



CPSC Notes

COUNCIL FOR PASTORAL AND SPIRITUAL COUNSELLORS

No 36 – May 2026

Standing strong in difficult times

Dear Affiliates,

It is my sincere hope that everyone is doing well, standing strong in the Lord and in the power of His might (Ephesians 6:10), even amidst the difficult times in which we find ourselves.

We are living in days marked by much apostasy and hypocrisy that have crept into our communities and, regrettably, into the church as well. Many troubling things are happening around us.

The church appears to have lost its prophetic voice, government institutions seem weakened, there is a void of leadership and accountability in the state establishment, and at times it may feel as though everyone has been left to fend for themselves as the scripture puts it in Isaiah 53:6 "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all".

Yet, despite it all, we remain grateful to God, for His grace is sufficient for us (2 Corinthians 12:9). Even in these seasons of uncertainty and despair, His strength is made perfect in weakness, and His faithfulness continues to sustain His people.

Fellow workers in ministry, it is in times such as these that our work as counsellors has become increasingly important and more crucial. We are called to help contain the many challenges confronting our communities by offering the much-needed counselling, care, and spiritual support that people desperately need. Ours must be a ministry of compassion, healing, and restoration. It must be a service rendered without malice, hidden agendas, or self-interest, but with sincerity of heart and love for God's people.

In a world marked by confusion, pain, division, and despair, the church must once again become a place of refuge, wisdom, healing, and hope. Therefore, let us serve faithfully, counsel wisely, and care deeply, knowing that our labour in the Lord is both timely and necessary. The Apostle Paul writes "But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory



through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:57-58).

In doing this work of ministry, we must remember:

Firstly, that we must do this work of ministry with fear and awe of GOD. We may have qualifications and diverse specializations, gifts and talents, but we are not experts in

human life - only God is.

Again, Paul states that "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. 2 Bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ. 3 For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself" (Galatians 6:1-3).

This will foster humility and reliance upon God who guides us by His Spirit as we minister amongst His people.

Secondly, we need to be strong and courageous, to serve and provide care to those who are broken, shattered, tired and going through difficulties of life.

Providing counselling and caring for people often means entering their pain, confusion, brokenness, and burdens. It takes spiritual strength to continue serving when one is weary, misunderstood, or even unappreciated. At times in our best efforts of caring and supporting, we find ourselves treading on the ethical slippery slope, whilst intending to lift others.

Yet God repeatedly calls on us as His servants to be strong and courageous, like He spoke to Joshua, "Have I not commanded you? Be

strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." (Joshua 1:9).

Thirdly, service with integrity and good conduct cannot be over-emphasized. As we serve in ministry and counselling, we must uphold integrity and holiness in

May we be strong in caring, wise in counsel, ethical in practice, and fully reliant on God.

our conduct. The credibility of ministry and the church is damaged when ethics are neglected. God, whom we serve and who has entrusted these gifts and talents in us as professionals, requires faithfulness, honesty, purity, humility, and accountability as we have been entrusted with caring for others. Whilst at times we may be neglectful and then find ourselves as counsellors caught on the wrong side of ethical dilemmas, we need to always pause and ponder, “what would Jesus do?” in certain situations.

We need to be reliant on God. We need the power, grace, guidance, and sustaining presence of God daily in our conduct as it is a daunting ask to think we can carry the

demands of this precious ministry through human strength alone.

Fellow counsellors and ministers, may we be strong in caring, wise in counsel, ethical in practice, and fully reliant on God. In these difficult times, the church still has a mandate, ministers still have a calling, and God still has faithful servants through whom He desires to heal, restore, guide, and transform lives. Always remember that God has raised you, equipped you because “*Where there is no counsel, the people fall; But in the multitude of counsellors there is safety*” (Proverbs 11:14 NKJV).

Shalom!

