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International Perspectives: How People use

Religiousness/Spirituality to Cope.

Professional practice requires respectful attention to naturally occurring forms of religious or spiritual coping and healing. Belonging to a religious group provides social support, a sense of meaning, connectedness, and purpose to its members (Myers, 2000). Groups dealing with major life stressors showed that religion and spirituality were helpful to individuals' coping when they had the fewest resources and were facing situations over which they did not have control (Pargament, 2001). Because religion focuses on the sacred and ultimate truth, it serves individuals in religious societies to become aware of their human limits and perceive a need for transcendence. The first presenter, Dr. Gargi Roysircar, provides disaster metal health services in a primary care clinic in Haiti. She discussed within a religious framework her assessment findings on Haitian children's **Resilience** and **Vulnerability**. The second presenter, Dr. Ruth Chao, reported on **Stress and Loneliness** among Taiwanese college students. She presented findings on how religiousness/spirituality serves as a mental health resource for Taiwanese to manage stress. The third presenter, Dr, Everett Worthington, understands religion as related to forgiving others and spirituality as related to forgiving oneself as he estimated the impact of **Forgiveness Interventions** worldwide.

The 1st discussant, Dr. Donelda Cook, recognized the Black Church as the help-seeking setting of choice for many African Americans and served as a mental health consultant to African American pastors and developed counseling ministries in churches. She serves as an Associate Minister at Covenant Baptist United Church of Christ, an inclusive, Africentric-oriented, social justice-committed church in Washington, DC. She has authored chapters on the integration of psychology and spirituality in psychotherapy with African Americans.

The 2nd discussant, Dr. Edward Shafranske , served twice as president of Division 36 and has been in the forefront of theory building and developing approaches to address religion and spirituality in psychotherapy. In 1996 he edited APA's first textbook on religion and spirituality and is associate editor of the *APA Handbook of Psychology, Religion, and Spirituality (Vol 2)*. In a recent supervision book, he examined the role of multicultural identities, including religion and spirituality, in clinical training and supervision.

The 3rd discussant, Dr, Scott Richards, a former president of Div 36, is coauthor and co-editor of books on psychotherapy and religious diversity published by APA (1997, 2000, 2005, 2014). In 1999, he received the Div. 36 William C. Bier award for outstanding contributions to findings on religious issues.

Presenter 1, Gargi Roysricar, and student co-presenter, Ashland Thompson: *Haitian Religiousness and Children's Resilience*

Haitians make meaning of traumatic contexts by referring to religion. It is likely that they interpret the many years of political, economic, systemic, and social hardships and the 2010 earthquake as being permitted by God to further strengthen them. A religious and/or spiritual orientation is expected to trickle down to children. Haitian children also learn to be religious through their religious names, such as Dieuseul, Dieusibon, Jesula, Mercidieu, and Marie. Haitian children's survival of ongoing trauma may be explained by intersecting intrapersonal and interpersonal/systemic processes of faith-based resilience.

Child assessment study. Assessment of Haitian children ($N = 131$, 66 girls and 67 boys, age range 6-15 years) with ratings of House-Tree-Person drawings showed multivariate multiple regression interaction patterns of time (years 2012, 2013, and 2014) and 4 townships for **Resilience** and **Vulnerability**. This regression model was significant ($F_{2, 118} = 5.17$, p-value = .007), and the R^2 values, 42.4% and 28.2%, for Resilience and Vulnerability, respectively, indicated that the model explained moderate variance.

