

Respectful Model of Counseling & Development Self-Assessment

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Learning about the RESPECTFUL Model in counseling opened my eyes to what we should look for when evaluating a client. This is a valuable tool for thoroughly getting to know a client. Understanding that we comprise the three components of spirit, soul, and body is crucial; therefore, we can recognize our patients much easier when we can see them from all angles. I will refer to this paper as my life in my home country, even though I have resided in the U.S. for almost eight years, because my prior experiences have impacted my life and character.

Religious and Spiritual Identity

I am not seen as religious since I believe the only true religion is a personal relationship with God. I believe in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In fact, I accepted Christ into my heart in a Vacation Bible School program at my local church when I was six. My father served as a senior pastor at the Christian and Missionary Alliance in Lima, Peru, for over forty years. As a matter of fact, he was one of the CMA's founders in Peru; hence, I have been attending the CMA church my entire life. I trust the Savior, Sanctifier, Healer, and Coming King of the Fourfold Gospel. The Alliance World Fellowship website states, "The Fourfold Gospel is the heart of what Alliance people believe about Jesus and forms the foundation of everything that defines the Alliance movement." (Alliance World Fellowship, 2023). My essential ideals are summarized in this Christological analysis. As a pastor's kid, I was raised with these fundamental beliefs in my home. However, during a youth retreat, I restored my faith. I realized I was not "special" because my father is a preacher. The central idea of Christianity is a personal relationship with God; therefore, the Lord does not have grandchildren.

Furthermore, I first began to serve God in the worship ministry. I sing lead or, occasionally, background vocals. In fact, I am blessed because I married a Christian man who

was brought up in a Christian home and had been worshipping God in his local church. He is the pianist in our church.

I've always been curious to learn more about biblical counseling. My therapy sessions are far more productive when I use the Bible as a guide. I merely desired to improve my bias or capacity to deal with various disorders, such as sexual or gender identity disorders. I ask God to grant me the ability to perceive my clients as people who require direction.

Economic Class Background

I was raised in a middle-class family. There are many different explanations regarding the economic class and how they perceive their motivation in life. Lynda Gratton made an analysis of Maslow's Need Hierarchy with Three Social Class Groups. According to Gratton (1980), "The majority of the middle class considered the needs for esteem and self-actualization as primarily important." (p. 473). In other words, all physiological, safety, and belonging needs are met. In addition, I can identify with this statement because my parents took care of those necessities so I could concentrate on esteem and self-actualization. Before transferring to a public university, I attended a private school, and we had a modest home. I grew up in a large metropolis called Lima, my nation's capital. La Perla, a middle-class neighborhood, was where I resided. It was close to Lima International Airport and the Pacific Ocean. I had the chance to make friends from all over the nation who moved to the nation's capital to pursue a career because I attended a public university. Despite meeting folks with less favorable economic circumstances, I considered myself on par with others.

My father served as the senior pastor of more than eight congregations; hence, I could also visit various Alliance churches in multiple counties or districts. I recalled that my family used to take a public bus for more than an hour to get to church. Actually, I did not regret

attending any of these churches since it allowed me to engage with people from other socioeconomic groups and learn about their way of life. Since I had friends from various economic classes, I could empathize with clients from all over the city and multiple districts. I recall that since they were humble, I loved being around those in need rather than those who were wealthy. Because I used to believe that rich people were proud, I might have prejudices against them. In conclusion, my interest in getting to know diverse people helps me recognize various economic classes and how to deal with them.

Sexual Identity

Regarding Sexual identity, I identified myself as a woman. In the Bible, we can find the roles of women. Birney (1971) provided two principles of women's roles, "The first principle is that women are equal to men in standing before God. 'There is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus' (Gal.3:28b). The second principle is that the man is to be the head of the woman. 'But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of the woman, and God is the head of Christ' (1Cor.11:3)" (p. 15). Woman is equal to man just as Christ is equal to God, and she is to be submissive to man as Christ submits to the Father. Learning how God created us, men and women, as compliments is fascinating.

In society, it is expected for a woman to stay home and do household chores. However, there have been changes in gender stereotypes. Eagly et al. (2020) remark, "Women's labor force participation rose from 32% in 1950 to 57% in 2018. Women also now earn more bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees than do men, unlike decades ago" (p. 1). Society has changed, and women have more opportunities than our ancestors. Knowing this, I can serve my clients without stereotypes and with a Biblical perspective about the man and woman roles.

