client's world, but also to understand the impact of their own world view on the therapeutic relationship. The need for an authentic 'use of self' requires a growing self-awareness particularly in terms of the impact of their beliefs and spirituality an issue to which I will return later. The effectiveness of the therapeutic relationship in terms of client goals rests on the ability of both social worker and client to develop a genuine working relationship, which in the first instance is initiated by the worker's authentic 'use of self'.

This research focuses on social workers that embody a Christian perspective (fulfilling both a religious and spiritual outlook), exploring values and beliefs that motivate their practice and contribute to their sense of effectiveness.

What Constitutes Effective Practice?

Over the last three to four decades in an effort to validate social work as a profession, there has been considerable work in developing an evidence-based practice model. There has been a conviction around the notion that unless social work interventions

can be proven effective based on scientific principles, then they lack dependability and the ability to be applied confidently to other situations (Gambrill, 2003).

More recently the idea of scientific methodology being the only way to measure effective social work practice has been challenged. As a result there is a growing awareness of the need to include a more reflexive approach that takes account of the meaning behind changes that produce effective results for the client (Otto, Polutta, & Ziegler, 2009).

While the question of what works within social work intervention for the client is of paramount concern, there is a two-sided relationship that deserves consideration. Capturing the social worker's point of view could enhance the understanding of what constitutes effective practice and assist in facilitating client initiated change.

An area that has suffered from some neglect within the evidence based practice debate is the use of 'the self' by the practitioner. A difficult area to quantify at the best of times, the finer nuances of what contributes to a social workers sense of effective use of self are made more difficult by the restrictions a scientific methodology of investigation imposes.

The ability to include 'use of self' as part of what constitutes informed and effective practice opens the door to aspects of the self that transcend the ability to quantify and measure. Spirituality is an essential yet at times ignored part of the whole, and can be an important ingredient in the therapeutic effectiveness of a social work intervention.

While there has been a considerable upsurge in writing regarding the place of spirituality and religion in social work, the linking of its significance for the individual practitioner in terms of effectiveness in practice, is a subject not addressed to any great extent. The research project seeks to contribute in this area drawing meaning from the findings generated by eight semi-structured interviews.

Research Rationale

Professional and Personal Reasons for Research

It is pertinent to note at this point that my reasons for choosing this research topic were parallel to what I later discovered in interviewing the participants, namely the Christian faith that is the cornerstone of my life is also the cornerstone of my social work practice. It provides depth, meaning, values and ethical boundaries and is a way of being rather than a way of doing. As I wrote below, it has impacted both the manner in which the work is conducted and the values and beliefs that sustain the dedication to a social work career.

My spiritual perspective was an important consideration in my choosing social work as a career. Having a desire to contribute to and support others going through difficulties was a motivator that came from a sense of purpose and calling based on my Christian faith. The notion of “calling” or vocation is referred to in the literature as;

....a use of one's talents, abilities, and assets in a life's work that is consistent with God's will (Canda as cited in Canda & Furman, 1999, p.9).

This is an observation, which is consistent with my own view.

I have worked in many and varied situations, from numerous Mental Health settings to Hospice, work with older adults, to my current work with a large variety of clients through a Primary Health General Practice. It has been my observation while working within Christian settings in particular, that faith in action is a crucial ingredient to an employee's sense of effectiveness. Spiritual interventions relating to prayer, either independently or with the client, produced tangible results that at times culminated in significant shifts for the better. The research project, then, explores the extent and the nature of that impact for other Christian social workers and the significance in terms of their own sense of effectiveness and involvement in the social work profession.

My experiences as a Christian social worker in both faith-based and secular agencies led to a consideration of how a person's Christian belief may contribute to their sense of effectiveness in their work and if so, what were the implications in terms of positive outcomes both for the practitioner and the client.

While the project focussed specifically on a Christian world view, none the less it seemed reasonable to assume that given the relatively high proportions of Christians in social work (Stirling, et al., 2009), the research could prove useful in terms of identifying aspects of practice that the participants felt were effective for them and so may have some applicability for other spiritually motivated practitioners.

Overview of Chapters

Chapter two provides a search of the relevant literature, with reference to religion and spirituality's place within social work both historically and currently. Transpersonal theories are referred to as the framework within which spirituality and religion finds its relevance for social work.

The evidence-based practice movement is investigated as it relates to the consideration of effectiveness within social work. Writings regarding the value of awareness around 'use of self' in social work practice are examined and their contribution studied in the light of what constitutes effective practice.

Extrapolating from this area is the link made to the expression of spirituality within social work practice identified as an inherent feature of human nature and an outworking of the 'use of self'. In bringing together these divergent areas, the area of social work spiritual assessment is explored as a means of providing a structure for spiritually sensitive practice.

Chapter three explains the methodology, employing a qualitative framework with a phenomenological approach. Rationale for the approach is justified and its applicability is held up against the aims of the project.

The way in which the eight participants were selected is outlined and the ethical considerations around their involvement are described. The chapter includes the process of engaging the research sample, and the learning involved in refining my approach after embarking on the first interview. Data collection and analysis processes are described with the limitations of the project clarified. In view of the literature informing the direction and shape of the project, the work takes a deductive stance building from the knowledge base.

The data findings are presented in two chapters, the first of which expresses two meta themes that describe the participants overview of their faith and the motivators and supports that empower their perspective. The identified meta themes grow out of the participant's description of a personal, interactive relationship with God that is characterized by communication in the form of prayer, worship and consequent spiritual insight.

Chapter five, the second of the findings, looks more towards the operationalizing of those larger themes, identifying five more sub themes that speak of the interface with social work practice. Participants share foundational beliefs and values that form the substance of their relationship with clients.

Chapter six returns to the nexus of the project, reviewing the implications of the importance of spirituality, for the practitioner (exemplified in the lives of eight Christian social workers), the client and the social work profession as indicated from the findings. Recommendations for future research along with practical implications for the social work profession are discussed.

Conclusion

Attention to the spiritual element of humanity is an essential rather than an optional part of social work practice. There is ample evidence for its importance in people's lives and its contribution towards effective outcomes (Aponte, 1998; Boyd, 1998; Hodge, 2005a, 2005b; Hodge & Williams, 2002; O'Brien, 2008).

In view of the fact that social workers are professionals credited with specialist skills and knowledge, it follows that they need to have a high degree of sensitivity around this topic. Self-awareness and knowledge of “use of self” as it pertains to their own spirituality, is the starting point.

This project takes a selection of Christian social workers and explores how their faith contributes to their sense of effectiveness in practice. This chapter has expressed the rationale for the research and the chapter to follow locates that rationale within the context of the relevant literature.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter two begins with the exploration of the literature related to Christianity's place in social work both historically and currently. Investigation of spirituality and religion's influence on the social work scene, leads to a consideration of how these dimensions can be integrated into social work assessment, creating a framework for spiritually sensitive practice.

Examination of evidence-based practice as a modality for assessing effective social work follows with comment on its yet incomplete ability to capture an important component of effectiveness, the 'use of self'.

Associations between these factors are discussed, establishing a rationale for the research.

Christianity's Place in Social Work

The history of Christian charitable work in the nineteenth century was birthed out of the belief that personal change facilitated by a divine work would have fundamental impact on a person's situation (Bowpitt, 2000).

Christianity's place in social work found expression as the church sought to develop ways of reaching those in society that needed assistance. Spirituality was an accepted part of the human condition and people were assisted with an assumption that their spiritual need would be attended to (Hugen, 1998).

The New Zealand welfare scene reflected a similar genesis to the American and British, with both churches and non-denominational benevolent societies having a strong influence on charitable aid (Munday, 1986; Tennant, 2007; Tirrito & Cascio, 2003). The Catholic church was notable for its work with "foundlings, derelicts and incurables"(Tennant,2007,p.47) outworked in orphanages, soup kitchens and district

nursing. In 1883 the Salvation Army formed in Dunedin and with great energy for the next twenty years set about founding “four women’s rescue homes, three maternity homes, three prison gate homes, two night shelters, and two children’s homes, as well as conducting soup kitchens a labour bureau and missing person’s work” (Tennant 2007, p.47).

Non-denominational organizations such as the YMCA and the YWCA along with various benevolent societies worked hard to provide help to people in need, while seeking to attend to matters of spiritual concern. The Wellington Ladies’ Christian Association had as its objectives;

... to promote the spiritual interests of its members , to render assistance to young women coming to the city as strangers and to engage in evangelical work the Association felt competent to undertake (Tennant ,2007 p.45).

From the 1880s the church welfare sector worked more in hand with the State lacking the necessary depth of finances to fully fund their charitable efforts. From the early 1900s onwards other benevolent influences contributed to the welfare scene expanding on volunteerism from the church. The cataclysmic events of the Great Depression and two World Wars were responsible for considerable changes in social policy which expanded the role of the State and witnessed the diminishing role of the church in welfare provision (Tennant, 2007).

Evolving paradigms of secularism and humanism in the mid-20th century saw a change in the faith-based nature of social work with the following thirty years witnessing an evolving style that to a large extent disregarded the importance of religion and spirituality and its place in the client and practitioner’s story (Eastham, 2002; Stirling, et al., 2009).The influence of secularisation created the paradigm whereby the individual alone by means of adopting the approaches of psychology, sociology and social policy could bring about change and development independent of a higher intervention. (Bowpitt, 2000).

The Christian approach continued as a sub-text but no longer held the same place of relevance and influence on the social work scene. Combined with the changing

composition of the client population, major shifts in governmental policy in both England (The 1989 Children's Act) and North America (the charitable choice provision of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities Reconciliation Act) (Chambre, 2001) with its acknowledgement of religion, spirituality and the place of faith-based services, the focus is back on the place of religion and spirituality in social work.

New Zealand offers a unique perspective in its ongoing commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi, acknowledging Maori spirituality as an integral part of being Maori. Polynesian and other diverse cultures resident in New Zealand have also influenced the view of acceptance of the spiritual as part of culturally-sensitive practice (Stirling, et al., 2009). This perspective is not as yet generalized to include all other cultures within New Zealand.

Christianity's place in this diverse scene is of significance, not only due to but also because of its proven track record as both providers of social service and as a reflection of a segment of client population that draw strength and hope from it. While its dominant historical voice has been hushed somewhat, the new millennium has ushered in a time of adjustment and change that may provide a catalyst for Christianity to re-state its place and relevance in the social work landscape.

Now there is a growing agreement within the social work community that religious and spiritual beliefs are important for practice, (Furnam, et al., 2002; Furness & Gilligan, 2010; P. Gilligan & Furness, 2005; Harris & Thorensen, 1999; Stewart, Koeske, & Koeske, 2006; Stirling, et al., 2009) Christian social work faces the challenge of articulating the strengths it contributes to the modern social work setting. Christianity as a part of that pie is beginning to contribute a fresh voice to the discussion as it finds its way through the post-modern backdrop.

While Christianity as a faith is embraced by a considerable number of social workers,(Furman, et al., 2004; Stirling, et al., 2009) the population within this description should not be assumed to be homogeneous. What does unite this group at an elemental level would be an agreement that they follow Jesus Christ and reflect the essence of his teachings. Canda and Furman declare that the Christian social

worker would exemplify the notion of loving God and others and would often times expand that loving service to issues of social justice both for communities and globally (Canda & Furman 2010)

Bowpitt (2000), Hugen(1998), Ressler (1998) and Sherwood (1998) are four writers who contribute a Christian viewpoint that seeks to complement and enhance existing literature and thought around spiritual and religious diversity and social work. The frameworks they provide for self-examination for the Christian social worker afford a solid basis for consideration of the place of faith within social work. Hugen's writing will be examined in more depth later in the chapter.

Having examined the place of Christianity within social work historically and currently what follows is the importance of the 'use of self'. The 'use of self' and the beliefs that accompany both the practitioner and the client are an important consideration in the therapeutic alliance and subsequently the effectiveness of that relationship.

Use of Self

'Use of self' in the social work profession has long held a place of importance in the literature (Arnd-Caddigan & Pozzuto, 2008; Ganzer, 2007; Reupert, 2007). Central to the concern for engendering a self awareness in the individual worker is the motivation to develop social workers who are able to form therapeutic alliances with their clients enhanced by clinical knowledge and skills but fundamentally influenced by the 'use of self'.

Use of self is conceptualised in various ways in the literature from obvious physically identified features (Davies in Reupert 2007) to more abstruse concerns including 'use of personality, use of belief system, use of relational dynamics, use of anxiety, and use of self disclosure (Dewane ,2006,p 544). Dewane sees the use of self as a point of difference for social work from other professions. Given the nature of the issues that clients present with, the need for a genuine and authentic person can be the only response valid enough to build a therapeutic alliance (Dewane, 2006).

While a social worker will gather tools and make use of proven and effective practice techniques, the particular flavour which operationalizes that knowledge will be fundamentally influenced by the use of self (Reupert, 2007). There is ample evidence in both social work and counselling literature for reference to the “therapist factor” (Graybeal, 2007; Neumann & Kreugar, 2003), that part of the therapeutic relationship that has sprung from the inner being of the therapist connecting with the client. Developing from this is the notion of use of self as an interpersonal process (Arnd-Caddigan & Pozzuto, 2008), where the “self” of the social worker in practice is not seen as a static fact but relational with a dynamic adjusting between client and worker to allow for progress on the work in question. The change process is one that impacts both parties.

Arnd-Caddigan and Pozzuto (Arnd-Caddigan & Pozzuto, 2008) work on the use of self in relational clinical social work describes the self as an “interpersonal process” (Arnd-Caddigan & Pozzuto, 2008, p.236), evolving and changing in the interaction that happens between client and worker. A case study used to illustrate this phenomenon is not only interesting from the point of view of ‘use of self’ but also regarding the content of the interaction, which related to spirituality and religion. The narrative relates to a social worker beginning a therapeutic relationship from a firm feminist non-spiritual point of view. Her client had strong religious beliefs and the therapeutic journey saw both parties change, the worker towards developing a more empathic understanding of the place of religion in people’s lives and the client to grow in her understanding the acceptability of being imperfect.

Of importance in this descriptive article is the dynamic relationship between worker and client that developed and produced change.

In considering the importance of the ‘use of self’, areas that are identified as contributing factors are belief, religion and spirituality (including faith), areas that are taken up in the next section.

Religion, Spirituality and Faith

In the past twenty years there has been an increasing groundswell of opinion that affirms the place of spirituality and religion within the social work therapeutic alliance (Cornett, 1992; P. Gilligan & Furness, 2005; Lindsay, 2002; Sheridan, Bullis, Adcock, Berlin, & Miller, 1992; Stewart, et al., 2006; Stirling, et al., 2009; Wachholtz, Pearce, & Koenig, 2007). This discourse covers both sides of the social work relationship, acknowledging the requirement for competent holistic assessment that includes a spiritual assessment as well as a bio psycho-social approach for the client. There is also recognition of the need to consider the social worker's belief system as an important component in the 'use of self' and the consequent development of an authentic working relationship that is both effective and satisfying (Boyd, 1998; Cornett, 1992; Hodge, 2005; Zapf, 2005).

A much referred to definition in the area of religion and spirituality comes from Canda, a noted writer in the field;

Spirituality refers to a universal quality of human beings and their cultures related to the quest for meaning, purpose, morality, transcendence, wellbeing, and profound relationships with ourselves, others and ultimate reality (Canda & Furman 2010).

Religion is the external expression of this deep-seated driving force, demonstrated by means of shared practices and beliefs and rituals (Harris & Thorensen, 1999).

Spirituality can be expressed independent of religious affiliation and conversely religion can be enacted without the undergirding of a spiritual belief (Ressler, 1998).

There is a burgeoning amount of literature that affirms the emergent importance of the place of spirituality and religion in social work practice (Furnam, et al., 2002; Gilligan, 2006; Hodge, 2006; Hodge, 2007; Hodge & Wolfer, 2008; Stirling, et al., 2009). This accompanies the growing appreciation for the diversity of belief that presents itself in the client population.

Canda (2010), in his chapter on religious perspectives and insights, describes seven main religious beliefs. Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Indigenous religions, Islam and Judaism. While his work is centred in the American context, New Zealand has become no less diverse in its' populations religious beliefs (Stirling, et al., 2009).

The notions of spirituality and religion are intrinsically linked to culture and the current demand on the social work profession to respond competently to cultural diversity, has accelerated the discussion on the place of religious and spiritual values, both for the practitioner and the client (Gilligan & Furness, 2005).

Cultures vary on their attribution of the place of religion and spirituality, but for some it is the defining ingredient of identity, an example being the Jewish culture, whose distinctiveness rests in its religion rather than any geographical setting (Sheridan, et al., 1992).

Research indicating the influence of religious and spiritual attitudes of social workers on the application of religious and spiritual interventions (Sheridan, et al., 1992; Stewart, et al., 2006), has prompted a debate around the need for sensitive engagement across cultures. Furness (2003) in her survey of social work students around the topic of religion and culturally competent practice concluded that spirituality and religion were appropriate social work education topics that needed addressing as part of working with culturally diverse populations.

A client may identify with a particular faith tradition, but individual interpretation can add another layer of belief that requires a skilled approach to appreciate the finer nuances of how these values influence the client's life. Literature indicates that spirituality and / or religion is often an important factor in a client's capacity to cope with life and a vital resource in facing crises that are outside the person's control (Hodge, 2005; Nathanson, 2003). A survey of older adults undertaken as part of study on the importance of religious and spiritual belief in coping with medical issues reported that forty three percent viewed their beliefs as the most significant factor in their health maintenance (Koenig as cited in Hodge 2005).

In a broader sense there is a developing assent for the influence of religion and spirituality on good health reflecting a more strengths based approach. Previous writing in the mental health field has been more fixed on the notion of scientific enquiry(Thayne, 1998),reluctant to consider anything that would be perceived as too personal or subjective. More recent writing has delved into areas formerly ring-fenced by the religious and spiritual community, looking at forgiveness, prayer and ritual, as legitimate and effective therapies within mental health and health settings (Aponte, 1998; Harris & Thorensen, 1999; Wachholtz, et al., 2007). Forgiveness in particular is a principle of healing shared by different faith traditions.(Hodge, 2005).