Canaan, a relocation camp, is a desolate hillside in which families scrape together what they can to survive. The longer the Canaan children ($n = 46$) were exposed to adversity, the higher were their resilience scores relative to the children of Blanchard ($n = 44$), Damien ($n = 25$), and the Providence orphanage ($n = 16$), who were less affected by the earthquake and poverty. The Canaan children were

living the ideology of moral resistance and stoicism preached by ministers and sustained by parents. On the other hand, we know that degree of exposure to a disaster, extent of damage, and witnessing the death or injury of another individual or a perceived threat to self are risk factors of PTSD. These risk factors common for Haitian children explained the decreasing resilience scores and increasing vulnerability scores over time for the other three groups. For the Canaan children, however, their vulnerability scores did not change much over time, while their resilience scores increased. Other findings on age and sex differences and themes qualitatively developed from focus groups of children's parents were discussed from a Haitian religious perspective.

Presenter 2, Ruth Chao: *Taiwanese Religiousness/Spirituality and Loneliness*

Taiwan ranks among the top countries with the longest working and studying day. Working hard is ingrained in Taiwanese society. The National Suicide Prevention Center in Taiwan reported that suicide has emerged as the second-largest cause of youth death due to academic pressure, despite students' long hours of study. Thus, while psychologists recognize students' stressors, what remains important is to understand how Taiwanese students manage their stress. When encountering stress, individuals utilize resources (e.g., religiousness/ spirituality) to manage their stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Importantly, Taiwan is a collectivistic society and seeking guidance or support at times of stress from religion/spirituality via various communal activities, such as prayer and worship, is common among many Taiwanese. Religiousness/spirituality support may facilitate coping with stressful life events or as a resource for people to manage stress (Krause, 2011). Thus we hypothesized that among Taiwanese, religiousness/spirituality would provide a buffering effect against stress on loneliness.

A moderation testing of religiousness/spirituality. In this study, we constructively tested the moderation effects of religiousness/spirituality on the stress-loneliness association among Taiwanese. Participants were 441 Taiwanese college students (216 men and 225 women) who completed the Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen et al., 1983), General Orientation in Religiousness/Spirituality (Fetzer Institute/National Institute on Aging Working Group, 1999), the Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale (R-UCLA; Russell, Peplau, & Cutrona, 1980), and a demographic questionnaire. Using a hierarchical multiple regression analysis to test the moderator effects of religiousness/spirituality, we found that religiousness/spirituality significantly buffered against stress among the Taiwanese participants ($\Delta R^2 = .01$, $p = .002$). Thus, despite struggling with stress, when

Taiwanese participants perceived their religiousness/spirituality as a support and resource, they felt less lonely than perhaps others who do not perceive the resource of religiousness/spirituality. With spirituality/religion support, we suggest that the Taiwanese participants felt ready to resolve their problem, to strive toward overcoming stress, and then they felt less lonely.

Presenter 3, Everett Worthington: *Forgiveness and Religious Interventions in USA and International Contexts*

Religion and spirituality are both coping responses to stress reactions associated with unforgiveness and self-condemnation, respectively. Both have direct and indirect health and mental health effects. We will report on a meta-analysis on forgiveness (of others) **group interventions** that found a dose-response relationship of 0.1 per hour of intervention and 0.05 per hour each for decreased depression and anxiety. In the United States, we have investigated **community awareness-raising interventions** on college campuses—explicitly Christian universities. **Do-it-yourself REACH Forgiveness workbooks** and **self-forgiveness workbooks** have been investigated in secular samples, and **REACH** in Christian samples. Christian samples had twice the effect size as secular samples. We have examined efficacy of Christian REACH Forgiveness due to group interventions, public awareness-raising, and do-it-yourself workbooks.

Generalization. Lin et al. (2014) found that REACH Forgiveness groups were as efficacious with foreign students as Virginia-born students. Based on social science research on forgiveness within in-groups (Greer et al., 2014a), clinical meta-analysis (Wade et al., 2014), and community research in Christian communities (Griffin et al., 2015), we speculate on the increased forgiveness, decreased depression, decreased anxiety in community-wide or national public-awareness efforts in the US and internationally. REACH Forgiveness groups have worked in the Philippines in rural community churches (Author et al., 2010). Our other efforts are underway in Taiwan, Brazil, Barcelona, and Indonesia.