

CONNECTING 35

Healthy Information from the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center  January/February 2007

Pastoral Counseling: An Invitation to Living More Abundantly

Pastoral counseling is a form of psychotherapy that uses spiritual resources along with psychological understanding to facilitate the client's healing and growth. This partnering of spirituality and psychotherapy is rooted in a holistic approach that affirms the integration of mind, body, and spirit. This approach is made manifest, both theologically and clinically, through relationship – one person **journeying** with another; one person representing a **healing presence** for another; one person **believing** in another; one person **affirming** the goodness of another; one person expressing a **loving acceptance** of another.

Where psychotherapy may focus on problem solving in the context of persons with emotional issues, relationship concerns, and painful life experiences, pastoral counseling bolsters psychotherapy with compassion, acceptance, and intentional respect for the spiritual values of the client.

According to Clebsch and Jaekle in their excellent text, *Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective*,¹ pastoral care is expressed through four major functions: *healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling*. **Healing and sustaining** involve using the painful symptoms that get our attention as signals to look beneath the symptoms and address the wounds or issues that may be manifest in the symptoms, and then searching for the meaning and values that lead to a more fulfilling life. **Guiding and reconciling** involve listening and clarifying so that the client can find voice for all her or his concerns. On the journey toward healing of the inner self, addressing questions involving guilt, resentment, protection of the self, and forgiveness become stepping stones toward the capacity to connect with others. All four functions emphasize the importance of the therapeutic relationship for healing.

In a national survey conducted in 2000 that explored attitudes toward the role of spiritual values and beliefs in the treatment of mental and emotional problems, nearly 70% of respondents indicated that they “recognize the close link between spiritual faith, religious values, and mental health, and would prefer to seek assistance from a mental health professional who recognizes and can integrate spiritual values into the course of treatment.”² Today, pastoral counseling accounts for three million hours of treatment annually.³ The Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center provides more than 15,000 hours of counseling each year in central Iowa.

The history

Traditionally, religious communities have sought to provide spiritually-based support for those encountering difficulties in their lives. For centuries, pastors, ministers, rabbis, and other religious professionals have listened to and counseled their congregants. Until the mid-twentieth century, persons suffering from personal or relationship pain sought relief almost exclusively through talking with their religious leader or their physician. However, most religious leaders recognized that they had neither the time nor the training to provide extensive, in-depth work. So, in a desire to better respond

to the increasingly complex and intense needs of parishioners, some religious leaders sought professional training in psychology programs and other graduate academic settings.

In the modern era, these pastoral functions have been combined with the sciences of psychiatry and psychology in the profession of pastoral counseling. In 1963, the American Association of Pastoral Counselors was formed as a credentialing body to establish standards for these healing professionals who were trained in both the art of theology and the science of psychology. Today, membership in the AAPC numbers 3,000 and represents a full range of faith groups as well as mental health disciplines.

The Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center (DMPCC) was organized as a mission project of Des Moines' First United Methodist Church in 1972. It was soon incorporated as an independent, non-denominational, not-for-profit organization. In 1981, the Center was accredited by the American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC) and in 1985, the Center's professional education program was also accredited for the purpose of training clergy and mental health professionals in understanding the whole person. Today, the Center has grown to include a clinical staff of 24, representing the disciplines of pastoral counseling, clinical psychology, clinical social work, mental health counseling, child psychology, holistic nursing, career counseling, human sexuality therapy, and spiritual direction. The Center is the only accredited pastoral counseling center in Iowa and one of only four in the surrounding Midwestern states. In 2006, the Center received the AAPC's Distinguished Program Leadership Award for our significant contribution to professionally integrating psychotherapy and spirituality.

Our tenets

The Center is both a beacon of hope and a sanctuary for safety and healing within a society that is increasingly characterized by isolation and alienation. Robert Bellah et.al., in *Habits of the Heart*, and Robert Putnam in *Bowling Alone*, describe how our society's valuing of independence and self-sufficiency contribute to a lack of relationship connection. Countering the predominant culture of self help and quick fixes, Center staff believe that a relationship – built on trust and offering hope – is key to life and to healing. Among the many life lessons clients have taught us over these 35 years, three tenets basic to our practice of pastoral counseling at the Center stand out:

1) We know that much of the pain and difficulty in living satisfactorily as well as effectively results from the acts of another, usually within the context of a relationship.

2) Just as surely as relationships can be a source of damage, we know that persons who experience harm can find hope and healing through relationships. Even on a physiological level, the parts of the brain that have been sensitized to experience fear and depression through damaging words and actions can be calmed and brought toward a less sensitized state through a caring, loving relationship.⁴

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Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center Presents

The POWER of CONNECTION: An INTERDISCIPLINARY CONVERSATION on HEALTH and WHOLENESS

Friday, February 23, 2007, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Plymouth Congregational Church, 42nd and Ingersoll, Des Moines, IA

Fee: \$35 (includes lunch)

Register by calling the Center (515) 274-4006

Plenary Session: Doug Ronsheim, D.Min.