Transpersonal Theories

Developing from the validation seen in the literature for spiritually motivated interventions (Aponte, 1998; Stewart, et al., 2006; Wachholtz, et al., 2007) is the notion of transpersonal theories, advanced as a way of encapsulating the spiritual in social work.

Coming under the umbrella of “Transpersonal Theories” are numerous theories, which take into account the individual’s ability to transcend the ego state, and to appreciate that their existence is interdependent with others and, depending on their belief, with God. (Robbins, Chatterie, & Canda, 2006). The theories venture beyond the restriction of human development bound to the physical, cognitive and emotional and take account of factors that impact people on a spiritual level.

These theories contain a range of approaches, with a few in particular holding relevance for the research at hand. Beryl Hugen’s spirituality model for social work practice is based primarily on the rationale that social work is “largely grounded in religious faith” (Hugen, 1998, p.92) and its modus operandi is the consideration of the whole person in environment. Hugen uses the idea of “religious calling” as a means by which Christian social workers orientate themselves within their work giving meaning and direction to their service of others. Hugen’s explicatory work on calling draws amongst others from the writings of Richard Cabot (Cabot, as cited in Hugen, 1998) whose article “The Inter-Relation of Social Work and the Spiritual Life” has interesting comments regarding the links between the two.

Despite the time that has passed since Cabot penned his article, what he contributed remains relevant today for those motivated from a faith base. Cabot saw the goal of social work to;

Maintain and to improve channels of understanding both within each person and between persons, and through these channels to favor the entrance of God's powers for the benefit of the individuals...

Unblocking channels is what social workers do. The sort of unblocking that I have in mind is that between capital and labor, between races, or between members of a family who think they hate each other...

Spiritual diagnosis, I suppose, means nothing more than the glimpse of the central purpose of the person, unique and related to the total parts of the world. Spiritual treatment, I suppose is the attempt to open channels, the channels I have been speaking of, so as to favor the working of the world purpose. In this way social workers participate in the providence of God (Cabot as cited in Hugen, 1998 ,p. 100).

Cabot warned against sectarianism, viewing it as potentially harmful in its tendency to encourage the imposition of values on others. Hugen relates Cabot and other early writers in the field of social work to modern concerns around a current model for vocation or “calling” in social work. Hugen incorporates the work of Canda and Fowler and their definitions of spirituality, religion and faith in order to provide a backdrop for the idea of “calling”. “Calling” encompasses a transcendent way of being where the individual is dedicated to a life of service to others motivated by that which means the most to them, their faith. While Hugen presents this model as a support to those with a Christian outlook, she is firm in her reasoning that such a model can encourage others who are committed to understanding the effects of their own and their client’s spirituality(Hugen, 1998).

James W. Fowler’s theory of faith development helps to give substantiation for those aspects of a person’s life that creates value and meaning. Fowler focused more on faith as a concept than belief and religion. His definition of faith allows for a wider

spirituality than theism, incorporating all aspects of spirituality. Faith he states can be described as;

The most fundamental category in the human quest for relation to transcendence. Faith it appears is generic, a universal feature of human living, recognizably similar everywhere despite the remarkable variety of forms and contents of religious practice and beliefs.

He postulates further;

Faith, classically understood, is not a separate dimension of life, a compartmentalized speciality. Faith is an orientation of the total person, giving purpose and goal to one's hopes and strivings, thoughts and actions
(Fowler, 1995, p.14.)

Between 1972 and 1981 Fowler embarked on a comprehensive qualitative research project interviewing 359 people focusing on their perception of their personal histories, problem resolution through life and their construction of moral and religious convictions.(Fowler as cited in Robbins et al 2006).

From this and further studies he conceived a model of faith development stages ranging from a “primal faith” in infancy to a “universalizing faith” which reflects a mature outlook on life where a person has developed a non-judgemental and inclusive frame of reference that seeks to express love unconditionally. It further expresses itself in matters of social justice. Fowler records the possibility of people attaining this stage is unusual and is epitomized in the lives of people like Mahatma Gandhi and Reverend Martin Luther King (Fowler, 1995).

What is important about Fowler's work is the thought that faith is a way of being rather than a separate compartment in people's lives. He examined the capacity for people to change and develop along a spiritual pathway. His work gives credence for the need to acknowledge spirituality's place in relation to assessment.

Spiritual Assessment

Assessment in the social work setting differs from that of other professional settings by means of its commitment to an holistic view of the person.(Boyd, 1998). The notion of person in context is a hallmark of social work's ability to capture a snapshot of the relationship of the person to their environment and the consequent interaction of those surrounding factors. There is a rising tide of articles examining the concept of spiritual assessment, in addition to the biological, psychological, social and cultural aspects (Boyd, 1998; Hodge, 2005a, 2005b, 2006; Hodge & Williams, 2002; Van Hook, 2005).

Rationale for the inclusion of a spiritual/religious assessment takes little justification in light of the identified importance of these factors in people's lives (Nathanson, 2003; Stirling, et al., 2009; Thayne, 1998). What proceeds from this juncture is the formation of suitable tools to encapsulate the spiritual factors most important to the client from an objective position as possible.

Hodge in his numerous articles on assessment (Hodge, 2005a, 2005b, 2006; Hodge & Williams, 2002), presents a variety of methods for capturing such data, with an emphasis on skilled selection of the approach that would most suit the person interviewed. Hodge presents the following assessment tools in his article on developing a spiritual assessment toolbox (Hodge, 2005a) Spiritual histories, lifemaps, genograms, ecomaps and ecograms all contribute approaches to assessment that encourage the practitioner to select the most appropriate one for a given context. Hodge offers some guidelines around what tool may be suitable for which context. Spiritual histories follow a traditional format and both Van Hook and Boyd are two authors that also offer this approach (Boyd, 1998; Van Hook, 2005). Hodge states that the spiritual histories model is straightforward and easily administered, best suited to the client who has good verbal command.

The more interactive models, starting with lifemaps, allow the client to focus on forming a narrative pictorially. Hodge describes the lifemap tool as a linear drawing of the client's life accommodating the positive and the negatives of spiritual events.

This functional tool is an uncomplicated way of summarizing the client's spiritual journey.

Hodge goes on to develop the idea of spiritual genograms, which attends to the deficit in the lifemap model that does not include intergenerational comment. Spiritual genograms create space to include significant others that have contributed to the client's spiritual journey. This tool is a more complex one, and not always suitable for the client who does not wish to include intergenerational aspects.

Spiritual ecomaps deal with the "here and now" of what is happening for the client denoting family members in symbolic form and following a traditional ecomap layout (a common tool used in social work assessment). The difference is in terms of spiritual overlay, with the addition of the exploration of transpersonal issues.

Hodge is adamant on the need for the practitioners to display spiritual sensitivity. He cites a possible reason for African Americans to engage with clergy rather than mental health professionals as a lack of spiritual sensitivity amongst helping professionals.(Hodge & Williams, 2002). Hodge uses the ecomap model when working with this client group, but emphasizes its adaptability to other populations. Hodge's final model he describes in this article is the spiritual ecomap, which works on the merging of the ecomap and genogram spiritual assessment tools to produce a comprehensive approach.

Hodge is careful to denote the limitations of his approaches in terms of the prerequisite of a social worker who has the spiritual competence to administer these tools(Hodge, 2005a). Hodge's research suggests that a social worker who discovers in an initial assessment, an inadequacy in themselves regarding being able to engage in a spiritually sensitive manner (this could be as a result of their own unresolved spiritual issues), would be advised to refer to another practitioner (Hodge, 2006).

A later chapter on practical applications will utilize Hodge's ecomap model.

Boyd (1998) in his writing on spiritual assessment is concerned with the importance of capturing the spiritual as a multi-purpose tool for the use in social work

intervention. He sees spiritual assessment as a dynamic and evolving contributor in the therapeutic relationship. Matters of religion, spirituality and faith are personal and intimate, and while clients are encouraged to reveal those aspects of most importance to them, they should also feel free to allow time for that process to unfold. Boyd notes the importance of creating a place where clients can safely express such issues and the utility of accessing religious based supports as aids if the client views these as appropriate. Boyd offers a wide-ranging spiritual assessment model, cautioning for the social worker administering it to use discretion in its implementation. He covers religious and spiritual history, current beliefs and practices and spiritual maturity and development.

Van Hook's (2005) model for spiritual assessment confines itself to the integration of religious factors into the assessment process. While this work attends to the narrower focus of religion rather than spirituality per se, Van Hook does have some interesting insights on the necessity for the practitioner to examine their own religious (spiritual) outlook in order to best meet the client's needs. This important aspect will be examined more closely later in the practical applications chapter.

The application of any spiritual assessment tools to the social work setting would need to be adapted to best suit the context and the particular needs of the client. In the preceding section various frameworks that have been constructed pave the way for future development and contribute to the literature regarding effective practice.

Effective Practice

Evidence -based practice as defined by Sackett et al is;

...The conscientious, explicit and judicious use of current best evidence in making decisions about the care of individual patients, based on skills which allow the doctor to evaluate both personal experience and external evidence in a systematic and objective manner

(Sackett et al as cited in Bilson,2005,p2).

The definition presents as an overtly medical one and O'Hare adds another dimension with his contribution defining evidence-based practice as,

...the planned use of empirically supported assessment and intervention methods combined with the judicious use of monitoring and evaluation strategies for the purpose of improving the psychosocial well-being of the client (O'Hare as cited in Graybeal 2007 ,p.4).

The upsurge in the utilization of evidence-based practice tools has its genesis in the medical arena which stimulated the growth of EBP as a response to authoritarian decision making in the helping relationship (Arnd-Caddigan, 2010; Gambrill, 2003). The rationale for the application of evidence-based practice methods and tools was largely in response to criticism that for too long social work intervention had lacked a substantial research base to affirm its effectiveness (Gambrill, 2003).

Just as we ask our physicians to provide treatments that have been scientifically proven to be effective, so should we in the helping professions do the same for our clients (Glicken, 2005, p.1)?

Therein seems to lie the dilemma as the close alignment with social work to the medical scientific model, would seem to be ill-suited to the more esoteric aspects of human behaviour (Bilson, 2005; Furman, 2009). Evidence-based practice emerging from a medical scientific model has brought about vigorous debate regarding the place of positivist scientific research to validate the social work profession. Social work's commitment to holistic service delivery is at odds with the historical tendency of the medical profession to focus on mainly the physical aspects of human health. Consequently measurement of effective treatment within the medical setting has generally been confined to quantitative targeted studies that focus on specific improvements in a particular health problem or issue. Taylor and White refer to a "hierarchy of evidence" regarding EBP, developed in the medical arena and currently applied to the social work scene. This involves;

1. *Strong evidence from at least one systematic review of multiple well-designed randomised control trials (RCTS).*

2. *Strong evidence from at least one properly designed RCT of appropriate size.*
3. *Evidence from well-designed trials without randomisation, single group pre-post, cohort, time series, or matched case-control studies.*
4. *Evidence from well-designed non-experimental studies from one centre or research group.*
5. *Opinions of respected authorities, based on clinical evidence, descriptive studies or reports of expert committee.*

(Gray cited in Taylor & White, 2005, p8).

This opinion of what demonstrates the best form of evidence of effective treatment within the health and social care setting is expressed within the United Kingdom context and is favoured due to its reputed ability to filter out bias and error (Taylor & White, 2005).

The positivist scientific approach has its critics and supporters, and the final verdict on what EBP in social work will look like and how it will enhance the profession is still under discussion (Arnd-Caddigan, 2010; Gambrill, 2003; Graybeal, 2007). Its heavy emphasis on systematic appraisal of research relating to salient practice questions (Gambrill, 2003), while reported in the literature as an essential part of promoting best practice (Arnd-Caddigan, 2010; Glicken, 2005), does leave open a number of questions regarding the dynamic and ambiguous nature of the social work therapeutic alliance.

Otto et al (2009), attempts to address some of these dilemmas in his article promoting “Reflexive Professionalism” as a new generation of evidence based practice. This article moves beyond examining effect to causal considerations. Otto et al maintains that while EBP can deliver explanation regarding whether there is a connection between treatment and outcome, it does not deal with the why or how that is so, and under which circumstances do these outcomes hold true (Otto, et al., 2009). The further challenge that is extended in this article is the consideration of ;

...according to which and whose goals should any evidence in social work be assessed?

(Otto et al., 2009, p.474).

In this article the social worker is seen as a reflexive professional whose role is more that of mediator of contextually appropriate knowledge than that of administrator of scientifically proven effective packages of care. Otto allows for the variations that present themselves and encourages a form of creativity in the working relationship. He acknowledges that while there is a motivation to provide the best interventions possible for the service user, the complexities of the issues people present with and their inability to fit into neat criteria can at times leave the scientific approach wanting, This is an opinion affirmed by Gambrill and Arnd-Caddigan (Arnd-Caddigan, 2010; Gambrill, 2003).

There is qualitative work that contributes to the scene and in a qualitative study of thirty experienced social workers examining the distinguishing features of social work expertise, results revealed affirmation of social work as an art, the participants functioning in their role using approaches to practice that encompassed the complex (Fook, Ryan, & Hawkins, 1997).

Graybeal's article on the evidence for the art of social work, gives attention to aspects of effective social work practice relating to the therapeutic working alliance. (Graybeal, 2007). The more organic nature of the relationship suggests a dynamic that goes beyond the easily measured and EBP's tendency towards a positivist approach that does not always accommodate the multifarious nature of working with people and their complexities (Graybeal, 2007).

Graybeal provides a summary of those factors outside the intervention methods that have make a significant positive difference for the client. This is known as "The common factors model" which includes the characteristics of the therapist as accounting for thirty percent towards the effected change. This involves aspects such as empathy warmth and acceptance (Drisko in Graybeal 2007). While there has been some contention over this model as related to social work (it was posited in the context of psychotherapy), it none-the-less provides an important insight into the world beyond scientific analysis. Graybeal also notes the restrictions of the medical model when seeking to work with the

psycho-social and spiritual dimensions, asserting the need for a more encompassing framework to direct research and practice (Graybeal, 2007).

The notion of social work as a creative work in progress motivates Graybeal to suggest that along with the need for evidence of effectiveness is the important and inescapable contribution of the particular social worker and client characteristics, which produces a therapeutic working relationship that cannot be replicated with others. (Graybeal, 2007). How this is captured and the part that client perception of success plays, are of vital importance in the ongoing debate.

There is current evidence within the literature regarding evidence based practice, of a dialogue that is attempting to embrace the medical-scientific model of EBP, while making sense of how the values that epitomise social work, can be retained (Arnd-Caddigan, 2010; Furman, 2009; Gambrill, 2003; Graybeal, 2007).

Values around social justice, empathy, empowerment and autonomy, can all come under pressure, when placed within the EBP model, which due to its emphasis on strict scientific methodology can overlook the need for contextual considerations (Arnd-Caddigan, 2010).

Of interest is a comment by Furman, who queried the possible over emphasis on method and technique in social work training to the detriment of the development of the social work students and practitioners (Furman, 2009). Contrasting with this view is that of Ainsworth & Hansen who stress the importance of social work values training that incorporates research as its base, positing its absence leads to unethical practice (Ainsworth & Hansen, 2005). This begs the question of what constitutes “research”.

There is no argument regarding the need to continually inform practice with those aspects of knowledge that enhance effectiveness for clients. Debate centres more on the methods for capturing that knowledge and whether the knowledge being captured fully allows for depth of variance, both in context and in the parties involved in the therapeutic relationship.

Consideration of whether all that matters within the therapeutic relationship has been fully captured is a further matter for discussion. Furman gives examples of this in his article on ethical considerations in evidence-based practice. His concern rested with the possible restriction on client empowerment as a result of the drive for effective and efficient service delivery(Furman, 2009). Furman gives example of a client who may prefer to pursue faith healing as part of their tradition, rejecting evidence-based therapies that may seemingly indicate a better outcome.

He further addresses the issue of social change factors that can take time to register and by their nature elude quantification. He uses the example of obliterating racism and discrimination to illustrate his point. It is interesting to note that while Furman uses macro issues to illustrate his concerns, the issue of time within the therapeutic relationship is a valid factor when considering effectiveness. Measuring a given intervention within a specified time frame gives no place for the evolution of change in a person's life and the serendipitous events that can bring together different learning's at a future time.

As the debate within the EBP movement expands, the literature reflects a widening use of different research methodologies to contain evidence. The quest for accurate capture of evidence and the understanding of what constitutes evidence appears to be seeking not so much to force social work into an existing EBP framework, but to keep developing a framework that takes into account social works' complexities. Given the clear indication from the literature of the importance of spirituality, religion and the use of self, the way ahead would need to take these factors into consideration.

Conclusion

By its very nature as a helping profession, social work attracts people with an orientation to life that seeks to serve others with empathy and compassion. In keeping with social work's traditional roots, often that motivation is underpinned by a belief system that has a spiritual or religious base. While there are many volunteers that would aspire to the same call of serving others, the professional status of social

work requires evidence of effectiveness. To this end there is an evolving framework of measurement that seeks to capture what constitutes effective intervention in order to continue to inform practice.

Current literature refers to considerable research around the notion of what is working and effective in various social work practices and programmes. The research examines techniques, tools, and models of social work. What emerges from the literature is the limitations of the methods employed to gather the information, which due to its methodology is unable to capture aspects of practice that deal with the 'use of self'. The deconstruction and quantitative examination of practice as demonstrated by EBP can reduce the examination of human relationship to that of mechanistic technology.

Missing in the equation are the aspects of human relationship that contribute to successful interaction and consequently effective intervention. Spiritual and religious belief is acknowledged as an important part of our humanity and a significant influence in terms of use of self.

Ways of accessing that knowledge has been examined through the 'use of self' and spiritual assessment material.

The following chapter details the methodology chosen for the project, designed to capture a part of the story that hitherto has been absent namely, how a particular spiritual perspective (Christianity) contributes to their sense of effectiveness in social work practice.