– Dr Jack Mashapata, CPSC Chairperson ■

Safeguarding through supervision: Ethical responsibilities of pastors, counsellors, volunteers, and organisations

Karen Tewson presented to CPSC members during the supervision conference earlier in 2026.



As Christian counsellors, we are entrusted with more than the care of individuals. We are guardians - builders of a better world of hope and every time we sit with a client, we are not only helping them heal; we are reminding them that compassion, dignity, and resilience still exist.

Remember, the world needs supervisors as role models who restore belief in humanity. By embodying kindness, fairness, and courage in both supervision and counselling practice, they enable others to believe in their own contribution to a brighter future.

"Supervision that safeguards today and inspires tomorrow."

This development further enhances the need for ethical accountability in pastoral counselling practice.

Note: In this article, the term “counsellor” is used interchangeably to include pastors, supervisors, volunteers, and those serving in churches, schools, children’s ministries, and similar organisations. Regardless of their place of practice or institutional setting, it is relevant for all. We are all supervisors, pastors, counsellors in our day to day life.

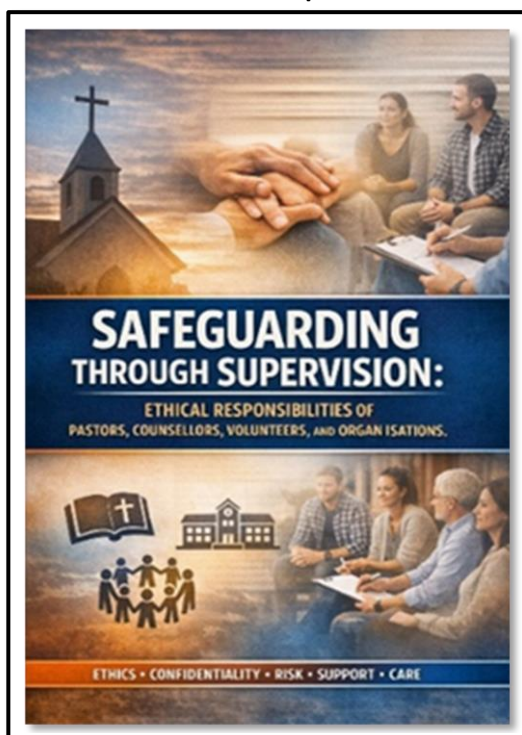
Supervision is important and stands at the heart of ethical and effective counselling practice. It is more than a professional requirement; it is

Introduction

Counsellors frequently encounter ethical dilemmas that affect not only their professional practice but also the organisations they serve, particularly within the Church.

Government has established a Section 22 Committee “Peer Review” mechanism for the Christian sector. This Committee has been established under the Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Rights Commission which has a bearing on ethical practices within the church which we will not discuss in this article.

However, herewith a link for ease of reference: <http://www.crlcommission.org.za/crlact.php>.



a vital safeguard that protects both clients and counsellors. For clients, supervision ensures that the support they receive is grounded in accountability, reflective practice, and adherence to professional standards and legal obligations.

For counsellors, it provides a structured space to process complex cases, manage emotional demands, and refine their skills under the guidance of experienced supervisors.

In this way, *supervision acts as a dual shield*—maintaining the integrity of therapeutic work while nurturing the wellbeing of counsellors. As counselling continues to evolve in response to diverse social and psychological challenges, the role of supervision

remains indispensable in fostering high ethical professional practice standards whilst protecting both counsellor, client and the public.

"Supervision that safeguards today and inspires tomorrow."

To prevent complaints or legal action against institutions or counsellors:

The **first line of defence** is the counsellor themselves applying **self-regulated** integrity and ethical practice; **supervision** is the **second line of defence** for the client, the counsellor and the institution.

With the right attitude additional learning avenues may be introduced especially as legislation is an ever-evolving arena.

Protective supervision practices: essential or optional?