Psychological Maturity

Regarding psychological maturity, I am a 37-year-old woman in a stage of life—middle age—where I have achieved some academic and professional goals, like working in the mental health sector and earning a master's in mental health counseling. On the other hand, I got married in April 2015. My husband and I have traveled an enjoyable path together. In fact, a few years ago, we were fortunate to purchase a home. If having children is part of God's plan, we patiently await his timing. It is vital to understand that age and psychological maturity are different and that people might have different maturity levels regardless of chronological age. As a critical component of diagnosis and treatment, I think assessing the clients' personalities and cognitive abilities is essential. Furthermore, working with people who have impairments would be challenging for me, but I am aware that this is a skill I would like to develop.

Ethnic and Racial Identity

I was pleasantly surprised to learn that I considered myself Latina, South American, and Peruvian when I first arrived in the United States. Even in my homeland, there are various races, such as "mestizo, amerindio, blanco, negro, and asiático" or "mixed race, American Indian, White, Black, and Asian." Most of the population is mixed-race due to earlier centuries of immigration from many nations. Without a doubt, racism is a complicated problem that affects numerous countries. People with mixed indigenous and European ancestry are frequently called "cholo" in Peru. Unfortunately, a lot of people in Peru have prejudices and misconceptions about individuals who are referred to as "cholo." Indeed, there are better job prospects in large cities, but most are in Lima, the country's capital. Consequently, there has been internal immigration from towns and villages to the capital. In my experiences as a woman who has lived in Lima, I

have witnessed intolerance toward those who are from "la sierra" or the "Mountains" and are afforded fewer possibilities because they speak their native tongues.

On the other hand, I've discovered in the US that ethnicity is a cultural and social classification, but race is biological or physical. Although I was disappointed that Hispanic/Latino was not a race, I recognized that all races might have Hispanic cultural roots.

I love my nation, its traditions, culture, food, and everything else, to put it briefly. Learning how much you adore your homeland as an immigrant is fascinating. As we say in Spanish, "nadie sabe lo que tiene hasta que lo pierde" or "You do not know what you have got until you lose it." My cultural identity has not been lost, but I still yearn for it.

Chronological and Developmental Challenges

As I indicated, I am a 37-year-old lady who has been married for eight years. As a young woman, I worked with the church's teen ministry. I was a member of the youth and adolescent ministry's leadership team. I enjoyed the opportunity to preach, play, and talk about the Bible with my disciples. On the other hand, I also worked with kids and teenagers as an educational psychologist. My interest in working with this community has always been strong. I encountered myself having the "it factor" while working with teenagers. I mainly focused on developing and implementing preventative programs for groups or individuals. I actually enjoyed doing this kind of job. However, I will have to educate myself on the late-adult population. Furthermore, I have never worked with people who have developmental disabilities, so this is a topic I would also like to explore. Working with disabled people will be difficult because I need to be innovative and employ various assessment techniques.

Moreover, I have had moments when I feel discouraged because sometimes I believe I am not qualified to counsel parents because I have no children. Nonetheless, I realized that my skills and experience could help clients.

Trauma and Threats to Personal Well-Being

By the grace of God, I grew up in a Christian family with respectable morals. My parents have three children and have been married for over 40 years. We did not often interact with our extended family since my parents wanted to preserve our morals. In fact, due to their pastoral counseling experiences, they tried to protect their children. As pastors, they thought it was extremely risky to interact with anyone, even family members, alone.

In addition, living through the COVID pandemic was undoubtedly highly difficult. It involved learning new greeting methods, following specific protocols, and using hand sanitizer and masks. Even though no one in my family passed away from COVID, seeing friends lose loved ones harmed me. Building strong ties with people is challenging because of the constant worry about spreading the virus. Indeed, society has evolved, and people have come to understand the importance of maintaining social distance from others. Panchal et al. (2023) highlight, “The pandemic has affected the public’s mental health and well-being in a variety of ways, including through isolation and loneliness, job loss and financial instability, and illness and grief.” (para. 1). Particularly, becoming accustomed to living alone resulted in a lack of communication and the growth of social skills. Approximately four out of ten adults reported symptoms typical of anxiety and depression throughout the pandemic by early 2021, then dwindled as the pandemic continued to three in ten adults. (Panchal et al., 2023). In this context, my desire to become a mental health counselor has been confirmed.