CHAPTER 3

THE RESEARCH PROCESS

The ‘use of self’ in the social work arena, is a fundamental aspect of the social worker’s arsenal and comprises a significant component in the forming of a therapeutic relationship with a client (Reupert, 2007). Growing assent regarding the need for attention to the spiritual (Furman, et al., 2004; Hodge & Wolfer, 2008; Sheridan, et al., 1992; Stewart, et al., 2006; Stirling, et al., 2009), both for the client and the social worker, provides a touchstone for this research, a goal of which was to explore the contribution that a Christian perspective makes towards a sense of effectiveness for the social worker, and thus examines an elemental part of their use of self in practice.

In this chapter the qualitative methodology chosen is described justifying its implementation in terms of the research and the background literature. My own place within the research is identified and the interview and analysis process explained.

Applying Literature to Research

The growing depth and breadth of work being undertaken in the area of spirituality and religion as relates to the social worker is a clear indication of the relevance and influence of these topics on social work practice (Canda & Furman 2010; Furman, et al., 2004; Gray, 2008; Hugen, 1998; Lindsay, 2002; Sheridan, 2010). Narrowing the topic to one particular form of spirituality, namely Christianity, focuses attention on a specific perspective that is well represented in social work (Johnston 1998; Ressler 1998; Sherwood 1998). This is worthy of exploration, given the place it holds in the story of the profession’s development as referred to in chapter two.

The notion of effectiveness in practice has stimulated the development of the evidence-based-practice movement (Glick, 2005), examining the profession under a scientific, medical model, with the aim of developing best practice parameters to benefit the service users. An area that seems to have suffered from some neglect in

the zeal to ensure efficient and competent practice delivery is the aspect of the dynamic of service delivery that cannot be quantified as it relates to the organic therapeutic relationship that develops between worker and client. Graybeal (2007) refers to this as the art of social work, forming a creative workspace that allows for change and development. Canda commented;

“I would like to see more evidenced based research about how spirituality connects to social work, including rigorous standards for inquiry design.”

(Canda , 2008 ,p.39).

While this would seem a logical progression in the move towards considering both the client and the social worker holistically, there would need to be careful consideration of how that knowledge was collected, as the very thing that is under investigation, at times presents in such a way as to defy quantification and easy and rigorous research approaches and activities.

Although there is evidence within the literature for the impact and effectiveness of spiritual tools such as prayer and meditation (Hodge, 2007; Sheridan, 2010; Wachholtz, et al., 2007), some of what has been reported presents unclear and contradictory results. This raises questions around ethics and the need to equip social workers in the area of spiritual assessment in order to provide competent service delivery.

The picture that emerges overall is one of agreement for the place of spirituality and religion in social work

(Canda & Furman 2010; Hodge, 2007; Lindsay, 2002; Stirling, et al., 2009; Zapf, 2005) as part of an holistic approach and consideration of person in environment.

What is less obvious is the link between spiritual belief and use of self within that approach, the question of specific interest for this thesis.

Research Strategy

In order to scaffold this research with sufficient flexibility to respond to the finer nuances that characterize the topic, a strategy was employed that allowed for the use of a qualitative method.

Canda speaks of spirituality as being an;

...intricate tapestry of all aspects of human diversity woven together with spiritual experiences, values, beliefs and practices (Canda & Furman, 2010, p.101).

Consequently the method chosen required the ability to capture depth and allow for exploration of the personal meaning of Christian spirituality. Qualitative research methods are renowned for their capacity to aid the capture of data that places the participants within their own setting and seeks to extract perceptions and opinions that give depth and meaning to the research question (Davidson & Tolich, 2007; Denscombe, 2007; Neumann & Kreugar, 2003). Investigating the area of Christianity and its contribution to a person's sense of effectiveness in practice, meant an exploration of a spiritual and religious phenomenon that implicitly denote complexity and depth.(Canda & Furman, 2010). The project undertaken, with its focus on an aspect of the social worker that contributes to an holistic view were well suited to a qualitative methodology.

A relatively small-scale project was conceived, reasoning that the group selected could potentially give adequate enlightenment given the depth of the interviews. The manageability of the project depended on its ability to respond to "real world" conditions (Patton, 1990), taking into account the limited time and availability of the participants. Using one to one interviews and taking a semi-structured approach provided a relatively straightforward means of data gathering, and worked within the restrictions of time and resources.

Choosing a Qualitative Approach

Due to the complex and multi-dimensional nature of the research a qualitative method that applied a phenomenological approach was selected. Phenomenology's concern with capturing a sense or a snapshot of the human experience under investigation and broadening that appreciation to each participant makes it an ideal vehicle to relate to this project. Its focus on distilling the fundamental nature of the shared experience of the participant group (Patton, 1990), created a framework that enabled the capture of significant shared experiences that are revealed in thematic analysis.

This interpretive approach allows for a description and exploration of the topic and an account of the experiences of the eight participants (the number interviewed for this project) that remains true to the meaning they have ascribed to their experiences (Denscombe, 2007). This emphasis seems particularly important given the nature of spirituality.

Personal Bias

As someone who has worked in both secular and private settings, and in both overtly Christian and government agencies, my own background and inherent bias towards the subject matter gave an awareness of creating an interview climate where as far as possible a neutral stance was maintained. The importance of being able to "bracket off" one's own beliefs (Alaggia & Millington, 2008; Denscombe, 2007) is a hallmark of the phenomenological approach which seeks to suspend the interviewer's pre-existing notions in favour of approaching the participants with a "stranger" stance (Denscombe, 2007; Neumann & Kreugar, 2003).

In order to mentally distance myself from the participants as people who shared common beliefs, I approached each interview in the manner of an interviewing journalist, introducing myself in a business-like way and explaining the project based on the information sheet (see Appendix A). One of the tools employed in order to diminish the effects of researcher bias involved collection of data by means of having taped interviews, ensuring the full context of the responses was recorded. This was

also a useful tool in terms of remaining as neutral as possible in interviews as there was an awareness of the capture of data on tape.

The phenomenological approach encourages “detachment in analysing experience” (Patton, 1990, p.73) and leads ultimately to the extraction of the essence of the experience that is being investigated; as such it was important to have an ongoing awareness of potential bias.

In the preliminary stages of setting the stage for the interview process it is important for the researcher to as far as possible come to terms with their own preconceptions and biases that can prove to be a hindrance to allowing the free expression of the interviewees. Patton describes this anticipatory period as “Epoche” whereby the researcher consciously works to remove or minimize the effects of their own personal point of view (Patton, 1990). As the motivation for most research projects would be birthed from a researcher’s particular interest in a subject (Denscombe, 2007), this need to create distance from one’s own preconceptions is an ongoing challenge as the work unfolds. I was aware that while a deliberate examination of possible partiality was an essential part of the start up phase, it remained an ongoing demand as the interviews revealed areas of both personal and professional interest.

My social work history involved working independently on many occasions, and I had seldom had the opportunity to work with Christian social workers. It was a revelation to me that the participants reflected similar thoughts regarding faith and practice that I imagined were peculiar to me. For instance, I have reflected on the longevity of my involvement in social work, without any real diminishment in my passion for seeing people overcome difficulties. Discussion with the participants revealed a similar outlook accompanied by personal faith empowered by continual prayer and communion with God, a phenomenon that mirrored my own experience. It was necessary to put aside the natural enjoyment of this discovery and treat it as I would in a professional social work setting. That is, a passing mental acknowledgement of what was said, but neutrality in demeanour that allowed the participant to continue uninterrupted. It is important to convey both neutrality and rapport to create a place where the participants felt able to express themselves freely (Patton, 1990) .

The need to retain a self-aware and reflective stance, led to the development of an interviewing technique that sought to provide room for the interviewee to feel relaxed and able to speak freely with minimal interventions from myself. The transcripts reveal the use of minimal encouragers and summaries (Denscombe, 2007) to facilitate dialogue with an effort to mitigate against directive interviewing. On the first interview I was very aware of not directing or leading the discussion, and as a result the transcript reflected a somewhat stilted air. Discussion with my supervisor led to an insight on the importance of pursuing some lines of enquiry in order to unfold a deeper content to the narrative. Probes and prompts were used in this regard (Denscombe, 2007). Using a reflexive approach, I applied this learning consciously as the interviewing progressed and note the developing depth of detail in the examination of the transcripts.

There is a fine balance to be achieved in the use of self as a research tool and there is support for notion of the researcher's point of view being an important asset to the process (Denscombe, 2007). It is not entirely possible to remove all traces of self in the interactive process and there are schools of thought that the commonalities with the participants may allow for a freer expression (Denscombe 2007, p301).

The key then is not so much an emptying of oneself and associated values and beliefs, but rather being as cognisant as possible of those factors and their influence on the research and implementing some bracketing to reduce this influence. Due to the nature of qualitative interviewing an "expectancy effect" can be generated, where the interviewee may respond in a way perceived as desirable in order to please the interviewer. On one occasion this was brought to my attention with a participant querying whether their response was the one I was looking for. My response was to deal with this in a humorous manner, saying it was my aim to interview them, rather than the other way around.

In order to gain insight into people's feelings, emotions, experiences, sensitive issues, (Denscombe, 2007) six questions were developed that formed the basis of semi-structured one-one interviews. The questions are further described later in the text.

Identifying a Research Sample

The sample interviewed were all trained social workers with a range of ages and years of experience in the field. The social workers were selected primarily for their Christian faith, which was self defined within the first question. All respondents described their faith as a personal belief in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour. Their faith was the central fulcrum from which their lives hinged. It was important to have the Christian faith focus as a prime motivator in the person's life rather than a religious belief system because of the research intention to explore how their internalised spiritual belief system impacted on their sense of effectiveness in their work.

Due to the over representation of women in the social work profession, there was only one male interviewed, but due to the small sample representativeness was not deemed to be of major concern (Yegidis & Weinbach, 2009). As this study was narrow in its focus there was not a great diversity in terms of ethnicity or nationality however the agencies represented comprised of secular, Christian faith-based and a non-government organization. The age range was wide from late twenties to late fifties.

In order to initiate the interviewing I approached an acquaintance who I had met in the context of my work as a social worker at a General Medical practice. I was able to expand the sample using a snowball effect as this person then referred me to two others. Another acquaintance also assisted in this manner and a previous staff member in the School of Health and Social Services was able to supply two more contacts.

After an introduction and explanation of the project via phone all of the potential interviewees were happy to be interviewed. The information sheet (see Appendix A) described the research topic, with a brief explanation regarding the questions and was sent by e-mail attachment. The information sheet explained the questions were to be related to their own spirituality or religious beliefs and addressed areas related to their sense of effectiveness in the work setting.

In all eight participants were interviewed. I began the interviewing in late March and completed the process in late May.

Conducting the Interviews

I had received permission to pursue a low risk project after the administering of a self- questionnaire and a review of the research intention in discussion with my supervisor (see Appendix D).

The participants were offered the option to be interviewed at their home, out of work hours or in my own office. Several participants offered their own work place as a means of working within an allotted time with the least inconvenience to them. I would establish with the interviewee that their employing agency was happy for a meeting on site and a private room was booked within the agency.

On one occasion I travelled to a participant's home in another town. Two respondents who were contract workers were interviewed in their own homes at their convenience.

Questions were developed and refined through discussion with my supervisor and self-reflection in conjunction with the literature review being developed and considered. The literature review informed the construction of the questions adding insight particularly in the areas of effectiveness, drawn from evidence-based practice literature (Patton, 1990). The questions were designed in an open-ended format to encourage free exploration of the topic and for the most part, consistency in the order of questioning was maintained by following the prescribed outline. At times there would be an awareness that two questions had been answered in one discourse, but this was usually a reflection of how the questions flowed from one to another (see Appendix C).

Some time was spent at the beginning of each interview in rapport building and setting the interviewee at ease. All participants were enthusiastic in the giving of their time to the project and two people expressed appreciation for the thought provoking exercise it had proved to be.

The first question was a stage-setting platform (see Appendix C) designed to relax the interviewee and gain an understanding of their setting and the client population they served. It served the function of allowing the interviewee to talk freely of an area they were very familiar with and allowed for the following questions to be placed in a wider context (Denscombe, 2007). Participants were happy to talk at some length about their work and on occasion their work background was explored in greater depth (as with one interviewee, who is now retired from paid social work). This proved to be of significant relevance as the interviewee was able to freely illustrate answers to the later questions by drawing on examples from several work settings.

The initial question then led on to the participants describing their Christian faith and it's meaning for them within the work context. This allowed the interviewee, having described their work context to then unfold their faith belief and begin to associate it with their work setting. In this way a process began of starting to forge connections between their faith and practice and lay the ground work for the more probing aspects of the next three questions. These questions sought to uncover matters related to their sense of effectiveness in their work, demonstrated by aspects concerning their building of a therapeutic alliance with their client with the subsequent questions expanding that notion to working with clients from secular and different faith traditions. These questions were motivated by literature on effectiveness, which examined the importance of the therapeutic relationship (Glicker, 2005; Graybeal, 2007; Reupert, 2007).

The final question sought to encapsulate some of what had gone before in the interview, encouraging the participant to reflect on those aspects and characteristics of their Christian faith that may have significance for the wider profession of social work, offering valuable tools to enhance social service delivery. The shape of the interview sought to take the participant from a thoughtful and subjective consideration of the place of their Christian faith in effective practice to a wider contemplation of some of those tenets. In the interviewing of eight participants it would be likely that there would be as many opinions as interviewees.

All the participants were happy to commit to a single interview with a few offering extra contact if needed.

The first interview, while yielding rich and significant data, made me aware that time could have been more economically used by sending the questions out prior to the interview. The participant needed clarification on some questions, and the following interviews were noticeably smoother when the participant had had an opportunity to review the questions preceding our meeting. Following that first interview the information sheet, the consent sheet and the interview questions were sent out all at the same time, allowing the interviewee time for deliberation. Even so there were occasions where the interviewees had not perused the material. For one interviewee I returned to do a second interview as she had not reflected on the questions to any great extent and felt the need to spend more time in reflection. Due to the brevity of the first interview, I chose to use only the second interview reasoning that the data would have a greater depth given the time the interviewee had spent in reflection. As the second interview was approached as a stand-alone piece of work, there was no discernible impact on the data.

Ethical Considerations

The participants were all approached via telephone in the first instance and a concerted effort was made to ensure the potential interviewee did not feel pressured or obliged to take part. All expressed enthusiasm for involvement.

Confidentiality

The information sheet was clear in its commitment to confidentiality being limited to two named supervisors and myself. The information sheet informed the participants that their personal anonymity would be protected by a pseudonym and in discussion there was an assurance their agency would not be named. The only male participant was given a female pseudonym as the nature of his work was specialized and he could have been identified more easily. A consent form was signed after an explanation of the recording process (see Appendices A and B).

Subsequent to transcription of each interview, the transcript (as was explained in the information sheet) was returned to the participant for editing. Two participants made minor changes, which were incorporated, and some participants attached encouraging remarks. I was aware of the personal nature of the spiritual content shared and was careful to assure the participants of anonymity. None of the participants expressed any concern around what they had shared and affirmed the transcription having read it.

Transcripts were kept separately from personal contact details and participants were informed of the Massey University protocols regarding storage and eventual destruction of notes and recordings.

Analysis

Data coding was undertaken using a systematic numbering of the lines of the transcripts, followed by an analysis of the contents, highlighting identified themes by colour coding. Key words and phrases were highlighted, falling into the following categories.

Mention of “created in God’s image”, “bigger picture” and prayer and communication with God were identified as dominant themes. Non-judgementalism, empathy, compassion, and hope were further key concepts that were identified. The data was then divided into these categories, with links being made between the categories and a hierarchy of importance being established in relation to the key concepts in question.(Denscombe, 2007). The “created in God’s image” and “bigger picture” themes were identified as overarching concepts and were described as meta themes. Prayer and communication with God were recognized as the means by which the participants maintained a personal relationship with God. Non-judgementalism, empathy, compassion and hope formed a set of sub themes emerging out of this larger framework. The rationale for the prioritising of these themes will be attended to in detail in the two findings chapters.

It was important for the taping and transcription to be executed by myself, as the close engagement with the material was essential for gaining a flavour of the contents. The repetitive review of material as it was typed, gives the reviewer a strong connection with the subject matter. Patton makes the case for several readings of the data being necessary prior to indexing and categorization (Patton, 1990, p382). The need to traverse back and forth over recordings to accurately capture data, allows the opportunity to become intimately acquainted with the content.

As a result, the data collection and analysis phase proved to be a time of transformative learning as the individual transcripts were initially typed and meditated on, sent for review to the interviewee, adjusted if need be and then coded and analysed. An interesting discovery in the course of this action was the shift in thinking regarding the interview material. I had developed impressions during interviews over what material would be useful, and what would prove to be less so. In reality the identifying of specific themes led to an unfolding of surprising results. One interview that I deemed could be lacking in sufficient data, yielded rich results, while another lengthy dialogue was not so fruitful. The serendipitous nature of qualitative research is something that is both enjoyable and revealing, indicating the dynamism of the method that encourages depth of expression.

The interview which at first reading appeared to be lean in data, however when combined with the other results and subjected to analysis, revealed comments that while concise, added to the developing themes. The importance of approaching the data with an open mind (Denscombe, 2007, p301) was an important learning as the data generated held these unexpected responses.

The researcher is often involved in a “data analysis spiral”(Denscombe 2007, p. 292) moving between stages of familiarity, preparation, interpreting, verifying and representing the data (Denscombe, 2007) and this proved to be the case as emerging themes were compared and contrasted .

Verifying the Data

A method of triangulation comparing the participants' responses with each other facilitated the verification of the data, confirming by means of emerging themes the validity of the findings. The participants were interviewed at different times and different places, incorporating the use of "space triangulation" (Denscombe 2007, p.136).

The collection of data by way of audio tape means that any data used to confirm the findings can be checked and verified as part of the original work.