Executive Director, American Association of Pastoral Counselors

"Getting Connected: Collaborating Across Disciplines for Individual, Family, and Community Well Being"

Panel 1: "A Conversation Connecting Children with Health and Wholeness"

Panel 2: "A Conversation Connecting Body, Healing, and Spirituality"

Panel 3: "A Conversation Connecting the Ways People Express Their Needs"

This seminar is intended for professionals in the mental health, ministry, medical, and educational fields. In a time of increased "connectivity," we are also able to identify increased aspects of stress, isolation, and alienation. What are the qualitative aspects of connections and relationships that enhance health and well being? In turn, what are the various collaborative roles that health care providers, mental health counselors, and faith community leaders can play to facilitate health, well being, and wholeness? Participants will be encouraged to join in the conversation.

The seminar facilitator and plenary speaker is Rev. Douglas Ronsheim, the Executive Director of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC), Fairfax, VA. AAPC, founded in 1964, is a national certification and membership organization whose mission is to provide training, education and pastoral psychotherapy. Prior to 2003, Dr. Ronsheim served for 17 years as the Executive Director of the Pittsburgh Pastoral Institute. He is a Presbyterian minister, licensed as a Marriage and Family Therapist (PA), a Fellow in the American Association of Pastoral Counselors, and a Clinical Member and Approved Supervisor, American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy.

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3) We also know that certain emotional needs are present throughout our lives. These include: the need to be affirmed and valued, the need to feel safe and protected, the need to be like others, the need to join with that which we admire, the need to have our autonomy affirmed by those who support us, and the need to feel effective in having our needs met.⁵

Healing

At DMPCC, we extend an invitation to live more abundantly through the therapeutic interaction between two persons journeying together, committed to understanding the life story of one while making use of the life experience, humanness, and training of another. The pastoral therapist is not so much one who has answers or who can tell another how to run his or her life; rather, the pastoral therapist is one who intentionally and compassionately attends to the one who comes seeking a more fulfilling life. While making use of their clinical expertise and training from the fields of psychology, medicine, energetic understanding, and holistic care, the counselors at the Center also bring a pastoral attitude of compassion, intense attention, self-understanding, and a willingness to be present with another. The healing emerges within the relationship between the client and the counselor on the journey to wholeness.

Hope

The Center offers a professional setting and opportunity for therapeutic relationship where persons of all ages can find healing and pursue their potential, growing in becoming fully human. It is a place where couples and families can discover how to enable each

other's growth. This kind of interpersonal healing usually takes time. Although modern science offers important means of relieving symptoms that literally save many lives, the healing that allows persons to grow emotionally is usually a slow process. Trust in a therapeutic relationship must be built and the intentional therapeutic work to do that is not easy. Center counselors offer hope that healing is available within the pastoral relationship and living more abundantly is possible.

Ellery H. Duke, Ph.D.

Ellery Duke, Executive Director of the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center, is a licensed clinical psychologist. Ellery holds a master of divinity degree from Garrett Theological Seminary and a doctoral degree in pastoral counseling and psychotherapy from Northwestern University. He is an ordained Elder in the United Methodist Church, a Fellow in the American Association of Pastoral Counselors, and a Clinical Member of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. He provides counseling and psychotherapy to individuals, as well as couples and families. Ellery has special interests in grief therapy, relationships, and men's issues. He also consults with congregations and coaches clergy.

References

¹ Clebsch, William A. and Jaekle, Charles R. (1994). *Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective*. Lanham, MD: Jason Aronson, new edition.

² <http://www.aapc.org/about.cfm>

³ <http://www.aapc.org/history.cfm>

⁴ Siegel, Daniel J. (2003). "An Interpersonal Neurobiology of Psychotherapy." In Marion F. Solomon and Daniel J. Siegel (eds.), *Healing Trauma: Attachment, Mind, Body, and Brain*. NY: W.W. Norton & Co.

⁵ Wolf, Ernest S. (2002). *Treating the Self: Elements of Clinical Self Psychology*. NY: The Guilford Press, new edition.

Recommended Reading

Bellah, Robert N., et.al. (1996) *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press, updated edition.

Putnam, Robert D. (2001) *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. NY: Simon & Schuster, new edition.

