

TABLE 10.2
Definitions and Examples of Various Religious
and Spiritual Interventions

Intervention	Definition	Examples of intervention
Therapist prayer	Therapist silent prayer	Prayer to help clients develop a bigger picture of their suffering and look beyond their current circumstances.
Teaching spiritual concepts	Teaching or instructing clients about theological issues and spiritual concepts	Teaching an awareness of biblical promises of peace, love, and faith. Help clients view self-worth based on what God says about them.
Reference to Scripture	Direct quotation or citation of Scripture to establish a point	Instruction by scripture to counter inappropriate feelings such as perfectionistic striving. Therapist cites references to Christ's emotions to help clients feel at ease about their problems.
Spiritual self-disclosure	Therapist self-discloses or models spiritual experiences or behaviors in an attempt to influence the client	Therapist shares aspects of his or her own spiritual experience. Therapist attempts to model grace and affirmation.
Spiritual confrontation	Interventions that confront a client concerning religious or spiritual beliefs and values	Therapist asks clients in bad relationships what they think the Bible says about the relationship. Therapist gently confronts clients about the incongruencies between their professed religious values and their current behavior.
Spiritual assessment	Using the initial counseling session as a way to assess the client's religious and spiritual status	Therapist takes a history of the client's spiritual development when he or she first sees him or her." Therapist gives clients the Spiritual Well-Being Scale to assess how they feel about their relationship with God.
Religious relaxation or imagery	The use of guided imagery, meditation, or relaxation with direct reference to spiritual concepts	During guided imagery, therapist asks clients to visualize being embraced by and speaking to Jesus. Therapist uses imagery and metaphor in biblical stories for relaxation.
Therapist and client prayer	Vocal in-session prayer with client	Therapist prays on behalf of clients that they will have the strength to deal with strong, painful feelings. Therapist invites the client to pray at the beginning of a session to petition God's guidance and help during the session.
Blessing by therapist	Use of priesthood blessings (laying on of hands) in session to help client cope or work through impasses	Therapist lays hands on a client's head, blessing him or her that he or she might receive comfort, strength, and insight.
Encouraging forgiveness	Discussing the concept of forgiveness with client; encouraging client to forgive parents or others	Therapist discusses how to have forgiveness when a client reports guilt about a behavior or feeling. Therapist uses forgiveness in restoring broken relationships.
Use religious community	Using the client's religious community as an extratherapy resource	Therapist refers to a pastor for specific spiritual or theological questions. Therapist sends a person to a Christian attorney for information.

TABLE 10.2 (cont.)

Intervention	Definition	Examples of intervention
Client prayer	Encouraging client private prayers	Therapist encourages a client to pray for help to know how to better relate to his or her spouse. Therapist suggests that a client pray for strength to resist whenever he feels tempted to view pornography.
Encouraging client confession	Encouraging the client to confess violations of moral code to appropriate persons and to seek repentance	Therapist suggests that a client admit that he was overly harsh and emotionally abusive to his children and ask them to forgive him. Therapist supports a client in her decision to confess a sexual transgression to her religious leader.
Referral for blessing	Encouraging client to request priesthood blessing from home teacher or religious leader to help client cope and work through impasses	Therapist suggests that a client seek a blessing from her spiritual leader for assistance in gaining the emotional and spiritual strength to cope with the death of her child.
Religious journal writing	Asking client to keep journal concerning spiritual struggles, insights, and experiences	Therapist assigns journal keeping of answered prayer. Therapist suggests to some clients that they record spiritual insights or impressions they have.
Spiritual meditation	Encouraging meditation about spiritual matters to promote client spiritual growth	Therapist suggests meditation or meditative imagery focusing on Christ and his love. Therapist suggests quiet times when the client can ponder and contemplate about his or her life and God's will for her.
Religious bibliotherapy	Giving clients religious and spiritual literature to read	Therapist encourages clients to read the Book of Job in the Bible. Therapist gives some clients tapes or articles of talks by leaders in the church.
Scripture memorization	Interventions specifically using client memorization of Scriptures to affect change	Therapist suggests Scripture memorization for thought stopping of obsessive clients and as a means of coping during panic attacks.

Note. Definitions and examples were adapted from two sources. Ball, R. A., and Goodyear, R. K. (1991). Self-reported practices of Christian psychologists. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, 10, 144–153. Reprinted here by permission from the Christian Association for Psychological Studies. Richards, P. S., and Potts, R. W. (1995a). Using spiritual interventions in psychotherapy: Practices, successes, failures, and ethical concerns of Mormon psychotherapists. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 26, 163–170. Copyright 1995 by the American Psychological Association.

Table 10.2 taken from: Richards, P. S. & Bergin, A. E. (1997). *A Spiritual Strategy for Counseling and Psychotherapy*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association. (pp. 234-235).