Limitations to the Methods Employed

While the one to one interview is an efficient and streamlined medium for the capture of data in a small-scale project, it may have been of further benefit to organise a focus group to add further depth and richness to the results. Any discussion around spirituality and religion is usually contributed to by lively debate and the goal of qualitative research to gather "thick" description (Patton, 1990), could have been enhanced as participants communicated and developed more dynamic responses to questions. Dialogue and social contact will often generate thoughts and concepts beyond what an individual on their own may contribute. Given the time constraints on the research (to be completed within the university year), restrictions on budget, and the challenge around the logistics of bringing a group of busy social workers together, the option of individual interviews was chosen.

Having chosen the participants using a snowball sampling method, and as the main pre-requisite was their Christian faith, it was likely they would emerge from a variety of settings and as such would offer a reasonable selection of viewpoints and depth of thought. There is some restriction in this method of selection however creating a relatively homogeneous sample. The area of this limitation on the project will be explored further in the discussion and conclusions chapter.

The data collected was strictly a subjective account of the social worker's perception of the contribution their Christian faith made to their sense of effectiveness in their work. To gain a three hundred and sixty degree view of this phenomenon, it may have been helpful to interview a participant's supervisor and a client. This could have contributed a triangulation effect that may have added to the validity of the study.

Constraints on this approach would centre on ethical considerations and the organisational logistics. Observations regarding the social worker's faith could invite the potential for criticism of unsafe practice, depending on the outlook of the other parties involved and how much knowledge they had of spirituality and religion in social work. This issue will be returned to in the later discussion chapter.

Conclusion

Literature selected for the backdrop to this study formed a broad base for the development of the research methodology. From readings around spirituality and religion, Christianity and social work, use of prayer and spiritual interventions in practice to evidence-based practice, and use of self, the material was a reflection of the need to gain a wide appreciation of the context of the research question before work began. The gap that seems to have revealed itself was one related to the use of self in social work, interconnected with spiritual belief system, and the project was conceived as a response to this.

The nature of spirituality and religion is transcendental and draws from the deep aspects of the human condition that are hard to quantify and explain. The methodology best suited to its study needs to be able to mirror this complexity and make room for an holistic orientation, taking into account the parallels of holism in the subject matter. The qualitative method fulfils this requirement with its attention to the research subjects within their environment and the importance of their views within a given context. Its flexible and intuitive "modus operandi", (Mark, 1996) give the qualitative method the advantage in terms of it's ability to "enhance our general knowledge about complex events and processes" (Mark,1996, p 214).

From here the next two chapters will embark on exploring the participants' views and reporting on the findings.

CHAPTER 4

SPIRITUAL MOTIVATORS FOR PRACTICE

The following section of the thesis summarises the findings from the eight interviews conducted with Christian social workers.

The interviews are the sole source for the views presented. In order to protect their privacy, pseudonyms are assigned, allowing the reader to become acquainted with the person and follow the unfolding themes.

Initially the interviewees are introduced, accompanied by a brief description of their Christian faith. Two overarching themes are referred to in this chapter. Firstly the participants' sense of a 'bigger picture' providing context for their social work, and secondly a perception of the intrinsic value and worth of the individual as a result of being made in God's image. Both views are linked to the participant's personal faith in God, which is nurtured and developed through prayer and other forms of spiritual communication.

The two meta themes are the backdrop to sub themes expressed through beliefs, values and behaviours in the practice setting. These areas will be attended to in the following chapter and will continue the story of how the participants' Christian perspective contributes to a sense of effectiveness in social work practice.

Introducing the Participants

The participants' backgrounds and faith statements form an important base to the description of the themes to follow, helping to create a three dimensional picture of the findings. The brief descriptions of real social workers in real settings help to acquaint the reader with the variations in settings and the outworking of the individual's faith in that context.

All the participants with one exception had tertiary training in social work, two of them having completed the training in their countries of origin. One social worker, a New Zealander, had been employed by a District Health Board during a period where a Certificate in social work was sufficient. The Social Worker was a trained nurse and had a full appreciation and understanding of professional social work.

Current Work Setting and Faith Orientation

The participants current work experience and their faith was explored with some reference to previous employment when it was relevant to the question.

The first participant was currently working on contract with a faith-based organization in the role of recruiting foster families and support workers to care for children with special needs. The role required considerable public relations and marketing skills as well as employing ability in skills generic to social work. The ability to engage in relationship, interview successfully and develop a collaborative working relationship that worked towards an agreed goal, were all important facets of this position. Betty had completed contract work with the agency on other occasions. Betty had worked in social work in a variety of settings, both statutory and non-statutory. Betty defined herself as a Christian, stating;

Well, my own Christian faith is a commitment to honouring Christ, Jesus Christ as Lord, and Saviour who has come to declare the nature of a loving and transforming father who wants us in close personal relationship with him and for us to then to declare and be partners in his work in this world.

Participant two, Rae worked for a statutory Government agency as a caregiver social worker. Her role complemented the care and protection social workers, working with the caregivers that offered their services to look after children in need of a home. Rae was responsible for training, equipping, recruiting and supporting these people, who were whanau or unrelated to the child. For Rae her faith was defined as:

... I guess it's the belief in the presence of Jesus through the Holy Spirit at all times. it's not just a Sunday thing it's an all day every day awareness that I'm in the

presence of God and He is ah with me and resourcing me, equipping me um whether I'm aware of that or not, ah my belief is that it's happening and each person is created in the image of God and that they are respected, and honoured...

The third participant, Annette, worked for a Christian-based organization with care and protection teams and a special needs support team. This was Annette's second place of employment having previously worked for a Government health agency.

Her role involved front line social work, working with families and children in the care and protection team. Annette described her faith in these terms;

.....well I have a strong Christian faith ... a belief in Jesus Christ.....

Participant four was contracted to a not-for-profit organization as an Administration Director. Susan has a background in social work and administration and the role involved working with support group coordinators whose function was to support grandparents left in a parenting role.

While the role had an administrative title, the position required skills peculiar to social work, engaging and working with the support group facilitators to examine the current situation and look at ways to improve service delivery, both administratively and practically. Susan described her faith in the following terms;

Well, I don't divorce my Christian faith from anything it's part of who I am so ... that is ... sure um ... I don't make any difference from in my work from just living life but if you wanted to take it into the work place per se. Two things I suppose would govern me first and foremost with dealing with people I see them as human beings y'know I see them, basically Jesus died on Calvary to save you as to save me and that um you're important to God just as I'm important to God, he doesn't have favourites ...

The fifth participant was a retired social worker who reflected on her last two social work positions to draw her responses. Jill had worked as a District Health Board Social Worker and for a non-Government organization, a residential home for the elderly. The first role was based in a psycho geriatric unit and involved assessment and intervention tasks as part of a multi-disciplinary team. The second role was also

part of a team and related to working with clients (older adults) and their families in a residential setting. Jill defined her faith as;

My Christian faith is my acceptance of Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour and my life being lived according to his teaching and adherence to the 10 commandments and I believe when I accepted Christ as my Saviour He became part of me so as a person I no longer live for myself but I live with him so everything I do .in my life is almost referred through him... because in him I trust.

The sixth participant Ann worked within a government community mental health agency as a social worker. Her work involved therapy in the form of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and Dialectical Behavioural therapy (a derivative of CBT). The work was both one to one and group work. Her faith was summarized in these words:

... I'm a born again Christian..... my walk is just trying to be like Jesus, he walked alongside people, he didn't judge them he loved them and um I can't judge because I know what my past is like.

Belle, the seventh participant was a senior social worker in a faith based organization; her current role involved her in front-line social work as the agency was short-staffed, but when more staff could be hired, Belle would be involved in supervising two workers. The work was on a care and protection team. Belle's faith was expressed in these words;

...and then I went into social work straight after school, it was very much my Christian journey and my social work journey were parallel in terms of I grew up as a Christian but really gave my life to the Lord in standard 9 so that was about...I was about 16,17... and that was ... I went on ... it was called a pilgrimage of pain and hope and it was going out into really the townships real kind of slumlands of what now is called Gauteng it was then called Johannesburg, working with the poor, poor, poor people um and the (indistinct word) the verse in the Bible the least, the last and the lost and Jesus working with those people, and it was very much a case of me, if I was going to be a Christian I was going to have to work with the least, the last and the lost that wasn't something that could be untangled...

Philippa was the eighth participant working as a social worker in a Government acute mental health setting. Her role involved contributing on a multi-disciplinary team, working in an intense focussed way with people who were going to be admitted to hospital, or have had early discharge from hospital. The aim was to support the client towards recovery and in some cases avoid hospitalisation.

Philippa described her faith as;

...having a relationship with God and he is my father and putting him first in my life and putting my trust in God and also believing that Jesus died for my sins and that my sins are forgiven and all that part of it, so yeah living each day . day to day , living for God and bringing him into my life as much as I possibly can and into my work ... my work environment.

The common thread that runs through all the descriptions of faith is the ownership that each individual had of a personal belief in Jesus Christ and the awareness of His daily impact in and on their lives. The personal relationship that each participant described as the motivating factor in their life was enlarged on as the interviews progressed illustrated by strong descriptions of how that personal relationship was maintained. Communication with God through prayer, intuitive awareness of the work of his Holy Spirit, and other methods of communication, proved to be of underlying significance in terms of each social worker's sense of identity and their use of self in their work.

Communication with God

Personal Prayer

Communicating with God through prayer was described as a natural and normal part of the participants' daily lives. Rae began her day thus;

I probably ... I get up early I spend time meditating, reading, praying, committing my time and my day to the Lord... um when I go into situations I often pray about the

situation um, but going into them I often pray for opportunities to not so much share the Gospel.. that's not my role but to be a good witness um... to be a character, a person that the client is able to relate to be warm, to see something in me that's different that might be unusual for them but that I'm able to recognise their hurts their pain and um walk with them through that and help them...

Later referring to the conversational aspect of prayer as;

It's just everyday situations but the coincidences are too often... um so prayer is very important , that's not getting down on my knees ... that's just talking , that's just involving God in my thoughts and talking to myself type-thing...

Ann related her prayer with God as being;

I have um...my hot line to God is a conversation Like you and I are having, for me to actually sit and pray I'm thinking that my prayer really sucks at the moment (laughs)... but yeah... I talk to God as I talk to you ... that's my prayer time.

Susan said;

I talk with God non-stop. I have my normal prayer time, but He's just there.

Prayer for Difficult Situations

Prayer on a personal level was a feature of all the participants' daily lives both for providing strength for the day and also as an important part of decision making and direction in difficult situations.

Jill and Ann reflected on situations where their clients had been hard to engage, describing the prayer that went into the situations and the changes they observed. Jill's experience was with an elderly man who was displaying very aggressive behaviour. Staff involved were routinely abused verbally and threatened physically.

I can remember there was one man in the unit and he was so...so angry and we had...when he was admitted he broke a window on the way in that's how angry he was , he had to be almost manhandled and everybody was really scared of him and I was allotted to him and I was really scared too cos he would shout and rave and wave his arms and get angry and you almost wondered if there'd be a physical assault....

As Jill's role was to facilitate discharge home, she recalled her encounter with him in these words;

....and I used to pray before I had to go and talk with him , and used to present very gently but firmly to him and I can remember when he was finally discharged, he was much better I had to follow him up at home weekly for a couple of months, because he'd been a very difficult case and the first time I went he welcomed me with open arms, I was a friend and he called his wife to bring tea and cakes and it was lovely and I think it was all because of that low-key approach that he could cope with, I was no threat to him... but a lot of people were.

Ann had worked in a hospital setting in England and dealt with a client who lashed out at staff. The Geriatrician had seen him and diagnosed him as suffering from dementia. Ann had awoken prior to going to work one morning, with God speaking to her saying "This man's deaf." Ann approached him with paper and pen questioning him and he replied, "Yes, I'm deaf as a doornail!" Ann had also noted that he was not eating and wrote down her query; he responded and described a very sore mouth. Ann then advocated for him with the Geriatrician, averting a move to the dementia unit. Ann related this incident specifically to her personal communication with God, prompting her to act.

Communal Prayer

Betty described a breakthrough in her project work where there had been a special needs child requiring placement. While this particular case did not result in a placement, the staff, despite discouragement, had continued in prayer, subsequently witnessing an avalanche of interest for the wider project. This situation demonstrated

a communal approach to prayer, a familiar phenomenon in the faith-based agencies where there was an expectation that the workers would contribute to times of focussed prayer.

In Annette's agency the social work team met regularly for prayer. This integration of faith into work, required adjustment on her part as a previous place of employment was very clear on separation of belief from work.

...so it's been quite different this year, and this year I think it's learning that God's a part of all of it so we have prayer and devotion every morning um often when I discuss a case with my supervisor that's a little more difficult or tricky we'll stop and pray about the case as well... and to be honest I'm actually trying to find my feet in that ...

Annette's described her journey in these terms

... um not so much from my work but from the degree I felt very .. spoken... that your Christian values shouldn't be coming through in your work... you need to separate out who you are and just be there for the client...I really felt that from my degree and that's probably why in my first job that it was quite separate because of what I'd been taught at Uni and how much it had to be separate, whereas now I'm re-integrating which is quite exciting...

Faith based agencies, due to the staff's shared beliefs and values, regularly met for prayer. This time of prayer and support was an agency expectation and in one agency in particular the worker's ongoing spiritual development was seen as an important part of their development generally. This time of communal prayer and faith sharing was an important part of the overall agency ethos and could well serve to reinforce the shared values and vision of the service. As in Betty's case, it was a significant factor in the encouragement of the team to persevere through a difficult situation to the point of breakthrough.

Prayer for Clients

All participants referred to their private prayer for clients and their situations. Prayer with clients was dependent on the perceived appropriateness of that intervention. The agency setting was also influential, with the faith-based agency supportive of this intercession. What was apparent in all interviews was the social worker's sensitivity to the client and an awareness of the need to practice in an ethical manner. Several participants referred to the need to respect the client's right to self-determination and the importance of not imposing their own views. Ethical considerations will be returned to later in the Discussion chapter.

Ann described situations where older clients in particular had asked her to pray for them.

Prayer was viewed as a foundational aspect to the participants' life and practice, and was illustrative of the importance that each person attached to an ongoing dynamic relationship with God. All the participants interviewed had a current faith, which they saw as the cornerstone of their lives.

Common to all the participants was a daily communication with God in the form of prayer, meditation and worship. The close connection with God that each person described how they viewed their clients and their work, creating a seedbed for the values that informed their practice.

These views expressed themselves in the following ways.

The Bigger Picture

Through prayer and other forms of spiritual communication, the participants felt a connection with a higher power which led to a view of life that acknowledged a 'bigger picture' than what they were privy to. Jill viewed God as having an authority and power that allowed her to hand on her anxieties in situations where she felt powerless to effect change. Jill described a situation where due prayer and releasing of concern over a work situation, she witnessed a shift in circumstances that had

considerable impact. Jill felt that along with her belief in a higher power came a confidence to express herself when it came to important issues.

You had... you had.... The knowledge that there was a higher force working within you and that you were safe...and that you were able to say things that you really believed and stand up to things that you didn't believe in because you had backing I guess...

Betty was able to maintain a positive outlook in her work which at times would involve long periods of seemingly unproductive work prior to any reaping of results.

Yes and perseverance and a certainty that the Lord will provide a way and when the door is closed... when a door is closed you kind of like accept well... it is closed there will be something else. There is a peace that comes with the door being closed and there is a peace at times that comes when you don't understand, you don't understand why something is happening but there is trust that the Lord has a better way or a different way in it ah... and there are many examples at work in...where extraordinary things have opened up given a bigger time frame and its kind of like having a confidence in that experience I can trust that God is going to provide something and while it mightn't be clear now there will be clarity further down the track. It's happy to have confidence um... God's ways are higher than my ways I see things a particular way but God sees things in a much bigger and vaster time frame and I have to accept sometimes that that time frame is not going to be in my life time. Or my client's lifetime possibly, but it is that thing in trusting and having confidence in that.

Some of the participants believed that the concept of a higher authority and a bigger picture allowed them to adopt a perspective that allowed for the unexpected. Belle commented;

I think keeping a focus on the bigger picture is incredibly helpful, and I can't say I can do that all the time...

I think it certainly is related to my faith because if I was to judge my effectiveness on the outcome of my clients I would feel pretty bad about myself, because things don't go the way you want them to go all the time... and it's often the things you don't know you've done that can be the most powerful for people...

Annette describes her discovery regarding her work;

I think there's still part of me figuring that out that it's not just up to me and bringing that in control and laying it before him so that's yeah again I haven't really experienced that before in my work and so learning to do that and let go of it...

The notion of a bigger picture operating with God being the one in authority allowed for the participants to release a sense of over-responsibility for situations. Their perceptions of their limitations in terms of ability to effect change in any given situation seemed to assist the participants in their letting go of concerns that might otherwise occupy their thoughts and contribute to stress.

Rae worked in a high stress environment, and commented on her awareness of God with her, that she never felt alone. When she faced dilemmas related to finding a suitable placement for a child she would pray, releasing her concern to God. She would consciously resist being drawn into the tension of the situation and as a result was able to relax about the outcome.

An awareness... that I'm not on my own that God is forever present that whatever happens I've got the opportunity, I've got the resources ... I've got whatever is needed to deal with that situation if I remain open and I guess prayer and thinking through a lot of these things on a regular basis throughout the day helps me deal with ... if I can't find a placement... "God you know where they are..." I tend to relax a lot more then... If I can't find one... then I can't find one... to not get hooked up in the pressure and the tension that others get into and it's very easy to do that especially when you get a child that needs to be picked up or has been picked up and you've got to find a place for them um but I've found that I do have the ability to step outside the situation and um. ..re... not so much relax but de-stress to think calmer...

Image of God

The participant's view of God as their Creator added to their overall appreciation of their clients, viewing them as people of worth and value. Ann spoke of each person as being known by God before they were born, leading to a view of each person being special and unique.

...you know how God formed us, and how he knew us before we were born so we're special.

Jill referred to the equal standing of people in the context of them being created by God and Betty believed that each person was created in God's image.

Oh, I guess I'm absolutely committed to... to God loves each and every one of... of his children, each and every person is created in the image of God and is a beloved child of God

Rae spoke of respecting, treasuring and honouring her clients as people created in God's image.