To engage with this question effectively two hypothetical scenarios will be introduced:

Scenario 1:

An example of a safeguarding situation in a child abuse disclosure matter illustrates how supervision safeguards both counsellors and clients in situations involving child abuse.

A 10-year-old girl child disclosed to the counsellor, working in a school setting, about being unsafe at home. The counsellor recognised potential indicators of abuse but felt the weight of responsibility – balancing the child's trust, confidentiality, and the legal duty to protect. She informed her supervisor and together they identified signs that required immediate safeguarding action, reviewed child protection protocols and mandatory reporting obligation and the counsellor's wellbeing. In addition, they developed an action plan to escalate concerns to child protection services while continuing to support the child in a safe, non-intrusive manner.

Thus, supervision safeguards both client and counsellor, providing guidance, emotional support, and a framework to navigate complex ethical and legal responsibilities without the counsellor feeling isolated.

Scenario 2:

In contrast, the absence of supervision caused another counsellor, a volunteer in a church children's ministry setting, to carry the emotional burden of an abuse disclosure alone. This led to burnout and reduced effectiveness in his work and opened him and the church up to potential legal consequences. He decided to "wait and see", continuing sessions without escalating the concern. He feared damaging the therapeutic relationship or making an error in judgment. Over time, the child's disclosures became more troubling, but the counsellor still hesitated to act, lacking guidance and emotional support. Without

Supervisors and counsellors can be held liable if they fail to ensure competent practice, adequate oversight, or client safety.

regular supervision, the counsellor had no structured space to process his uncertainty. This resulted in consequences for the client (delayed protection) and for the counsellor and the organisation (lack of timely safeguarding action exposed the Church to ethical and legal risks). This illustrates how the absence of supervision can compromise safeguarding for all.

Supervision would have provided a framework for risk assessment, ethical decision-making, compliance with legal obligations, emotional support, ensuring both client safety, counsellor wellbeing and the legal and ethical integrity of the church.

Responsibility toward clients

Counsellors are assumed to hold responsibility toward their clients based on principles of duty of care, ethics, biblical principles and respect for human dignity.

These responsibilities arise from both theological traditions and professional counselling standards, and they ensure that the client's wellbeing (spiritual, emotional, and psychological) is safeguarded.

According to Tyson Walters professional supervision is upheld by three basic pillars:

- **Normative:** Which focuses on ethics, responsibility and standards (where might harm be occurring, even if unintentionally)
- **Formative:** Learning and development (learning from near misses not just failures and ethical blind spots)
- **Restorative:** Sustainability and Wellbeing (moral distress, isolation and burnout)

Exposure to legal sanctions

In South Africa, counselling supervisors carry clear legal and ethical responsibilities such as articulated under the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) guidelines.

Supervisors are mandated by the HPCSA and similar statutory and non-statutory bodies to record supervision, assess competence, intervene when risks emerge, report harm to relevant authorities and refer matters beyond a supervisee's scope.

These provisions constitute the primary (counsellor as direct service provider) and secondary (Supervisor with oversight authority) and Employer Layer (The Church/ Employer and governing body establishing safeguarding policies and reporting mechanisms).

These Layers of Practice are designed to protect individuals from liability claims.

In South Africa, churches—like all employers—are legally obliged to report sexual offences and abuse. Failure to do so can lead to liability under the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act 32 of 2007

(as amended), the Children’s Act 38 of 2005, and the Employment-related obligations under labour law. These Acts make non-reporting a prosecutable offence and impose duties on institutions to protect vulnerable persons.

In the counselling field, liability generally arises when a supervisor fails to provide adequate oversight, training, or intervention, leading to harm to a client. Courts have held supervisors accountable under negligence principles, professional duty of care, and employment law. Counsellors are professionally obligated to ensure that continuous professional development is consistently maintained.

Case law and liability principles

Case Law shapes how laws are applied in real-world contexts, influencing rights, obligations, and liabilities.