Women Helping Women Annual Luncheon Friday, March 9, 2007



- Speaker:** Rekha Basu, The Des Moines Register, editorial-page columnist.
In her 15 years, Rekha has focused on human rights, racial justice, gender equality and immigration. Following the death of her husband, columnist Rob Borsellino, from Lou Gehrig's disease, Rekha launched an acclaimed series called "Surviving," on how people cope with tragedy.
- Topic:** "Carrying On"
Rekha Basu talks about her own journey, and other people's journeys, through love and loss.
- Date:** Friday, March 9, 2007
- Time:** 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
- Location:** Hotel Fort Des Moines, Grand Ballroom, 10th and Walnut, Des Moines
- Tickets:** \$30 (includes lunch)
Contact the Center, (515) 274-4006, to make your reservation.

Since 1999, the Center has sponsored an annual luncheon to raise awareness of our work with women struggling with the challenges of life on limited resources and to generate funds to help subsidize counseling for low-income women and girls. This year's featured speaker draws upon her own experience "Carrying On" with life. Please join us for this uplifting event in celebration of women.



MANifest: A Gathering of Men

MANifest is a program for men, facilitated by male counselors, built around weekend retreats and Saturday workshops.

MANifest is for men of all ages and from every walk of life.
Lowell Houts, D.Min., and Mike Sears, Ed.D., facilitate.

Men and Sex
Saturday, January 13, 2007
9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Facilitators: Lowell Houts, D.Min., and Mike Sears, Ed.D.
Fee: \$50, includes lunch
Location: Queen's Point, 2793 St. Charles Rd., St. Charles, IA
Registration: Please call the Center (515) 274-4006

The *Men and Sex* workshop will provide an opportunity for men to explore the sexual-emotional connection and enhance their understanding of themselves as sexual human beings.

Annual Meeting Announcement

The Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center's Annual Meeting will take place on Thursday, February 22, 2007. The event will be held at the Waveland Golf Course Club House, 6:30 p.m. reception, 7:00 p.m. dinner and meeting. The program will feature Doug Ronsheim, D.Min., as the guest speaker. Dr. Ronsheim is the executive director of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors. If you are interested in attending, please contact the Center, (515) 274-4006 or info@dmppcc.org.

Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center Foundation

Your legacy is your opportunity to perpetuate your values and commitments. If you or someone you know has benefited from or been comforted by the services of the Center, please consider a planned gift that will help ensure that same benefit and comfort to those who come after you.

Suggested bequest language: "I hereby give and bequeath to The Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center Foundation, West Des Moines, IA (Federal Tax I.D. #42-1449470) all (or ____%) of the rest, residue or remainder of my estate to be used for its general purposes."

Contact Kathleen Murrin at the Center for further information.

Growth through Connection: A Group Therapy Experience



Debbie Reed, Ed.D.



Peter Brantner, M.Div.

Thursdays, 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m., for 16 weeks beginning February 1, 2007

Facilitators: Debbie Reed, Ed.D., and Peter Brantner, M.Div.

Fee: \$40 per session (\$640 total)

Location: 2929 Westown Pkwy., Suite 110, West Des Moines

Registration: Please call the Center (515) 274-4006

Each prospective group member will be screened prior to acceptance into the group.

This is a group counseling experience for people who want to grow in their ability to openly and honestly communicate their feelings and enhance their connectedness with self and others.

Debbie Reed, Ed.D., earned her doctoral degree in counseling education from Drake University. She is a licensed mental health counselor and has extensive prior group counseling experience.

Peter Brantner, M.Div., is a pastoral counselor. He earned his M.Div. degree from St. Paul School of Theology in Kansas City, MO. He is currently enrolled in the Masters of Community Counseling Program at Drake University.

DMPCC Staff Recognition

J. Jeffrey Means, Ph.D., DMPCC Director of Professional Education, and Susan Pierce, LISW, a past DMPCC staff member, have been selected to present a pre-conference workshop at the annual meeting of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC), to be held in Portland, OR, in April 2007. The workshop is entitled "Attachment, Trauma and Evil: Understanding and Breaking Destructive Relational Cycles." The topic of evil and its relationship to the effects of severe trauma has been of interest to Dr. Means since the publication of his book, *Trauma & Evil: Healing the Wounded Soul*. Dr. Means will present an additional workshop at the meeting, "I'd Rather Learn from Books! Emotional Engagement in the Therapeutic Encounter."

Let Us Hear from You!

- ~ If you would like your name removed from our mailing list, please contact the Center.
- ~ If you would prefer to receive your newsletter by e-mail, please contact the Center.
- ~ If you have comments or suggestions about the newsletter, please direct these to Kathleen Murrin at the Center, (515) 274-4006, info@dmpcc.org, or 2929 Westown Pkwy., Ste. 110, West Des Moines, IA 50266.

CONNECTING

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