Um... I guess it's the belief ah in the presence of Jesus through the Holy Spirit at all times, it's not just a Sunday thing it's an all day every day awareness that I'm in the presence of God and He is ah with me and resourcing me, equipping me um whether I'm aware of that or not ah my y belief is that it's happening and each person is created in the image of God and that they are respected, and honoured, um because of who they are. They are unique and so we're not going to rubber stamp things each person has got their own personality their own individuality, I think it's important to recognise that...

Later Rae reiterates this point as an important reason for her respect and honouring of her clients.

Annette shared her belief of her clients created in God's image as an underlying reason for fully applying herself to hearing their stories. This encouraged her to have compassion and understanding for people that she may not have otherwise been able to, and so see their side of the story.

I'm a strong believer in as well because God created us we are all in his image and I think because of that no matter who I'm working with... most of the time.. not all of the time ... you need to see people as created in God's image ... and hearing their story ... that helps me be able to see the different perspectives hear the different stories and have compassion on and understanding for people that maybe otherwise you wouldn't be able to see their side of the story...

Annette's comments were connected to her work in care and protection and working with the perpetrators of abuse. Her belief in God as the person's Creator, brought about an ability to work with them in a non-judgemental fashion.

Conclusion

This chapter has been establishing the context of each participant's work and their definition of their faith. How that faith is maintained and developed is described in terms of a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit. Prayer and interpersonal communication, in the form of intuitive impressions and a sense of direction and wisdom, nurture the relationship.

The participants all acknowledged a view of a creator God that held a bigger picture of life and could be trusted with concerns regarding their work. These fundamental spiritual motivators served as bedrocks on which the participants had developed values that informed their practice.

The outworking of these overarching themes within the work context finds expression in the values that guide the participant's practice. The next section turns its attention to focussing on these sub themes (being created equal, non-judgementalism, compassion and hope) and discussing the findings.

CHAPTER 5

APPLYING SPIRITUAL MOTIVATORS TO PRACTICE

Having considered the overarching themes of ‘the bigger picture’ and viewing people as created in God’s image, the background is set for the developing sub-themes. These sub-themes describe the outworking of values and beliefs in the social work context and their place in the therapeutic alliance.

Empathy, emerging from a view of all people being created equal, being non-judgemental, having compassion and hope, are aspects of the participants’ practice that are investigated in this chapter.

How the individual integrates these values and beliefs into the therapeutic relationship is described, and the part they play in contributing to a sense of the participant’s effectiveness in social work practice is taken into account.

Beliefs and Values that contribute to the Therapeutic Alliance

We’re All Equal

Given that all the participants referred to people as being created by God, this belief set the scene for a perception of clients as having a position of equality.

The consistency of approach from the participants in terms of how they viewed their clients, created a respectful and safe place to begin the formation of a working relationship. These perceptions are expressed in the following words which highlight the belief the participants had in God creating all people equal and believing Jesus’ walk on earth affirmed that truth by the way in which he treated people. The participants sought to apply these principles in their work seeking to demonstrate those beliefs in their interactions with others. The participants were cognisant of diversity and were guided by the premise that everybody has a right to be treated fairly and equally, no matter what they believe.

Well, we're all created equal ... and I think ... and we have no right to impose our... I think we have no right to impose our views on anybody else, but we have to act them...(Jill)

I believe there's good in everyone...that we're all fallen as well and I think that is another way of helping me to come along not just as some person in power or authority... and I've got this all sorted and you don't ... but going...actually, but by the grace of God I would go there as well but by the grace of God I was raised in a good home, so I know how to parent ... I hope I would when I have children!...and I'd do an OK job...whereas they may not have had that opportunity to grow up and know what good parenting is... and so to have that look ... and go ... well if it wasn't for God's grace where would I be , so that I'm not coming in in a position of better than,...I'm better than you (Annette)

I think that yeah...I think more, forming therapeutic alliances that whole kind of concept of we're different , but God loves us equally, that whole feeling of I can reach out to this person, God's breath is within me, I can reach out to them no matter how I feel about them, or no matter how they feel about themselves and just that kind of treating them with that respect that they absolutely deserve as a child of God, no matter where they've come from ...(Belle)

...I treat all as equal whatever beliefs they hold without judgement however I will not compromise my faith for anyone um... my values is that and basically covers on to um some of the other questions you've got here is that um...I think that you can actually... you can be a Bible-bashing and you actually close doors but I try . my walk is just trying to be like Jesus, he walked alongside people, he didn't judge them he loved them and um I can't judge because I know what my past is like, and if I can love them and get alongside them and y'know just sort of saying, is that right sort of thing then um ... it's building relationships and that's what Jesus did he built relationships .(Ann)

Non-Judgementalism

As the view of equality was the basis of how the person conducted themselves in the professional setting this influential premise stimulated a way of relating to clients that endorsed the approach of being non-judgemental. Seven of the eight participants

had a high degree of awareness around this concept naming it as a strong value in their work. While the remaining participant did not specifically refer to this value, she none-the-less reflected this flavour in her work, speaking of “honouring” her client group and being careful to respect their stories. The background belief of them sharing an equal humanity with their clients and thus being in no position to judge motivated an attitude of unconditional acceptance towards the client. Belle, Annette, Jill Rae and Susan, outlined situations where they were able to work towards a separating of unacceptable behaviour in the clients they were working with and the person themselves. The participants identified a process and a self-awareness in these situations as they came to terms with behaviour that could be harmful to others, and placed in the context of the person’s background and circumstances. This appreciation for context allowed the participants to suspend judgement as they developed a foundation of trust on which to work.

Jill expressed the belief that an attitude of judgementalism was likely to completely ruin the forming of a therapeutic alliance and was consciously mindful about not imposing her own standards on the homes she visited. Annette shared the following experiences to illustrate her values around accepting people and the influence of her faith behind this principle.

I think probably the one that I want to talk about contributes as well because in coming in ...through different perspectives and not judging... being non-judgemental because you're not thinking I'm better than you... I've got this sorted that really does help... because they know when you're genuine or not ...So I think that really does impact... I think my love of people which is like God loves all these people and the commandment in the Bible to love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind and love others as yourself. um and ..yeah ... going in and seeing... and that comes back to seeing people as people and loving them as people despite whatever else is going on...

Rae shared her experience of working with potential caregivers who expressed judgemental Christian beliefs and her approach to helping them see things differently:

Yeah, cos I don't often talk about my faith although in saying that although in saying that opportunities often come up where I'm able to talk about it ... quite often caregivers are Christian ... so I'm able to be a lot more open and free with them in the way we talk, but that also brings up a negative that there's a lot of harm been done by the church... and so it's identifying I guess some rigid and judgemental attitudes and beliefs and not condoning those but helping them um see through the child. Rather than challenge their beliefs we talk about the child and how they might respond to um an attitude or belief and help them realise the impact that might have... and it often works and they're able to see, although the belief at the time, that is a Christian attitude it's not a Christian response and it's actually doing more harm. There's a lot of judgemental Christians and it's identifying their beliefs and how they deal with that. They might not accept behaviour but um... I guess that's another thing. Accepting the person but not the behaviour, and that would be one of the strong things I do, getting that across to a judgemental Christian, is accepting the child , and not accepting the behaviour, rather than labelling the child as bad or naughty or whatever it might be...

While the participant's shared views on equality were a value prior to meeting the client , the attitude of non-judgementalism became operationalized within the therapeutic relationship, albeit being challenged at various stages as the client's life story unfolded. If these situations did arise where aspects of the client's lives were difficult to accept (as in the case of perpetrators of abuse), the participants described a conscious re-centring of themselves in terms of reflecting on their core beliefs around non-judgementalism. Belle described a conscious process whereby she reflected on God's influence in her and on her perception of others.

For the participants the notion of not judging a person was vital to the forming of an effective working relationship. Rae's description revealed a way of being that enabled the client (in this case a child) to feel accepted and thus begin to form a basis for trust. Annette saw non-judgementalism worked out in meeting clients where they were at, relating to them in a way communicated her view of God's love.

Empathy

A value closely related to being non-judgemental and viewing others as equal, would be that of empathy expressed by the participants in their acknowledgement of their

own frailty and imperfections that allowed for an appreciation of other's situations. Susan, in her work with grandparents raising grandchildren, observed that there were times in life where people needed a helping hand in life, commenting that this need was common to us all. Rae referred to the empathy and compassion she feels as she recognises client's hurts and pains. Annette referred to the love she feels for people as she engages in their situations and works alongside them.

I think Christ was accepting of all people and that's how we should be and that's my value and so whether it some of the homes I go into... the home might be smelly and dirty and flies everywhere or whatever it is, and I can still go and sit on the floor with the mum... and play with her kid and talk with her because Jesus would do the same thing and he did do the same thing and so like it encourages me to go into those places and I feel a lot of love when I go into those places for the people and I think it's something I love about this job...we do go into people's home and last year my job wasn't like that and I think that that's something else as well ... it's going into people's homes and meeting people where they are at which is... I don't know whether it's a value or belief, but that's what Jesus did ... going to people where they are at and um ... rather than expecting them to clean themselves up and come to him...and that's something that I really am appreciating in this job and that we are working with a lot of the time people in real poverty who don't have the ability to come to us and who don't have the finances.. don't have the transport to ... who don't really have anything ... and we're able to go out and be where they are ...

Compassion

A concept related closely to empathy is compassion and the participants expressed this value in the following terms;

... just because as I said there's people that I have a huge amount of respect for what they do (the grandparents) and the how they do it and my heart goes out to them and compassion.. and all those things and that go with it... I think that's where my faith would influence me most it's the compassion...(Susan).

...to be a character, a person that the client is able to relate to, to be warm. To see something in me that's different that might be unusual for them but that I'm able to

*recognise their hurts their pain and um walk with them through that and help them...
(Rae)*

Just kind of being that kind of sounding board for young people that have been through hell, basically um that's OK you can yell at me, but I'm still going to unconditionally accept that A) we're going to work together, you're stuck with me and B) y'know that you are an accepted and loved and cherished child of God, you're not that miserable "toe-rag" that no-one wants to work with cause you're quite ugly to us, yeah, I guess it's putting yourself as a professional just one notch below, not "You're not going to talk to me like that young lady, I'm a professional and you're not going to talk to me like that" but just seeing where they come from and being that kind of yeah, being those arms of God holding them through that ranting and raving um and as we're talking about this it's actually more adults than young people doing that ...(Belle)

The participants saw this compassionate attitude towards their clients as motivated by their faith and a fundamental part of the way they practiced.

Hope

Emerging from the data was a common sub-theme of hope, powered by the participants' personal relationship with God and their belief of a higher power at work producing change. In this scenario the individual social worker perceived their role as holding that hope for a better future for their clients while the client may be struggling to maintain a positive outlook. Philippa stated:

...well I guess it's just that hope of knowing that there's more to life than what we see and that that God has a plan for us, there's a bigger picture and that would be the same for our clients who we work with ... although they may not recognise it at the time, or we don't really know exactly what that is, because we can't see the beginning and the end... but having that hope that God can see the beginning and the end... and I guess having that in the background for people who are Christians or have some sort of um spiritual background ...and you kind of think well God might be doing something here...

And in Belle's words:

Oh, it's just enormous, just I think that thing about "hope" and just over our last week's training that theme came up a lot, that if you don't have hope for your clients what hope can they have for themselves. We needed to view the families and the children we work with as the same way as God does, that he wants them to live a life abundantly, that he wants, he wants to give them joy, he wants to give them hope he wants to give them life and just having that in the forefront of my mind in working with my families now compared to what I had before it was very much a case of ...just do what you can to keep them stumbling along let nobody die on your watch, kind of thing as opposed to there is hope for this family, we can do good things...we can pray for them balancing the good social work practice, the strengths focus ...

Betty echoes this concept in her comments that were in reference to an offer of prayer to support a client who was seriously ill:

... it's that thing about offering hope, but there again it's the client's right to... accept or decline and and... I totally have a position where nothing must be forced upon a client ever it's just creating an opportunity. I guess... one of the phrases we use is "No hope no change"; there using the word N.O., but then underneath you have the words Know hope K.N. O. W Change. Yeah, so it's about being sensitive to the ways in which we may be able to provide hope and Christian faith is one expression and opportunity for hope, and many of the other things we do with clients in a social work context in terms of bringing change to their physical circumstances, physical and relationship circumstances may bring a great deal of change and hope but the resources of the Christian faith are another opportunity for further hope in a situation.

Annette described her faith as having contributed a sense of hope that engendered optimism when the work became difficult;

I think the biggest thing I've found is the hope... so like probably in this work ... but I noticed it mostly last year is a hope in in people's ability to change and a hope of people to recover, cos I was working in mental health... and just a hope in general for things to be better and I found that often times people weren't in a position to have any hope themselves... and the hope that I have in Jesus, around that was

something I could take into that and I didn't even have to say that ... you know... I didn't even have to say that in situations that it was because of God and the hope that no matter how hard the job gets I always have that hope because God is in control and I know that he is a good God and he gives me that hope and I feel that often times that's one of the most important things that people need ... even if they can't have that hope ... for someone else to have that hope for them...

This sense of optimism that flavoured the participant's practice gave depth to the use of strengths based practice tools. This conviction behind the social work practice is expressed in Belle's words:

...I think that whole concept of.. God sees the things I can do, not the things I can't do.. y'know that whole concept of strengths based work, looking for what people can do and mobilizing those strengths

Spiritual Motivators for Practice and Sense of Effectiveness

The sub themes that have been described (being non-judgemental, empathetic, hopeful and compassionate) have strong links with ethical social work practice generally (Canda & Furman 2010). The difference lies in the motivators for those values outlined in the description of the two overarching themes of “the bigger picture” and the belief that people are created in God's image. The participants personal relationships with God expressed through prayer undergirded these overarching themes, and described a dynamic sense of God's presence guiding and giving wisdom to their practice, an important observation that will be expanded on in the discussion chapter.

Rae reflected on this and stated:

I'm not aware of the things I do normally and I think, well how am I different to others in like social workers I work with they're not all Christians... some of them are... how am I different .. how are my Christian beliefs and values seen because often I do exactly the same as what they're doing, they do the same as what I'm doing um, I think it might be the attitude I hold the identity I give meaning... or the meaning I give to it, like my respect, well social workers respect their clients I believe my respect is because they're created in God's image and they need to be

treasured and valued and honoured so it's not just a theory or a strategy in order to get what I want..

Resonating across the interviews was a passionate belief in the worth of people and a commitment to facilitating empowerment and change with the client. There is evidence in the literature for the Christian faith perspective endorsing empowerment for the client, outworked through support to change socially unjust structures and encouragement for the client to pursue life affirming pathways (Belcher & Cascio, 2001). The values that the participants identified as fundamentals for the building of the therapeutic alliance with the client, were set in a context of broader belief that allowed the participants to cope with challenging situations.

While freely admitting their imperfections as practitioners and people, none-the-less the interviewees' spiritual sense of self and others enabled them to maintain a forward looking approach that cultivated reflective learning and adjustment. These aspects of faith integrated into practice encouraged a sense of effectiveness that at times was independent of the presenting circumstances. This is best illustrated by the following comments;

Yeah, so that is...that is definitely a big thing for me, just having God's patience, because God's pretty patient with me, so I guess I need to be patient with others because I'm not the most patient person, but in my practice that's definitely been a big lesson for me. Yeah... I wouldn't have thought about that before, but definitely patience, definitely a thing of... because I'm very task-oriented it might not be done the way I want it to be done and that's OK...Didn't used to be OK. It's still not completely OK! (laughs)... But it's OK I can let it go, definitely a bit of I'm never going to get everything done the way I want it to get done.. and a bit of ..eighty percent done is OK, because that last twenty percent takes more time.....Definitely yes... yes, that bigger picture definitely humility, definitely humility...um that whole concept of laughing at your self, because you know what sometimes you're just going to stuff up (laughs)...you're just going to mess it up...(Belle)

The freedom involved in letting go of situations that were beyond the participant's control brought about a sense of closure that may not have been possible in the practical sense. For instance a client may not have completed work that was agreed

to moving on earlier than predicted, or deciding to follow a different course of action that could lead to harm.

Well one of the ways I coped with it ... I was always very ... because I worked in other organisations too, I'm thinking of Lifeline at the moment because it was very important when you knew you were up against a brick wall at the end of the day to be able to... for me .. it's really important to be able to pray and put it away and almost put it in a "too hard basket" and say "God I need your help on this...give me wisdom and understanding"...and not to go on worrying about it so that you became stressed ... to be able to hand it over seal it off and I'm not saying that there wasn't stress because often there would be stress... (Jill)

Effectiveness and Spiritual Sensitivity

An aspect highlighted by five of the participants related to the ability to be spiritually sensitive to clients who expressed spiritual belief. Several of the participants expressed the opinion that whether they shared the same faith orientation with their client was not as important as the fact that they could approach the client with a sensitivity towards their needs. Phillipa in her role within the Mental Health area shared her views on this:

...Often clients have a very strong spiritual connection, when you're working with people in mental health, it's not always a Christian connection but there's some connection to spirituality...and I think having... being a Christian myself, you have a bit more of a connection in that area, even though you may not believe what they believe it's about being able to understand that there is that other spiritual connection for them and accepting that whereas a non-Christian may not be able to understand that or make sense of that sometimes and yeah so, I've just got being able to understand better where that client is coming from in that area...

Phillipa believed her spiritual perspective allowed her to discern whether a client's religious ideation was a symptom of illness, or part of a belief system that gave them strength. This observation is endorsed by Robbins et al (2006) who outlined the importance of considering the spiritual dimensions within a mental health diagnosis. A task force established in 1994 worked to supplement the DSM (Diagnostic

Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) IV with spiritual markers that would serve as guidelines for assessing a person's mental status. Phillipa believed it was important to not only acknowledge a client's spiritual beliefs but to take into account that belief system as part of assessing their presenting issues and needs (Robbins, et al., 2006).