Case law, both locally and internationally, shows that supervisors in counselling can be held liable under negligence and duty of care principles. Courts emphasize that liability arises not from mere oversight roles, but from failure to actively ensure safe, competent, and ethical practice.

While South African Case Law on counselling-specific supervision is limited, courts apply general negligence and duty of care principles:

- **Employer/supervisor liability:** Courts have held employers and supervisors liable when inadequate training or oversight led to harm (e.g., *Hobongwana v Bentele South Africa PTY LTD* [2023] 4 BLLR 359 (ECP)).
- **Negligence standard:** Liability requires showing that a supervisor failed to act as a “reasonable professional” would under similar circumstances.
- **Vicarious liability:** *Institutions* may also be held responsible if supervisors fail to enforce standards. Vicarious Liability means one party (usually the employer) is held responsible for the wrongful acts of another (the employee), even if the employer did not personally commit the wrongdoing. Thus, *the*

Act / Law	Duty Imposed	Liability for Churches
Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Amendment Act 32 of 2007	Mandatory reporting of sexual offences	Criminal charges for non-reporting
Children’s Act 38 of 2005	Mandatory reporting of child abuse	Offence under Section 110
Labour Relations Act & Employment Equity Act	Safe workplace, prevent harassment	Employer liability, civil damages
Trafficking in Persons Act 7 of 2013	Report trafficking/exploitation	Criminal liability

Church as the Employer may be held liable. If a *counsellor* is self-employed or working as an independent contractor, liability rests directly with the counsellor.

- **Duty of Care:** Supervisors must ensure supervisees are competent and supported. Consequently, it pertains to the Church and the counsellor equally.

The Duty of Care in childcare in South Africa is defined by the Children’s Act 38 of 2005, which outlines the responsibilities and rights of caregivers, parents, and the state. The Act provides a framework for the care and protection of children, ensuring that they are treated with dignity and respect. It also sets out the principles for the best interests of the child, the rights of the child, and the responsibilities of the state to protect and promote the welfare of children. (www.gov.za)

Practical implications for counselling supervisors and counsellors

- Keep detailed records to demonstrate due diligence.
- Client Protection Policies
- Ensure counselling sessions occur in safe, monitored environments.
- Comprehensive informed consent agreements.
- Provide clear channels for clients to report misconduct.
- Regularly assess supervisee competence and provide corrective feedback.
- Intervene immediately if ethical breaches or client risks are identified.
- Know your limits: refer cases requiring medical or psychiatric intervention.
- Ensure vetting of counsellors. Background Checks. Vet counsellors thoroughly before employment (criminal record, references).
- Stay updated on applicable legislative requirements and obligations; practice regulations and professional codes.
- Comply with mandatory reporting requirements
- Ensure comprehensive supervision agreement with supervisee, which includes roles and responsibilities,

signed by both parties. This is applicable to both the counsellor and the client. Moreover, reasonable care must be taken to ensure **both parents sign consent for a minor client.**

In order to obtain insight from

a “Policy to Practice” viewpoint the author enquired from Desiree De Atouguia, an Educational Psychologist, her perspective regarding the issue of obtaining parental consent for counselling of a minor and how this requirement plays out in practice.

Her response was as follows: “*It’s really tricky! The Children’s act says a minor needs one parent’s consent for*

counselling. Health act says under 12 both parents need to consent for medical procedures and over 12 a child can consent without parents' knowledge. HPSCA ethical code says both parents have to consent..."

In practice I had found that both parents' consent is best, otherwise one parent tends to sabotage the process. In the case of a divorce, I send forms to both parents and they can meet with me together or separately. But I request that both sign my documents.

If the parent states the other parent has no contact or the whereabouts of the other parent are unknown, I request an affidavit stating so, or a court document stating that they have sole guardianship - not custody. The document needs to state that the other parent has no legal right to the child. The same goes for children who are adopted or in foster or safe care - these documents are often temporary court documents.

