

Clinical Pastoral Education

Re-Awakening to Our Inter-connected World

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What is Clinical Pastoral Education?

- In the US: an interfaith professional education
- Religious leaders trained and supervised to work with persons in crisis.
 - Awareness of own theological and psychological beliefs
 - Providing life-giving care to those needing care
- Interdisciplinary teams
- Interpersonal and inter-professional

Settings of Pastoral Care

- Healthcare: hospital / hospice / long term care
- Mental health and substance abuse
- Prisons and military
- Disaster chaplaincy
- Elder Communities
- Workplaces



Three Lenses of Pastoral Care

- Premodern: care accessed through religious rituals, traditions, and spiritual experiences
- Modern: care that includes rational and empirical knowledge, such as psychology and medical science
- Postmodern: care that is aware of and addresses contexts such as cultural and social identity

The Practice of Pastoral Care: A Postmodern Approach, 2nd edition,
Carrie Doehring, Westminster John Knox Press, 2016.

How we connect: Empathy and Compassion

- Empathy – leaning in OR leaning out
- Obstacles (distress, burnout)
 - Fusion / empathic contagion
 - Withdrawal / emotional disengagement
- Compassion stepping into world of pain and suffering
- Practices support pro-social neural networks in response to pain



Communication Styles and Skills

- Styles of interaction: Following / Guiding / Direction
- Core skills used: Asking / Listening / Informing
- Flow of an encounter
 - Establishing trust
 - Listening closely
 - Beginning to co-create meaning
 - Offering interpretation



How to Step into Another's World?

- Theological Reflexivity
 - Beliefs ➡ Values ➡ Behaviors
 - Integrates theological and psychological beliefs, values in care
- Begins at personal level
 - Integration of own theological education into development as a caregiver
 - Able to give care that identifies, assesses, and respects the unique ways care seekers make spiritual sense of and cope with suffering

Unpacking Values and Behavior

- Embedded theologies
 - Beliefs and values instilled from childhood, community
 - May be unconscious and appear under stress
- Lived theologies
- Is lived theology LIFE Giving or Life Limiting??
 - Will values and beliefs support crisis?
 - Are they complex enough to bear the weight of suffering?

Looking Thru Religious and Psychological Lenses

- Lived theologies often held together by emotions
 - Guilt, shame, fear, anger
- Trust needs to be in place before we can explore with them
- Simple heart of being human – Bodhicitta
 - No self does not mean abandoning our own practice, faith tradition
- Becoming selfless by locating ourselves in another person's lived experience

Some Psychological Themes

- Loss – transition through life cycles
 - Transitory / intermittent / long term
 - Experienced personally, relationally, communally
- Making room for emotions of grief
- How to connect to the sacred?
 - Exploration of what is life giving?
 - How do beliefs inform values? And values affect behavior?

Discovering rhythms of daily life

- Coping can be short or long term
- Role of spiritual practices and community
 - Life giving OR life limiting
- Bringing ventilation to struggles
 - Conversation, meditation, ritual
- Pastoral care may be appropriate through any one of the three lenses
 - Premodern / modern / postmodern

Pastoral Care Education at Naropa



Naropa's Master of Divinity Program

- Applied Religious Studies degree
- 72-credit hours / 3-4 years to complete
- Prepares students for pastoral work, chaplaincy, social service professions, and community engagement
- Based upon wisdom gleaned from Buddhist traditions



Theological and Contemplative Study

- Basic Buddhist sutras, commentaries, and doctrines
- Includes historical and present-day contexts
- Practices: Buddhist, Christian, other traditions
- Practice Requirements:
 - 5 hours per week
 - Month-long retreat during the program
 - Practice week mid semester



Learning Interfaith Pastoral Care

- Ministerial/chaplaincy roles that serve spiritual and human needs
- Diverse communities
- Learning to embody core principles and practices
- Introduction to Pastoral Care, Religious Education, Homiletics and Ritual Arts, Applied Ethics, Contemporary American Religion
- CPE OR Field Education placements



Spiritual Formation

- Perspectives informed by studies and praxis
 - Interfaith environments of healthcare, prison, military
- Multiple modalities of learning
 - Experiential emphasis
 - Rituals, Religious Education, Pastoral Care
- Process Lab
 - 2 years, cohort based
 - integrates classroom learning with interpersonal and professional formation
- Experiential learning experiences through fieldwork
 - Field Ed internship and/or CPE



Buddhist Ministry Education in the United States



Buddhist Ministry Working Group

- Yearly gathering of Buddhist MDiv and retreat-based programs
- Common theme of training Buddhist ministers or chaplains.
- Conversations have centered around
 - paths of Buddhist training
 - how they might (or might not) appropriately meet the professional standards for service which are often rooted in Western paradigms.



Some topics of our dialogues

- What is right livelihood?
- What are our Buddhist theological foundations?
- Is there a particular Buddhist epistemology – or way of knowing?
- What are our different paths as Buddhists, and how are they articulated?
- What is the common ground we share as institutions and faculty?

Metta Prayer

- May all beings be peaceful.
- May all beings be happy.
- May all beings be safe.
- May all beings awaken to the light of their true nature.
- May all beings be free.



Translator unknown, tune by Winfield Clark
<http://winfieldclark.com/metta.html>

Thank You!

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