Definitely, I do not have to go through trials in order to help people. Counseling is about empathy; in other words, we can recognize others' emotions and understand and share another person's feelings. We can always provide guidance and resources and explore coping mechanisms to overcome distress.

Family Background and History

As previously indicated, my father served as the senior pastor of C&MA in Peru. My parents have three children and have been married for over 40 years. I have a younger sister and an older brother; therefore, I am the middle sister. In fact, I get along well with my parents and siblings. My entire family serves the Lord in their respective local churches. Praise be to God; I am a functioning member of a family that demonstrates cohesion and harmony. This is the kind of family I want to have. Markedly, I have been married for eight years, and my husband and I want to spend the rest of our lives serving God together. I remember that, as a girl, home for me entailed feeling secure and at ease. In addition, I acquired discipline from my parents. Indeed, providing emotional, physical, and cognitive support was the top priority, despite my father's responsibilities in the congregation.

At this point, the connection between the family members and their history is essential to understanding how I perceive family structures that differ from mine. A genogram is helpful for displaying problems and difficulties that might not otherwise be brought up in family dynamics. Genograms describe a specific moment; this representation may change over time and almost certainly will. The many parties may perceive these relationships differently from one another and from the practitioner who drew the genogram. These many viewpoints have a lot to teach us. In this sense, a genogram can serve as a basis for inquiry and a tool to open lines of communication among family members. (Scott, 2021). I utilize it to understand the dynamics,

see patterns, and depict the psychological elements that influence relationships. In counseling, the genogram can be a helpful tool for understanding a family's past and current dynamics.

Unique Physical Characteristics

In society, being slender is viewed as physically attractive since it stresses having a flat stomach, toned legs, and a tiny waist. Additionally, youth and beauty are sometimes interchangeable. Furthermore, traits that are Eurocentric are more attractive than traits that are connected with other ethnicities. Taller people are more appealing. Because they foster irrational expectations and can lead to low self-esteem and body dissatisfaction, stereotypes can be detrimental, especially for people who do not conform to the strict standards of physical appearance.

Regarding my appearance, I am a tall, big woman with brown hair and medium-light skin. My sedentary lifestyle is the reason for my weight gain. Exercise and a nutritious diet can help with this. In order to better understand our clients' lifestyles and sense of self-perfection and to be able to support them in developing good self-esteem regardless of their financial, physical, psychological, or emotional circumstances, it is vital to assess these areas in them.

Location of Residence and Language Differences

I reside in Poughkeepsie, part of the Hudson Valley of New York. I had to work on speaking because most of my neighbors only speak English. Even though English is not my first language, I rate my proficiency in it as intermediate. My writing abilities are definitely more substantial than my speaking skills.

I also learned that not all Hispanic people speak Spanish, which is a captivating truth. However, after a few years, I realized that living in America, a multicultural country, they may not have the opportunity to learn Spanish. At first, it upset me that they appeared to be denying

their cultural heritage. Beaudrie et al. (2020) reveal, “Many monolingual English speakers in the U.S. for example associate Spanish with poverty, immigration, and crime, despite the fact that Spanish is the second most widely spoken language in the world.” (p. 15). Furthermore, Beaudrie et al. (2020) state,

Speakers of non-English languages often internalize strong messages about the inferiority of their family’s language. It is not surprising that with very few exceptions, the grandchildren of immigrants to the U.S. (commonly referred to as the third generation) use English exclusively and retain very little productive proficiency in the heritage language (p.16)

It has been really eye-opening to remove prejudices about people who are non-English speakers and their reasons for not forcing their children to learn their mother tongue.

In this context, my goal is to serve the Spanish-speaking population. In my experience, most first-generation immigrants, whose first language is Spanish, have difficulty finding healthcare practitioners in the same language. However, I am still learning about dealing with different races and ethnicities. It is essential to think that it is all about respect. Being culturally competent means having the ability to understand, appreciate, and effectively interact with people from diverse cultural backgrounds, which is a critical skill in the mental health field.

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