If one parent refuses, and the child clearly needs therapy, I contact the parent and try to sway them.

If I feel confident that I have **taken all reasonable steps** to get consent and it **is in the child's best interest**, then I will see the child with only one parent's consent but will keep the other parent informed.

Legally after 12 the child can consent, but it is always best to get the consent of the parents, so I do try to do this."

Risks & Challenges

Supervisors may face liability if:

- 1: they ignore signs of incompetence or misconduct;
- 2: institutions lack clear supervision policies, or
- 3: supervisees harm clients due to poor guidance.

All counsellors must take **timeous action** when harm or risk is evident. These action steps must be documented to prove due diligence.

Inaction enables wrongdoing: Evil doesn't always win because it's stronger; it often wins because those who could resist remained silent or passive. It emphasizes that ethical people have a duty to act, not just to avoid wrongdoing themselves.

Importantly Churches in South Africa are legally bound to report sexual offences and abuse under multiple Acts which we have highlighted above. However, **Silence or concealment** exposes them to **criminal prosecution, employer liability, and civil damages**.

How do we prepare counsellors to respond when harm is disclosed?

- Training In trauma-informed practice (impact of trauma both on the people we serve and ourselves as professionals)
- Clear knowledge of ethical and legal obligations
- Structured Response Protocols

The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.
- Edmund Burke

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- Skill in Managing Emotional Reactions
- Consultation and Support Networks
- Documentation and Accountability
- Ongoing Reflection and Supervision
- Ongoing supervision of Supervisors / Pastors

If the church, school, organisation and those in private practice have clear policies, supervision records, and insurance, **it can show it took reasonable steps to prevent harm which will mitigate liability**. In short, South African institutions employing counsellors should combine contracts, policies, supervision, training, insurance, and safeguarding measures.

This not only limits liability but also builds trust with clients and protects vulnerable individuals. In addition, it reduces liability exposure and strengthens their defence in court.

Conclusion

Every supervisee or client we engage with contributes to the transformation of their world. Their courage to confront pain, their openness to growth, and their commitment to change are not merely personal milestones — they are catalysts of transformation that ripple outward into families, communities, and society at large.

As supervisors and counsellors, we are both witnesses and facilitators of this profound metamorphosis. It is essential never to underestimate the impact of a single supervisee's journey, for each step toward healing and growth has the potential to inspire broader change and nurture a more compassionate, resilient world.

RESOURCES

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Ethical Practice in Substance Use Disorder and Mental Health Counseling, an open-access textbook. Copyright © 2025 by Tom Hegblom; Zaibunnisa Ahmed; London Fischer; Lauren Roelike; and Ericka Webb is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, except where otherwise noted.

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Learning Communities: Becoming a Supervisor or Group Supervisor

By Dr Michele Rossouw, Advanced Religious Specialist in CPSC, that presented during the supervision training earlier in 2026.

Supervision is often understood as a professional requirement – a place to discuss cases, review ethical questions, remain accountable, and ensure responsible practice. While all the above-mentioned aspects are essential, supervision has the potential to grow beyond a mere procedural space. At its deepest level, supervision is about formation. It is about the inner work of becoming ethical, grounded, responsible, and compassionate counsellors.

This understanding lies at the heart of Learning Communities, a form of group supervision grounded in creating a safe, collaborative, and ethical space of reflection, accountability, and shared growth. In this approach, supervision is not merely something counsellors attend. It becomes an embodied way of being. It shapes how group members think, how they listen, respond, and carry the responsibility of care.

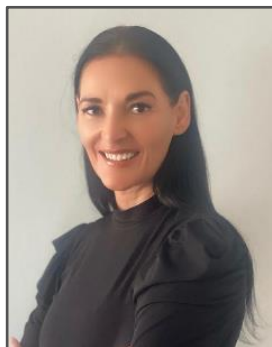
Servant leadership

The foundation of this approach is servant leadership. In Mark 10:45, Jesus says that the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve. This turns leadership upside down. From this perspective, authority is not removed, but reshaped.