...just considering the client's spiritual beliefs and if um not able to accommodate those needs then find someone who can, so I think that's quite important, and something that's quite often forgotten by um by non-Christians, considering as a social worker .. considering what their spiritual beliefs are in that area, and for some it might mean getting some other support from other place if they need to provide that , if the social worker feels that their not able to provide that , because I think often that spirituality is such an important part of the person, but often in the secular world it's kind of missed out, it's what do they need right now? Do they need food, do they need a benefit, and do they need accommodation medication yeah... I think it's getting better , people are bringing that in a lot more, especially in Maori models of practice y'know , that's quite evident there...Yeah ... I think it's great. It really is an important part that kind of needs to be taken in. .in any profession really....

Annette's comments illustrate how her faith-based agency creates a place of safety for people to discuss their spiritual concerns, whether they share Christian faith or not.

I think a lot of people appreciate that even though they might not have that belief in God and then in terms of coming from different faith traditions , I think because we're so aware of God and spiritual side of things it means that's a part of our assessment as well and that we're aware of that and so if you have someone coming from a different faith that would be something that would be picking up on and figuring out how to integrate that as well, whether that's getting them support within their um community of faith as well...and we'd be aware of that and looking at that as part of the assessment, part of the support, which I think often would often get overlooked in organizations that aren't so aware of spiritual aspects of things ..

The participants saw this heightened awareness of spiritual aspects for both themselves and the client as an important contributor to their sense of viewing the person in an holistic and contextual way. If the client raised matters of a spiritual

concern, the findings reflect that the participant's felt comfortable in exploring these aspects.

Conclusion

The outlined sub-themes help to illustrate in practice the bigger overarching themes that give meaning and purpose to the participant's lives. Given the importance the participants placed on their Christian faith, locating that faith within the work context and the therapeutic relationship revealed some interesting insights on how the individual made sense of spiritual belief that gave their life meaning and purpose and how the applied values contributed to their sense of effectiveness. The participants practice was fundamentally influenced by their faith base as they worked out their belief that God the Creator was in control and loved them. Their actions towards their clients of accepting others as equal, being non-judgemental, empathetic, hopeful and compassionate then reflected that belief system lending meaning and value to those interactions.

The integration of these values into practice at first glance would not seem to present any discernible difference to ethical social work practice generally. What became of significance was the motivators behind those behaviours and attitudes. The spiritual awareness that each participant described was of importance in their social work practice setting. The findings revealed a strength in purpose and delivery of service that enhanced the participant's sense of effectiveness while creating a place for the client to have free expression of the spiritual dimension of their life, should they wish.

The findings revealed in the participants', a passionate belief system that they believed empowered their practice. As the belief was founded more in a dynamic and sustained relationship with God than a theoretical assent to a code of behaviour, the participants at times reflected a sense of effectiveness outside of the presenting circumstances which at times may not appear hopeful. This was based on their acknowledgement that they were working within a 'bigger picture' and their respect for their clients as God's creation, imbued with worth and value.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

The question the research asked and explored was “How does a Christian perspective contribute to a sense of effectiveness in social work practice?”

A qualitative methodology was administered with a phenomenological approach, and produced findings that concurred with the literature regarding the importance of spirituality within the social work milieu.

The sample focussed on eight Christian social workers, who became an example of spirituality and the “use of self” in social work practice. Drawing from the findings, attention is turned to the implications of their insights and observations in the area of practice effectiveness for the practitioner, the client and the social work profession.

The Importance of Spirituality

For the Practitioner

The initial setting of the stage for the subsequent questions, asked the participants to describe their work setting and their client population. Three of the eight participants worked for faith-based organizations, one worked for a non-Government organization on contract and the remaining four worked for Government agencies.

The narratives that followed highlighted some interesting observations as the participants shared their current situations and in some cases spoke of previous places of employment. Some of the participants described their settings in a matter of fact manner, while others shared a story that covered their career pathway and revealed their learning in terms of their faith within these practice settings.

Of interest were two social workers that had recently transitioned from Government based settings to faith-based agencies. Their comments described their conflict at times with carrying a Christian perspective within a secular context. Bowpitt refers to these dilemmas in his article where he develops a Christian paradigm related to social work theory (Bowpitt, 2000). While the participants were unwavering in their faith base, the challenge for one in particular was with an agency view of clients that

saw many situations as hopeless. In her current employment within a faith-based agency, the vision statement encapsulated a strong hope and this attitude permeated the agency, raising expectations for people's ability to change and progress in their lives. The participant attributed this contrast in outlook between her previous and current place of employment to the faith-based environment she was now working in. This made a difference to her outlook as her faith was encouraged and stimulated by those with similar values and beliefs.

The other social worker while not feeling this sense of hopelessness in her previous work did however comment on the adjustment she was making in terms of integrating her faith into practice. She was enjoying the freedom this brought and excited by the changes she saw in her clients' lives. This social worker connected the prayer and spiritual support she received from colleagues as significant in the shifts and changes she saw in the clients' lives. The participants went on to describe what their faith meant to them in the context of their work.

Calling

There were aspects of their Christian belief that underpinned the participants' view of clients, and remained independent of the setting the social worker was in. This was consistent with the participants' having a "whole of life" view in terms of their faith. Hugen (1998) in her work on "Calling" as a model for social work practice, speaks of the notion of faith transcending spirituality and religion, and being the means by which a person orientates their life. This internal compass serves to guide the person on a daily basis and remains a constant regardless of the context. This was a consistent current throughout the interviews.

The participants that worked within a faith-based setting enjoyed the support and shared values that this environment provided while those working in a government or private contract situation relied on their personal relationship with God to strengthen them. While the faith-based setting appeared to provide additional support, all of the participants reflected an active faith that was a part of their day to day work, regardless of the setting.

Participants, while realistic about their work settings, spoke none-the-less of their enjoyment from their work and the notion of being occupied in settings which employed what they defined as their God given gifts and abilities. This commitment to a purpose beyond themselves contributed direction and meaning to their work.

This sense of purpose and direction was particularly meaningful in situations that required extended perseverance.

Management of stress

Descriptions of purpose, use of gifts and abilities, sense of direction and hope for a good outcome, are important indicators of resilience in a social worker and have implications for how they cope with the stressful demands of a social work career. Longevity in a career that by its nature is demanding, stressful and at times deeply distressing, can be influenced by such attributes(Canda. & Furman.1999). In interviewing some of the older participants, it was noteworthy that their involvement with social work at times spanned a few decades, and continued to reflect a positive and enthusiastic view.

Meta-themes of the ‘bigger picture’ and God the Creator, empowered by prayer and other forms of spiritual communication, carried the participants through times of difficulty and challenge where there was little progress in the agreed goals for the client. The participants’ personal relationships with God lent them a sense of wisdom and direction as they asked him for help. These are important points to be considered in the context of knowing what keeps a social worker motivated and feeling effective in the practice setting.

Ability to hand over and release issues to a higher authority was an effective stress management technique that lent strength to the participant’s practice and was a recurrent theme amongst some of the practitioners. The practical outworking of this finding will be returned to later in the chapter.

Faith in Practice

The interviews gave the participants the opportunity to reflect on the integration of their faith into practice and several expressed the challenge it had been to examine

how their faith affected their practice as it was an intrinsic part of how they conducted themselves. To separate this topic as merely an aspect of their practice was not easily workable as their description identified their faith as being part of themselves. Susan encapsulates this view in the following words;

Well, I don't divorce my Christian faith from anything it's part of who I am so ... that is ... I don't make any difference from in my work from just living life....

Susan's attitude was a clear indication, echoed by other participants of the need to consider self in an holistic manner Canda speaks of the irreducibility of the person, and the importance of seeing the spiritual as the fundamental element that makes us human (Canda & Furman 2010).

The concept of considering the whole self both for the practitioner and the client, and the implications for practicing in an holistic manner is a notion to which I will return later in discussion.

Ethical Considerations

Integration of ethical considerations into a Christian social workers point of view was a point of discussion in the interviews and the participants expressed strong conviction for ensuring their practice had appropriate ethical boundaries.

The integration of faith within practice could be implied or expressed. While faith-based agencies allow practitioners to implement spiritual interventions in a more active way, e.g prayer with the client, the participants were sensitive to the appropriateness of that intervention, holding in balance the agency's spiritual orientation with the client's right to self determination. Of interest was the notion that the overt faith-based orientation of the agency could create a climate where spirituality, of any kind, was more openly discussed. The importance of creating a safe environment for clients to express their spirituality can lead to a deeper and wider understanding of what it is that may facilitate growth and change. When spirituality is an integral part of a person and their lifestyle it needs to be considered as part of any intervention that may be planned.

Participants in secular environments were very aware of not proselytizing and indeed regarded this form of faith sharing as of lesser importance than a lived Christian life

which embodied their faith. They expressed the desire to present to their clients in a manner that fully reflected their faith and commitment to Jesus Christ. Participants described their commitment to living their faith rather than verbally sharing it, maintaining professional boundaries by a conscious awareness of the client's right to self-determination.

A study by Furman et al reflects some anxiety within the profession regarding the upsurge in interest in spiritual matters, perceiving a possible threat to ethical principles in the form of unwanted proselytizing. In fact what may be at issue is a neglect of ethical principles regarding the honouring of diversity, and cultural and religious beliefs(Furman, et al., 2004). As has been mentioned in the literature chapter for some cultures spiritual and religious factors are an integral part of who they are and have numerous implications for health and social service input. It is important for the social worker to have a working knowledge of the client's spiritual and religious beliefs in order to deliver the best service possible. Refusal of service can present as a puzzle for the social work practitioner, without the background knowledge of spiritual and religious beliefs that can influence such decisions.

Values relating to respect and honouring the client, non-judgmentalism, compassion and empowerment were congruent with social work's ethical base and consolidated for the participants their ownership of these principles. While there is a similarity with others in the profession that share these values the difference lies in the motivators behind them, described as the larger beliefs that gave meaning to the participants work. The question centres more in the "why" of service delivery rather than the "how". The participants interviewed were clear in the link they made with their overarching beliefs and the reason why they behaved in an ethical manner in the practice setting. Their commitment to the values they identified as important were first of all a spiritual concern and secondly a fulfilment of their professional ethical obligations. (Canda & Furman 1999) have explored this question for spiritually motivated practitioners but further exploration with non faith-based practitioners would be needed in order to gain a full appreciation of the motivating influences behind their agreement with ethical service delivery.

The importance assigned by the participants to their faith is a significant factor to be considered in the "use of self" in social work and their sense of effectiveness.

Use of Self

The participants' spiritual orientation to life led to practices that are common across many religions, that of meditation, reflection and prayer. Several participants spoke of the wisdom they felt was outside of themselves as they prayed about stuck situations and matters of concern. It is reasonable to speculate that the contemplative aspects of Christian faith and practice contribute to a high degree of self awareness and desire for personal growth. The Christian faith generally encourages a reflective lifestyle as Christians seek to grow more like Christ as they progress on their journey. This involves self-examination and the ability to continually evaluate one's life in the light of the faith that informs it. This speculation is supported in writing by Belcher and Cascio who refer to the sense of empowerment that accompanies the Christian's spiritual journey (Belcher & Cascio, 2001).

The ability of the Christian social worker to engage in reflective practice and consequent personal growth is an important aspect of their use of self in practice and their resulting sense of effectiveness. Dewane's article on use of self, outlines five operational uses of self; use of personality, use of belief system, use of relational dynamics, use of anxiety, and use of self-disclosure (Dewane, 2006). These categories are useful in so far as they assist in differentiating contributing factors to a therapeutic relationship, but the findings of this project would suggest that the participants' faith in a dynamic relationship with God was the base on which all and every other decision was made.

The participants' sense of God's presence in their lives led them to describe a way of being that strengthened them personally and professionally. They believed they were not alone in terms of decision-making and their communication with God gave insight and wisdom to difficult situations. At times they witnessed breakthrough in stuck situations, which they attributed to God answering prayer. These descriptions of spiritual communication informing practice add a deeper dimension to the notion of "use of self" which tends to view the input of the social worker to a situation as generating solely from them. Articles describing use of self tend to concentrate on the attributes the social worker brings to the situation or the dynamic that the relationship produces, seeing religious and spiritual aspects as more of intellectual

set of beliefs rather than a transcendent ability to access divine assistance (Dewane, 2006).

The participants who were interviewed described a variety of beliefs and values that contributed to their sense of effectiveness. Prominent amongst these were empathy and compassion, non-judgementalism and hope. These values and beliefs were strongly linked by the participants to their faith in God the Creator and the outworking of a 'bigger picture' in life. This observation links with the participant Rae's comment in chapter five who rightly observed that many social workers without a Christian faith shared these values, her point was the meaning she gave to those values; for instance her respect for others came from her belief that they were created in God's image. Her perception of her clients was influenced by this premise, she saw them as people of great worth and value, deserving of respect and honour, simply because they were created in the image of God. The honour and reverence in which the client's regarded God, transferred to their view of others, keeping them mindful of the need to view others through the filter of the values described above.

The ability to identify one's own value base and understand how that impacts client worker relationships is a crucial aspect to use of self and consequent effectiveness in practice (Canda & Furman, 1999). This important consideration will be highlighted in the later section on practical applications.

The participants demonstrated a high degree of self-awareness as they described values by which they lived their lives and their application in the practice setting. What they brought to the engagement phase with the client demonstrated an ability to present authentically and begin a trust-based relationship. The following section describes the development of the therapeutic alliance building on this base.

For the Client

Development of the Therapeutic Alliance

The flavours of optimism and positivism that permeated the participants' responses tended to help the participants approach the clients with an openness of attitude.

What was noticeable was a lack of cynicism that can accompany workers who have been in the field for a long time. This was common across the interviewees and may be indicative of a number of contributing factors. These include the data reported in the two preceding chapters which shows a belief system that places high value on the individual, condemns unacceptable behaviour rather than the person, believes in a person's potential for change and holds hope for the client's beliefs. These factors would naturally counterbalance the tendency to resort to cynicism.

The participants' belief and hope in the person as an equal created being with both natural and spiritual gifts and abilities, along with their conviction that a loving God cares for them, prompted a way of working with the client that promoted empowerment. There were several references to using a strengths-based approach that actively sought to develop areas of strength in the client's life. In describing attitudes and behaviours that sought to emulate Jesus Christ, there was a strong commitment to working towards an unconditional acceptance of the client, while retaining an awareness of both themselves and their client's common humanity and failings. This acceptance, some participants explained, was indicative of demonstrating God's acceptance of the person and communicating his love.

One of the participants expressed the need to celebrate small victories with the client, encompassing the notion of realistic expectations of a process.

The importance of the therapeutic alliance holds centre stage and is outlined in literature as a pivotal aspect of successful practice. Graybeal's article where he quotes from work by Lambert et al states that thirty percent of reported effective outcomes relate to therapist characteristics factors including empathy, warmth, acceptance and encouragement. This is particularly interesting given that the participants demonstrated these aspects as part of their helping relationship. A further forty percent relates to extra therapeutic change, matters that happen outside of the person's role as a client (Graybeal, 2007). This can include "spontaneous remission of the problem, personal strengths and resources, social supports and context, and the role of chance circumstances and fortuitous events" (Graybeal, 2007, p.5). The remaining thirty percent was made up of fifteen percent placebo effect, categorized as expectations of help, generation of hope and therapist's confidence in the approach, with a mere fifteen percent related to the model or technique used.

This description states eighty-five percent of the effective outcomes reported were generated from uncontrollable factors in the therapeutic alliance. This analysis leaves space for spiritual aspects in both practitioner (therapist) and client. The data presented in the preceding two chapters suggest that the participants' spiritually sensitive approach to the therapeutic alliance facilitated an authentic relationship that could contribute to an effective outcome. The "chance circumstances and fortuitous events" (Graybeal 2007,p.5), could also be attributed to spiritual factors depending on the beliefs of the practitioner and client.

The contribution of the spiritual is further endorsed when considering social work's commitment to the holistic view of the person in environment.

The Holistic Approach

Social Work has defined itself in terms of its ability to appreciate the person in context. This appreciation of the spiritual adding to an holistic view of the person opens up possibilities for the broadening of resources used in the therapeutic alliance. Literature affirms the importance of including the spiritual as part of a whole view of the person, and its neglect, according to some writers, leaves the therapeutic process wanting (Cornett, 1992).

Beryl Hugen's words reiterate the place for the spiritual in holistic practice;

Today there is also a small but growing movement within the social work profession that affirms that spirituality and religious beliefs are integral to the nature of the person and have a vital influence on human behaviour. These spiritual and religious dimensions are increasingly recognized as important features of social work practice, at all phases of the social work helping process and in all areas of practice. This perspective embraces a holistic conception of the person, with this view more recently being elaborated as the bio-psycho-social-spiritual perspective (Hugen, 1998, p.4.)

A spiritually sensitive approach to practice incorporates the client's whole approach to life, giving place for those aspects of their existence, which can define who they are and how they live. The data revealed participants who due to their Christian perspective had a heightened spiritual awareness that could identify if and when spirituality was of importance to their clients.

Working with Clients from a Secular or Different Faith Tradition

The participants' description of the values they operationalised within their practice (non-judgementalism, empathy, hope, compassion, equality) echoed those of social work generally, (Canda & Furman, 1999) and were a solid platform on which to engage collaboratively with the client, regardless of their belief system.

Spirituality is often an important factor in client's lives (Cornett, 1992; Furman, et al., 2004; Hodge & Williams, 2002; Wachholtz, et al., 2007) and it was a belief of several participants that their own heightened awareness of spirituality facilitated the client's ability to share openly and honestly about this area, irrespective of the specific faith system. This becomes an important aspect of the therapeutic relationship both in terms of issues that could be barriers for change and also as an area of resource to support change for the client. Participants spoke of the need to apply themselves to understanding a client's spiritual or religious point of view in order to best utilize the strengths these perspectives contributed. Participants were aware of the need to engage appropriate spiritual resources (from the client's own faith traditions) if this was seen as important part of the client's goals.

A further observation was that organizations that were overtly faith-based had removed a barrier for the client who wished to express some form of spirituality. As spirituality was already an accepted part of who the agency was, one participant believed this also opened the way for clients to express their beliefs freely. It was described as an organic part of the assessment process that arose naturally in the interview setting.

