

SCHOOL OF APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY, COUNSELING & FAMILY THERAPY PUBLIC LECTURE AND ORAL DEFENSE OF DOCTORAL DISSERTATION



PsyD Doctoral Candidate Aimee Keith

5/19/2017
Friday
1:30 p.m.
Room 230
On campus

Dissertation Committee Members

Suzanne Engelberg, PhD
Committee Chair

Jude Bergkamp, PsyD

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Title: The Process of Resolving Spiritual Struggle Following Adulthood Trauma

Spiritual struggle has been described as a disruption in religious practice and spirituality resulting in questioning beliefs, experiencing discord within religious communities, decreasing spiritual practices, and experiencing painful cognitions such as the belief that one is being punished by God. This study used constructivist grounded theory to explore how women identifying as Protestant Christians at the time of the traumatic event resolved their spiritual struggles. Eleven theoretical categories, which are presented in a stage model, emerged from the data. The stages were Experiencing an Event Discordant with Beliefs, Emotional Reaction (following the traumatic event), Questioning (of beliefs, suffering and identity), Disconnection (From God and Others), Seeking Resolution (as a priority), Seeking and Gaining New Understanding, Selectively Seeking Support, Reconnecting with Beliefs, Reconnecting Emotionally with God, Feeling Resolved, and Maintaining Resolution. A definition of spiritual struggle resolution was also constructed. Resolution of spiritual struggle was revealed to be an ongoing process partially simultaneous with spiritual struggle.