In supervision, this means that leadership is not exercised as power over people, but as service alongside them. The supervisor is not superior to the supervisee, and the supervisor and supervisee are not superior to the client. Both supervisor and supervisee take on the posture of servant leadership, acting as facilitators open to the working of the Holy Spirit.

In the supervision space, the role of the supervisor is not to dominate, but to create a safe and well-structured environment where growth can happen, ethical practice can be discussed, support can be received, and counsellors can continue developing personally, professionally, and spiritually.

Learning Communities matter because learning happens best in relationship. Scripture reminds us in 1 Corinthians 12 that we are one body with many parts; similarly, counsellors grow best and flourish in community. They grow



through shared reflection, mutual accountability, and the wisdom that emerges when different people bring their experiences, questions, and perspectives into the same space.

At its core, Learning Communities hold three important purposes together:

Firstly, they provide ethical safeguarding. They help counsellors recognise blind spots, discuss ethical dilemmas, work within scope of practice, and remain accountable for the quality of care they offer.

Secondly, they support professional growth by allowing counsellors to learn from multiple perspectives and increase self-awareness.

Thirdly, they provide support in ethical care by reducing professional isolation, normalising uncertainty, and creating a space where cultural sensitivity is explored and practised respectfully.

Adding the voice of the group members is important in this conversation, as it reveals the value of this model. This article is not a one-sided viewpoint but recognises the input and experience of those participating by intentionally including their lived experience of being part of a Learning Community.

Members experience this community as a place where they can learn from one another, see different perspectives, and normalise anxiety and self-doubt. They further recognise it as a practical and cost-effective way to support professional growth and improve client care.

One sentence from the group captures the heart of the process beautifully: *“When counsellors sit together and reflect honestly, ethics become something we live, not only something we read about.”*

Alongside the positives, the article also acknowledges the possible **challenges of Learning Communities:**

Relational spaces require care. Some members may hesitate to speak openly. Different levels of experience may influence the group dynamic. Trust takes time to develop, and some may fear judgement. Confidentiality can also become a concern if it is not clearly addressed. Time pressures,

At its deepest level, supervision is about formation. It is about the inner work of becoming ethical, grounded, responsible, and compassionate counsellors.



workload, limited ethical grounding, and lack of cultural sensitivity may further limit the depth of learning.

These challenges, however, do not weaken the value of Learning Communities; rather, they demonstrate why structure matters:

A thoughtful first session is essential. Sufficient time should be allocated to clearly identify the needs of each unique voice in the group, clarify expectations, and begin building trust.

Clear contracts should outline confidentiality, roles, responsibilities, ethical conduct, scope of practice, referral responsibilities, format, frequency of sessions, duration, fees, and administrative arrangements (such as taking minutes of the session).

Open, clear, and ongoing communication is necessary if the group is to remain safe and effective. This means that all the above aspects should be revisited throughout the process to ensure the group remains an effective and safe space for growth.

Using the CPSC website

The Learning Community referred to in this article began through networking with the CPSC. This provided a clear and accountable supervisory structure. The CPSC website allows supervisees/affiliates to review registered supervisors, consider their fields of interest, and choose a supervisor who fits their unique needs.¹

An introductory contact session was held, not merely to discuss content and structure, but to focus on relationship building, safety, trust, and finding the best fit for the group's needs. During the introductory session, the group was invited to ask questions and get to know the supervisor, clarify their goals for the group, name their needs, and reflect on what they were looking for in a supervisor.

The format of supervision is also an important component of the Learning Community. In this case, supervision takes place online via Microsoft Teams. Online Learning Communities offer easier access, reduced travel time and cost, more consistent attendance, a structured space. At the same time, they may limit non-verbal communication, create technology challenges, and allow environmental distractions. Yet when expectations are clear, online supervision can be relational, ethical, and deeply meaningful.