Clients who embraced a secular outlook on life were respected and honoured in the same way as someone presenting with a firm spiritual belief system. Whether this aspect was discussed as part of the therapeutic alliance or not, did not impact in terms of the values the participants continued to display.

For the Social Work Profession

Spiritual Assessment

Due to the important place that faith held in their lives and their social work practice, two participants stressed the importance of including spiritual assessment as part of the wider assessment process. Their rationale related to the notion of humans as spiritual beings and consequently the logic of utilizing spiritual resources to add to a person's range of possibilities for help and assistance.

One participant commented that it is often the case that spiritual issues accompany crises that may lead to a social worker's door, as the person questions the deeper meaning of life, a view supported by Canda and Furman in their work on "creating a spiritually sensitive context for practice" (Canda & Furman, 1999). Here was further thought that if the spiritual is not considered, the holistic concept of person in context is not truly being acknowledged. With numerous articles written on spiritual assessment, there is movement towards considering the significance of incorporating the spiritual dimensions into assessment. (Boyd, 1998; Hodge, 2005a, 2005b, 2006; Van Hook, 2005).

Surveys administered both in Britain and America revealed a lack amongst social workers for including spirituality as part of an overall assessment of a client's situation (Furman, et al., 2004; Gilligan & Furness, 2005). This could be related to insufficient training and preparation of social workers, and a climate which has tended to discourage discussion about personal spirituality (Gilligan, 2006).

The creation of a framework for spiritual assessment to a certain extent safeguards both the practitioner and the client. It facilitates ethical practice as it presents an objective tool that the social worker can administer rather than their reliance on the application of their own spiritual point of view. The development of such tools could be by means of collaborative effort seeking feedback from both clients and practitioners with spiritually diverse beliefs. In this way concerns around proselytization may be allayed as social workers have various templates from which to draw.

It is important not only to develop the means by which to capture relevant spiritual factors for the client, but also to develop the spiritual sensitivity of the social worker. These aspects will be addressed in the chapter on practical applications.

Evidence-Based Practice

Along with a mounting and continuing interest in the place of spirituality in social work (Eastham, 2002; P. Gilligan & Furness, 2005; Stewart, et al., 2006; Stirling, et al., 2009), there is growing literature related to the evidence-based practice model (Bilson, 2005; Gambrill, 1999; Otto, et al., 2009) Having borrowed its parameters from the medical scientific model, the current models have been inadequate to evaluate the spiritual dimension in practice (Zapf, 2005). The discussions in the literature speak of a debate that continues to evolve (Ainsworth & Hansen, 2005; Bilson, 2005; Howard, Allen-Meares, & Ruffolo, 2007; Otto, et al., 2009; Tierny, 2005).

Social work has sought to deepen its status as a credible and effective profession, drawing its measurement tools from scientific methods. However given the importance of the place of spirituality for a significant number of practitioners and clients (Stirling, et al., 2009), it follows that the social work profession needs to take issues of spirituality into account when considering what is effective practice. The evidence-based practice movement is currently in a state of flux having been unable as yet, to establish an agreement on what should be measured when evaluating effective practice (Smith, 2005). For some proponents of evidence-based evaluation, categorization of techniques and methods that seem to work well for clients is the main method of validation for successful helping interventions (Graybeal, 2007). While this satisfies a scientific approach to measuring outcomes, the unquantifiable nature of spirituality requires a different methodology.

In view of the evolutionary nature of the discussion around evidence-based practice other writers have contributed views that broaden the scope of evidence captured and encourage consideration of the “multiple, multi-layered, relational and complex” aspects of social work (Trinder as cited in Bilson, 2005, p.3).

For this project, by gathering the data using a qualitative methodology, room was made to reveal observations and insights that would be hidden in collecting data by quantitative means. The participants described situations that if they were to be evaluated by a quantitative method, would not necessarily reveal the depth of what was occurring, particularly from the social worker's point of view. Indeed it may appear that some interventions were not immediately successful, yet in discussion the social worker's perception of their effectiveness may be unrelated to the outcome at that time. Client goals may not have been achieved, and there may not be much sense of a successful outcome. Belle explains things in these words;

....that whole thing of things aren't going to go the way I want things to go...They might not even go the way the client wants them to go, but they will go the way God intended

Much of this rationale was related to the participants' belief in the 'bigger picture' where God's overall control of the situation, allowed for an appreciation that their intervention was only part of the story.

These kinds of observations represent the complexity of measuring outcomes and highlight the ongoing challenge of capturing what is working in social work.

Conclusion

The findings affirmation of the high value and impact that spirituality has on the participants' lives has led to the discussion around the possible implications for practitioners, clients and the profession. A logical progression from this summary is consideration for the way ahead and the link to be established for the ongoing development of knowledge gathering for evidence based practice. To this end the following chapter suggests a way forward, proffering practical applications that open up further possibilities for the inclusion of the spiritual dimension in social work practice.

CHAPTER 7

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The discussion chapter unfolded aspects of the research project that highlighted implications for the social work practitioner, client and the profession. In order to expand these observations further the following chapter seeks to propose practical applications for the development of spiritually sensitive practice for the social work student and practitioner. It includes a way in which a spiritually sensitive approach can be applied in the practice setting by the use of a spiritual assessment incorporated as part of a larger bio-psycho-social evaluation. A parallel spiritual development model is proposed for social work students, practitioners and clients, involving both sides of the therapeutic alliance in an exercise to heighten spiritual awareness.

The chapter concludes with final remarks that draw together some elemental issues the study has raised and recommendations for directions for further research.

A Possible Way Forward

The project was demonstrative of a way of data gathering that revealed the depth of meaning that faith had for the eight participants and the meaning of that faith for social work practice. The use of a semi-structured interview format delivered in a safe environment by a spiritually sensitive interviewer, revealed important implications for the ‘use of self’ in social work. The application of these same principles to the development of a spiritual assessment tool holds promise for a way ahead for working in a spiritually sensitive manner with clients.

Of initial importance is the development of self-awareness for the social worker, an aspect that is focussed on at length within social work programmes. In order to allay the fears of some within the profession that focus on spirituality and faith will lead to proselytization and unethical practice (Sherr, Singletary, & Rogers, 2009) there is a place within social work education programmes for the consideration of spiritual self awareness as part of the dialogue. The findings support the idea that where agencies saw spiritual concerns as a natural and vital part of practice, they were able to create

an environment where the client was less inhibited in terms of speaking of their spirituality. Fostering a safe atmosphere within an educational setting for discussions around spirituality (both from practitioner's and client's points of view) would seem to be an initial step towards the development of spiritually sensitive practice and ensuring that that practice is ethically sound.

Continuing and expanding the discussion of the place of spirituality, religion and faith in social work is an important foundation in considering what effective practice is. Social work educators and managers are faced with the challenge of embracing a time of change where there is a growing acknowledgement of the appropriateness of such discussions and the need to provide the space for them to occur. There is a need for the development of spiritual assessment models taught within social work education as an enhancement to anti-discriminatory practice. Training around raising awareness of diversity in spiritual belief will add to the work that is currently done in social work education around cultural sensitivity. By contributing to a social worker's knowledge and understanding of diverse spiritual and religious practices, the social worker will be better equipped as an advocate and facilitator of services that best suit the client's needs. An example of the usefulness of such knowledge can be seen clearly in the Hospice setting where client's spiritual beliefs can be especially important as they face the ultimate life challenge.

Creating firstly the environment to cultivate spiritually sensitive practitioners and secondly developing tools to best capture those matters of spiritual importance to the client, sets a baseline that can contribute to the story of what constitutes effective practice.

To follow is a proposed exercise for the development of spiritual sensitivity for the trainee practitioner and secondly a generic framework for spiritual assessment, able to be adapted to various contexts. The work draws from writings by Canda, Hodge, van Hook and Boyd (Boyd, 1998; Canda & Furman, 1999; Hodge, 2005; Van Hook, 2005). These models are complementary emphasising the significance of spirituality for both practitioner and client. Van Hook speaks to the need for the practitioner to examine their own religious system; the concept is broadened here to a spiritual self assessment (Van Hook, 2005).

Spiritual Self-Assessment Exercise

Stage 1:

Class based activities

Resources: Intrinsic values cards,² including Equality, power respect, honesty, independence, non-judgementalism, hope, spirituality, balance, belonging, influence, achievement, giving.

Individual activity:

1. Using the supplied set of intrinsic values cards rank in order of importance those values that are of significance in your life.
2. Note where the value of “spirituality” was positioned and comment on its place in your life. Record the reason for its position.
3. What does the term spirituality mean for you and how does it impact you in terms of its place in your personal and intended professional life?
4. How do you believe your beliefs apply in the practice setting?

Stage 2

In groups of three discuss the above questions taking into account your classmates points of view and using the material provided from Canda and Furman’s chapter on “Ethical Guidelines for Spiritually Sensitive and Culturally Appropriate Practice,” (Canda & Furman 2010) create as a group a model for ethical spiritually aware practice. (This exercise has a two-fold intention, firstly of encouraging the students to appreciate diversity in their classmates and secondly facilitating a cooperative approach to producing a spiritual model. This emulates the process they would face in the practice setting with a client).

Stage 3

Present your model to the class, incorporating all group members in the presentation and justifying your rationale for the framework you have designed.

Adapted from Career Action Center (1995). Values driven work. Facilitator’s Manual. Cupertino CA: Career Action Center.

A Proposed Spiritual Assessment Model for the Social Work Practice Setting.

Broaching the subject of spirituality in any setting is a matter of tact and diplomacy and the situation of client and practitioner present challenges relating particularly to the imbalance of power. For most people this topic is deeply personal and a first step towards creating a safe environment for discussion is to establish whether this topic is indeed of importance. A suggested technique paralleled in the exercise for students mentioned earlier is the use of intrinsic values cards which remove the focus to an inanimate object (the cards) and allows the client to rank the importance of the topic in a non-threatening way (Hodge, 2005; Stevens, 2002).

This phase could be seen as stage one. This exercise could be incorporated as part of a general bio-psycho-social assessment (Van Hook, 2005). The incorporation of the spiritual into current assessment models, rather than as a separate compartment of what is administered would seem to be more congruent with literature and the findings which affirm an holistic approach (Canda & Furman 2010; Huguen, 1998; Van Hook, 2005).

Stage two having established some rapport and trust could enlarge on the above, possibly happening within the same interview, although more likely to evolve over time. One of the tools suggested by Hodge (2005) involves the use of an ecogram, designed to present pictorially the client's spiritual worldview. The ecogram uses geometric symbols and some pictures to represent family members and significant spiritual strengths and events that have given and continue to give meaning to the client's life. The tool is described in depth in the literature chapter.

This diagrammatic representation can serve a number of purposes. In the positive, it can identify areas of hope and potential strengths that the client can draw on and implement. It allows the social worker an insight into aspects of the client's life that they deem supportive and opens the door towards the facilitation of an effective intervention.

In terms of identifying blocks to progress, confining a discussion to a diagrammatic representation can prompt the client to see areas that may be hindering their

movement forward in a non-judgemental, non-threatening way. While other authors have presented written frameworks with guided questioning, (Boyd, 1998; Van Hook, 2005) the idea of an ecogram summarising spirituality and faith patterns as part of a wider assessment can have the powerful advantage of presenting a visual and comprehensive statement in one picture affirming the old adage “ a picture is worth a thousand words”. The use of ecograms and genograms are well known in work with individuals and families.

Stage three can then assist the social work practitioner in moving forward with the client to construct an agreed plan, fortified with the knowledge of spiritual strengths that the client believes are significant for their progress.

The table below summarises the proposed parallel process of equipping both aspiring practitioner and client to make best use of spiritual aspects. While this model is proposed as an educative tool for aspiring social workers, the principles are easily adaptable for the experienced practitioner.

Table 1: Parallel Spiritual Development Model

Stage one	
Student social worker	Client
Development of spiritual self assessment using reflective exercise.	Development of spiritual self awareness using the values cards as part of the initial bio-psycho-social assessment
Stage two	
Widening of awareness through small group exercises with peers.	Ongoing development of spiritual assessment on subsequent visits if the client has identified this area as important. Widening of assessment to include understanding of spiritual and/or religious influences both positive and negative. Administering of appropriate spiritual assessment tool.
Stage three	
Group development of a ethical spiritually-sensitive model for practice	Inclusion of spiritual and/or religious strengths that enhance client’s goals.

For Practice Settings

The proposed model catering in the first instance to the student social worker could be modified for the practice setting allowing for the both the context of the work and the experience of the practitioner. A similar exercise to the one suggested above for students could be administered as part of staff training. The depth of experience in the practice setting is likely to produce some interesting discussions in stage two of the exercise as indicated by the findings. Spiritual strengths the participants identified are points for discussion that could lead to rich ingredients in the formation of ethical spiritually sensitive models for practice.

Examples from the findings indicate that spiritually motivated practitioners did have aspects of their faith that had impact and relevance for the workplace. Managing stress by means of handing concerns to a higher authority was a phenomenon shared by several participants. This is a valuable insight given the stressors of the social work profession and encourages discussion about the way in which practitioners could best utilize these spiritual attributes to strengthen their professional practice. One suggestion could be the allocation of a brief period of time for workers to quietly centre themselves before starting work in the morning.

One participant spoke of the importance of having a Christian supervisor and while such considerations are not always practical the benefits may be considerable. Sherwood speaks of matching clients to workers as there is clear evidence for clients preferring to work with someone that shares their worldview (Sherwood, 2005), leading to the natural conclusion that social workers would view things in the same way.

The participants interviewed represented a small but significant group committed primarily to their faith and secondly to its integration into their social work practice. Their response regarding their faith's importance was uniform as an intrinsic part of who they were and consequently a large part of their sense of effectiveness. This thinking relates firmly back to the literature on the integral place of spirituality and faith in a person's life (Fowler, 1995; Hugen, 1998; Robbins, et al., 2006). The participant's ability to operationalise what they believed as important in terms of

spiritual sensitivity to clients, emerged from an individual experiential base rather than the use of any formal spiritual assessment tools.

The spiritual assessment tools suggested above present a beginning in the development of spiritual sensitivity for the social work student, and practitioner.

Equipping student social workers and practitioners in this manner would contribute to social workers gaining confidence in approaching clients in areas related to spirituality and increase an appreciation of the spiritual links with cultural sensitivity and competence (S Furness, 2003).

While there is indication for this development in overseas literature (Hodge, 2005, 2006; Hodge & Williams, 2002), based on comments from one of the participants, a recent graduate, there is limited anecdotal evidence that the local scene has yet to embark on this journey.

The development of both social workers and clients in the area of spiritual awareness and use of associated strengths is a valid means of beginning to establish data on what can contribute to effective social work practice. How best to utilize this knowledge and so add to a wider appreciation of what is working in social work, leads to a number of recommendations expanded on below.

Final Remarks

In this research my intention was to study how a Christian perspective contributed to a sense of effectiveness in social work practice. The openness and honesty of the participants led to a gathering of meaningful data that while limited in its generalisability none-the-less was of a depth that confirmed the importance of the place of their faith and spirituality in their lives and practice.

The discovery of two dominant themes of “the bigger picture” and the belief that people were made in the image of God generated four sub themes (non-judgementalism, empathy, hope, and compassion) that encapsulated the participants’ value base. Empowered by an ongoing personal relationship with God these strong shared ideals were outworked in the therapeutic alliance with client and contributed

to a sense of effectiveness in practice that was sometimes independent of circumstances.

The evidence-based practice movement is committed to a course of action that produces evidence of effective practice so that practitioners will be as well equipped as they can be to able to deal with the complexities of client issues (Gambrill, 2003) .At the same time the aim amongst proponents of evidence based practice is to give the client more choices of what may be effective in terms of proven resolution in their situation.

Into the mix this current research posits the importance of finding a way to include the spiritual, not merely as a supplementary addition, but considered as part of the whole in terms of social service delivery.

In order to create movement forward in this area, place for discussion both in the social work education and practice settings needs to be instigated. A parallel process model has been presented to begin the journey of providing both practitioner and client with some basic tools. Reason would have it, that having formed a process by which data is recorded, (through spiritual awareness exercises and spiritual assessment), a basis is established for being able to include spirituality as part of effective practice evaluation.

Recommendations

Limitations of the study and directions for further research

The narrow focus of this study concentrating on a Christian perspective with a relatively homogeneous group, limits its ability to generalize the findings, but opens the way for a wider approach in considering other spiritual viewpoints. How a Buddhist, Hindu, or Maori spiritual perspective contribute to a sense of effectiveness for a social worker, are valid areas of research that could enhance current findings. Selecting participants randomly from an ANZASW list would have the affect of reducing bias in terms of sampling procedures.

While this study has sought to gain a perception of the social worker's sense of effectiveness related to their spirituality, there is also the perspective of the client. Beyond the client is the involvement of significant people in their lives that may well be employing spiritual beliefs and practices in their desire to help the client. How they view the impact of their spirituality as a part of an effective intervention for the client could be particularly significant in terms of mobilizing support for the client. This approach could contribute a more wide-ranging view that adds depth to an analysis.

In terms of contributing breadth as opposed to depth, in chapter two the notion of keeping the spiritually motivated practitioner as the central focus and gaining input from clients and supervisors was suggested. This could add a three hundred and sixty degree view of the contribution of spirituality to effective practice. The point was made that participants would need to have a clear idea of what they were responding to (spirituality as related to effective social work practice) as the topic of spirituality and religion can engender some biases.

Another area for exploration could include a study of spiritually motivated supervisors and the impact of their faith and beliefs on their work, adding to literature on both effectiveness and supervisory practices.

Conclusion

General literature on spirituality, religion and social work, confirm that spirituality is a fundamental part of being human(Canda & Furman 2010; Furman, et al., 2004).

The study findings have illuminated a representation of the Christian social worker's world as an example of spirituality at work. While other studies have explored the social worker's perceptions related to the use of spirituality and religion within social work settings, the findings from this study have revealed a more private world of meaning making in regard to their sense of effectiveness.

The depth of importance the participants attached to their faith and the outworking of those beliefs and values, constitute a significant reason for the social work profession

to consider these aspects as a vital part of evaluating practice effectiveness. The high degree of insight and self-awareness the participants shared also highlight the need to include a social workers spiritual perspective in considering use of self.

If, as the findings demonstrate, a Christian perspective motivates, inspires, uplifts and sustains a person in the social work profession and underpins their sense of effectiveness, then it becomes of importance to link that learning with developments in considering “use of self” and what constitutes effective practice. Capturing both the social worker’s and the client’s perception on effective practice requires a wider view and a necessary broadening of methodology to gain a more accurate picture that includes spirituality as an expected and valuable contributor. A way forward is suggested in the form of spiritual assessment tools that work towards the parallel heightening and acceptance of spiritual awareness in both the social worker and the client.

APPENDIX A



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
TE KURA PŪKENGĀ TANGATA

Jenny Hare
24th May 2010
Whangaparaoa

Dear

Thank you for agreeing to be involved with this research project. My name is Jenny Hare and I am a post-graduate student in the School of Health and Social Services. My research topic is "How does a Christian perspective contribute to a sense of effectiveness in Social Work practice?"

I will be interviewing eight to ten participants, who have been chosen through my professional contact or recommended by other colleagues. The supervision will be carried out under the supervision of Associate Professor Mike O'Brien and Mr Moses Faleolo. My contact for any queries you may have is 094244980 and my e-mail is hare.family@xtra.co.nz.

The research will involve the use of taped interviews. Prior to participating I will invite you to sign a consent form which will be kept in a filing cabinet at my address. The only other people to see it will be my supervisors. The interview will ask questions based on your own spirituality or religious beliefs and address areas related to your sense of effectiveness in the work setting. It will take a maximum of an hour and a half.

Your anonymity will be preserved with a pseudonym on the tapes. I will transcribe the tapes, and you are welcome to view a draft copy and withdraw anything you feel uncomfortable about. Written transcripts are held by the university for five years and then destroyed and a summary of findings will be sent to you on completion of the project. I would like to take this opportunity of expressing my sincere thanks for your participation.

I will contact you within the next two weeks to arrange an interview time.

Yours sincerely,

Jenny Hare

The project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Professor John O'Neill, Director (Research Ethics), telephone 063505249, e-mail humanethics@massey.ac.nz

Te Kūmenga
ki Pūrehuroa

School of Health and Social Services
Private Bag 102904, North Shore City 0745, Auckland, New Zealand
Health Enquiries +64 9 441 8166 Social Work/Policy Enquiries +64 9 441 8164 Fax +64 9 441 8165 www.massey.ac.nz

APPENDIX B



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
TE KURA PŪKENGĀ TANGATA

Consent Form

I have read the information letter and had the details of the research project explained to me.

I understand I can refuse to answer any of the questions posed, and if after viewing the draft transcript I am uncomfortable with any aspects of the content I can request those parts be withdrawn.

I understand my name will not be used without permission, and the information will be used solely for this research and publications that may arise from it.

I agree/do not agree to be audio taped.

I understand that two supervisors will have access to the material and authorize the release of the tape transcripts.

I agree to participate in this study under the terms described in the information sheet.

Signed

Name

Date

Researcher: Jenny Hare

The project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Professor John O'Neill, Director (Research Ethics), telephone 063505249, email humanethics@massey.ac.nz

Te Kūnenga
ki Pūrehuroa

School of Health and Social Services

Private Bag 102904, North Shore City 0745, Auckland, New Zealand

Health Enquiries +64 9 441 8166 Social Work/Policy Enquiries +64 9 441 8164 Fax +64 9 441 8165 www.massey.ac.nz

APPENDIX C



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
TE KURA PŪKENGANGATA

Interview Questions:

1. Can you describe your work setting and your client population?
2. Could you describe your Christian faith and what it means to you within the context of your work?
3. What aspects of your Christian values and beliefs contribute positively to your sense of effectiveness in your work? Can you please give examples of this?
4. What aspects of your Christian values and beliefs contribute towards forming a therapeutic alliance with your client(s)?
5. How do your Christian values and beliefs assist a client coming from a secular background or different faith tradition?
6. Are there any characteristics of Christian values and beliefs that are important for the social work profession to adopt or retain? For what reason?

Te Kūnenga
ki Pārehuroa

School of Health and Social Services
Private Bag 102904, North Shore City 0745, Auckland, New Zealand
Health Enquiries +64 9 441 8166 Social Work/Policy Enquiries +64 9 441 8164 Fax +64 9 441 8165 www.massey.ac.nz

APPENDIX D



MASSEY UNIVERSITY

24 February 2010

Jennifer Hare
4 Grandview Road
Stanmore Bay
WHANGAPARAOA

Dear Jennifer

Re: How Does a Christian Perspective Contribute to Self-Efficacy in Social Work Practice?

Thank you for your Low Risk Notification which was received on 22 February 2010.

Your project has been recorded on the Low Risk Database which is reported in the Annual Report of the Massey University Human Ethics Committees.

The low risk notification for this project is valid for a maximum of three years.

Please notify me if situations subsequently occur which cause you to reconsider your initial ethical analysis that it is safe to proceed without approval by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees.

Please note that travel undertaken by students must be approved by the supervisor and the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor and be in accordance with the Policy and Procedures for Course-Related Student Travel Overseas. In addition, the supervisor must advise the University's Insurance Officer.

A reminder to include the following statement on all public documents:

"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Professor John O'Neill, Director (Research Ethics), telephone 06 350 5249, e-mail humanethics@massey.ac.nz".

Please note that if a sponsoring organisation, funding authority or a journal in which you wish to publish requires evidence of committee approval (with an approval number), you will have to provide a full application to one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. You should also note that such an approval can only be provided prior to the commencement of the research.

Yours sincerely

John G O'Neill (Professor)
**Chair, Human Ethics Chairs' Committee and
Director (Research Ethics)**

cc Assoc Prof Mike O'Brien
School of Health and Social Services
Albany

Prof Steve LaGrow, HoS
School of Health and Social Services
PN371

Massey University Human Ethics Committee
Accredited by the Health Research Council

Te Kunenga
ki Pūrehuroa

Research Ethics Office, Massey University, Private Bag 11222, Palmerston North 4442, New Zealand
T +64 6 350 5573 +64 6 350 5575 F +64 6 350 5622
E humanethics@massey.ac.nz animaethics@massey.ac.nz gtc@massey.ac.nz
www.massey.ac.nz

REFERENCES

- Ainsworth, F., & Hansen, P. (2005). Evidence Based Social Work Practice: A Reachable Goal? In A. Bilson (Ed.), *Evidence-based practice in social work* (pp. 51-68). London: Whiting & Birch
- Alaggia, R., & Millington, G. (2008). Male Child Sexual Abuse: A Phenomenology of Betrayal. *Clinical Social Work, 36*, 265-275.
- Aponte, H. (1998). Love, the wellspring of forgiveness: an example of spirituality in therapy. *Journal of family therapy, 20*, 37-58.
- Arnd-Caddigan, M. (2010). Evidence-Based Practice and the Purpose of Clinical Social Work. *Smith College Studies in Social Work, 80*(1), 35-52.
- Arnd-Caddigan, M., & Pozzuto, R. (2008). Use of Self in Relational Clinical Social Work. *Clinical Social Work, 36*, 235-243.
- Belcher, J., & Cascio, T. (2001). Social Work and Deliverance Practice: The Pentecostal Experience. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services, 82*(1), 61-68.
- Bilson, A. (Ed.). (2005). *Evidence-based practice in social work*. London: Whiting & Birch.
- Bowpitt, G. (2000). Working with creative creatures. Towards a Christian paradigm for social work theory with some practical applications. *British Journal of Social Work, 30*, 349-364.
- Boyd, T. (1998). Spiritually Sensitive Assessment Tools for Social Work Practice. In B. Hugen (Ed.), *Christianity and social work*. Botsford: North American Association of Christians in Social Work.
- Canda, E., & Furman, L. (1999). *Spiritual Diversity in Social Work Practice* (1 ed.). New York.
- Canda, E., & Furman, L. (2010). *Spiritual Diversity in Social Work Practice* (2 ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Canda, E. F., L. (1999). *Spiritual Diversity in Social Work Practice* (1 ed.). New York.
- Chambre, S. (2001). The Changing Nature of "Faith" in Faith-Based Organizations: Secularization and Ecumenicism in Four AIDS Organizations in New York City. *Social Service Review, September*.
- Cornett, C. (1992). Toward a more comprehensive personology: Integrating a spiritual perspective into social work practice. *Social work, 37*(2), 101-102.

- Davidson, C., & Tolich, M. (Eds.). (2007). *Social Science Research in New Zealand* (Second ed.). New Zealand: Pearson Education.
- Denscombe, M. (2007). *The Good Research Guide* (third ed.).
- Dewane, C. (2006). Use of Self: A Primer Revisited. *Clinical Social Work, 34*(4), 543-557.
- Eastham, M. (2002). Vocation and Social Care. In M. Nash & B. Stewart (Eds.), *Spirituality and Social Care*. London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Fook, J., Ryan, M., & Hawkins, L. (1997). Towards a Theory of Social Work Expertise. *British Social Work, 27*, 399-417.
- Fowler, J. (1995). *Stages of Faith*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Furman, L., Benson, P., Grimwood, C., & Canda, E. (2004). Religion and Spirituality in Social Work Education and Direct Practice at the Millenium: A Survey of UK Social Workers. *British Journal of Social Work, 34*, 767-792. doi: 10.1093/bjsw/bch 101
- Furman, R. (2009). Ethical Considerations of Evidence-Based Practice. *Social Work, 54*(1), 82-84.
- Furnam, L., Benson, P., Grimwood, C., & Canda, E. (2002). Religion and Spirituality in Social Work Education and Direct Practice at the Millenium: A Survey of UK Social Workers. *British Journal of Social Work, 34*, 767-792. doi: 10;1093/bjsw/bch101
- Furness, S. (2003). Religion, beliefs & culturally competent social work practice. *Journal of practice teaching, 5*(1), 61-74.
- Furness, S., & Gilligan, P. (2010). Social Work religion and belief: Developing a framework for practice. *British Journal of Social Work, 1*-18.
- Gambrill, E. (1999). Evidence-based practice: an alternative to authority-based practice. *Families in Society- The Journal of Contemporary Human Services, 80*(4), 341-349.
- Gambrill, E. (2003). Evidence-Based Practice: Sea Change or the Emperor's New Clothes. *Journal of Social Work Education, 39*(1), 3-23.
- Ganzer, C. (2007). The Use of Self from a Relational Perspective. *Clinical Social Work*(35), 117-123. doi: 10.1007/s10615-007-0078-4
- Gilligan. (2006). The Role of Religion and Spirituality in Social Work Practice: Views and Experiences of Social Workers and Students. *British Journal of Social Work, 36*(4), 617-637. doi: 10.1093/bjsw/bch252

- Gilligan, P., & Furness, S. (2005). The role of religion and spirituality in social work practice: views and experiences of social workers and students. *British Journal of Social Work*, 36(4), 617-637. doi: 10.1093/bjsw/bch252
- Glicken, M. D. (2005). *Improving the Effectiveness of the Helping Professions*: Sage publications.
- Gray, M. (2008). Viewing Spirituality in Social Work Through the Lense of Contemporary Social Work Theory. *British Journal of Social Work*, 38(1), 175-196. doi: 10.1093/bjsw/bc1078
- Graybeal, C. (2007). Evidence for the art of social work. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*, 1-11. doi: DOI: 10.1606/1044-3894.XXXX
- Harris, A., & Thorensen, C. (1999). Spiritually and religiously oriented health interventions. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 4, 413-433.
- Hodge, D. (2005a). Developing a spiritual assessment toolbox. *Health & social work*, 30(4), 314-323.
- Hodge, D. (2005b). Spiritual Ecograms: A New Assessment Instrument for Identifying Client's Strengths in Space and Across Time. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services*, 86(2), 287-295.
- Hodge, D. (2006). A Template For Spiritual Assessment: a Review Of The JCAHO Requirements and Guidelines for Implementation. *Social Work*, 51(4), 317-326.
- Hodge, D. (2007a). Progressing towards inclusion? Exploring the state of religious diversity. *Social Work Research*, 31(1), 55-63.
- Hodge, D. (2007). The spiritual competence scale:A new instrument for assessing spiritual competence at the programmatic level. *Research in Social Work Practice*, 17(2).
- Hodge, D. (2007b). A systematic review of the empirical literature on intercessory prayer. *Research on social work practice*, 17(2), 174-187.
- Hodge, D., & Williams, T. (2002). Assessing African American Spirituality with Spiritual Ecomaps. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services*, 83(5/6).
- Hodge, D., & Wolfer, T. (2008). Promoting Tolerance: The Imago Dei as an Imperative for Christian Social Workers. *Journal of Religion and Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought*, 27(3), 297-313. doi: 10.1080/15426430802202203
- Howard, M., Allen-Meares, P., & Ruffolo, M. (2007). Teaching Evidence-Based Practice: Strategic and Pedagogical Recommendations for Schools of Social Work. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 17, 561-567.

- Hugen, B. (1998). Calling: A spirituality model for social work practice. In B. Hugen (Ed.), *Christianity and social work: Readings on the integration of Christian faith and social work in practice*. Botsford: North American association of Christians in social work.
- Lindsay, R. (2002). Recognising spirituality. The interface between faith and social Work.
- Mark, R. (1996). *Research Made Simple: A Handbook for Social Workers*. California: Sage.
- Munday, B. (1986). Roots: Historical perspective. In T. Philpot (Ed.), *Social Work : A Christian perspective*. Herts: Lion.
- Nathanson, I. (2003). Spirituality and the life cycle. In T. Tirrito & T. Cascio (Eds.), *Religious organizations in community services*. New York: Springer.
- Neumann, W., & Kreugar, L. (2003). *Social Work Research Methods. Qualitative and Quantitative Applications*. Boston: Pearson Education.
- O'Brien, M. (2008). *A Sacred Covenant. The Spiritual Ministry of Nursing*. Massachusetts: Jones and Bartlett.
- Otto, H., Polutta, A., & Ziegler, H. (2009). Reflexive Professionalism as a Second Generation of Evidence-Based Practice. *Research in Social Work Practice, 19*(4), 472-478. doi: DOI: 10.1177/1049731509333200
- Patton, M. (1990). *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*. London: Sage
- Ressler, L. (1998). When Social Work and Christianity Conflict. In B. Hugen (Ed.), *Christianity and Social Work*. Botsford: North American Association of Christians in Social Work.
- Reupert, A. (2007). Social Worker's Use of Self. *Clinical Social Work, 35*, 107-116. doi: 10.1007/s10615-006-0062-4
- Robbins, S., Chatterie, P., & Canda, E. (Eds.). (2006). *Contemporary Human Behavior Theory. A Critical Perspective for Social Work* (2 ed.). Boston: Pearson Education.
- Sheridan, M. (2010). Ethical Issues in the Use of Prayer and Social Work. *Spirituality and Social Work, 91*(2), 112-120. doi: 10.1601/1044-3894.3980
- Sheridan, M., Bullis, R., Adcock, C., Berlin, S., & Miller, P. (1992). Practitioner's Personal and Professional Attitudes and Behaviours Towards Religion and Spirituality: Issues for Education and Practice. *Journal of Social Work Education, 28*(2), 190-204.

- Sherr, M., Singletary, J., & Rogers, R. (2009). Innovative Service or Proselytizing: Exploring When Services Delivery Becomes a Platform for Unwanted Religious Persuasion. *Social Work, 54*(2).
- Sherwood, D. (2005). Spiritually Sensitive Assessment Tools for Social Work Practice. In B. Hugen (Ed.), *Christianity and Social Work* (pp. 288). Botsford: North American Association of Christians in Social Work.
- Smith, D. (2005). The limits of positivism revisited. In A. Bilson (Ed.), *Evidence-based practice in social work* (pp. 111-123). London: Whiting & Birch.
- Stevens, P. (2002). Career planning values card sort Administrator's Manual. Sydney.
- Stewart, C., Koeske, G., & Koeske, R. (2006). Personal religiosity and spirituality associated with social work practitioners' use of religious-based intervention practices. *Journal of Religion and Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought, 25*(1), 69-85.
- Stirling, B., Furman, L., Benson, P., Canda, E., & Grimwood, C. (2009). A comparative survey of Aotearoa New Zealand and UK Social Workers on the role of religion and spirituality in practice. *British Journal of Social Work, 1-20*. doi: 10.1093/bjsw/bcp008
- Taylor, C., & White, S. (2005). What works about what works? In A. Bilson (Ed.), *Evidence-based practice in social work* (pp. 87-111). London: Whiting & Birch.
- Tennant, M. (2007). *The Fabric of Welfare*. Wellington: Bridget Williams Books Limited.
- Thayne, T. (1998). Soul healing and the family. In D. Becvar (Ed.), *The family, spirituality and social work*. New York: Haworth.
- Tierny, S. (2005). Reframing an evidence-based approach to practice. In A. Bilson (Ed.), *Evidence-based practice in social work* (pp. 68-87). London: Whiting & Birch.
- Tirrito, T., & Cascio, T. (Eds.). (2003). *Religious Organisations in Community Services*. New York: Springer Publishing Company.
- Van Hook, M. (2005). Incorporating Religious Issues in the Assessment Process with Individuals and Families. In B. Hugen (Ed.), *Christianity and Social Work* (pp. 289). Botsford: North American Association of Christians in Social Work.
- Wachholtz, A., Pearce, M., & Koenig, H. (2007). Exploring the relationship between spirituality, coping and pain *Journal of behavioural medicine, 1-14*. doi: 10.1007/s10865-007-9114-7
- Yegidis, B., & Weinbach, B. (2009). *Research Methods for Social Workers* Boston: Pearson Education Inc.

Zapf, M. (2005). The spiritual dimension of person and environment. *International social work*, 48(5), 633-642.