A further key theme that forms part of the Learning Community discussion topics is scope of practice. Counsellors are called to work intentionally and humbly within their designated scope. Referral is not a weakness; it is wisdom and ethical care. In the Body of Christ, no one carries all

gifts or responsibilities alone. Referrals are therefore not failures or handovers, but extensions of care.

Multidisciplinary teamwork allows counsellors, psychologists, medical professionals, educators, social workers, churches, and faith leaders to work together for holistic support.

From personal experience as a supervisor of a Learning Community, and the voices of its members, this approach has proven to go deeper than mere oversight.

The lived experience is one of ethical formation, servant leadership, and shared responsibility. When counsellors gather in trust, reflect honestly, and remain accountable together, supervision becomes a living expression of care. It protects clients, supports counsellors, and nurtures growth.

As the group expressed so simply: *"We sit together, we learn together, and we grow together."*

This is the essence of Learning Communities – not simply supervision, but shared formation.

Become a supervisor and/or group supervisor

CPSC invites counsellors to consider becoming registered group supervisors. Both CPSC affiliates and non-affiliates may apply, provided they meet certain requirements.

If interested, please contact Ilse at ilse.grunewald@acrp.org.za.

BIOGRAPHY

Dr Michele Rossouw is a licensed Advanced Religious Specialist in Christian Pastoral Counselling with 12 years of experience. She obtained her PhD in Theology (Pastoral Counselling) from NWU. Based in Jeffreys Bay in the Eastern Cape, she consults globally through her private practice, *You-Turn Powerfully*.

Dr Michele Rossouw serves on the CPSC Supervisor and Evaluation Committee and is a lecturer at the South African Theological Seminary (SATS). Her areas of specialisation include course development and lecturing, as well as counselling with a focus on anxiety, depression, life transitions, grief, palliative care, and guiding individuals in finding their identity in God.

She is passionate about writing and presenting CPD-accredited workshops, equipping practitioners to grow in ethical and reflective practice.

Her life motto, drawn from Meister Eckhart, *"The outward work will never be puny if the inward work is great,"* reflects her belief that inner formation shapes ethical practice, leadership, and service. ■

When counsellors gather in trust, reflect honestly, and remain accountable together, supervision becomes a living expression of care.

¹ <https://www.cpsc.org.za/cpsc-supervisors>

My Experience of Supervision

by Mercy Manyema

CPSC Supervision Conference Presenter

Introduction

In this article I share my experience in supervision as a Christian counsellor in private practice.

When I was in training at SATS (South African Theological Seminary), the issue of supervision was highly emphasized, and I therefore sought out someone to walk the journey with me from the start. I am grateful to God for the journey I have walked.

What I learned and gained through supervision

Professional community

I started my counselling journey in private practice and I was working alone. I decided to have supervision sessions right from the start to avoid feeling isolated. **The sessions helped me to feel connected and have a sense of community.** This is important because it is very easy to feel like Elijah in 1 Kings 19:10 – *“I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me”* (NLT) with the weight of issues that counsellors face daily. Supervision helps to alleviate this sense of isolation. It is difficult to share our “work stories” with friends and family because of confidentiality and speaking to your supervisor gives you that space to share, while still maintaining client confidentiality.

Professional confidence

One of the roles of a supervisor is to validate the supervisee in their work and how they handle cases. While still maintaining confidentiality, I was able to share some of my experiences in the counselling room and receive validation for my competence. It is important as a counsellor to be confident in the presence of your client, and to be the safe presence that they need. Supervisors help you to identify your strengths as well as areas that need growth. My supervisor would also share some of the lessons learned in their own counselling journey, and this helped me to realise that we are all on a journey of learning to be the instruments of God.

Empowerment

The supervisor’s role is not necessarily to tell you what to do, but to help you identify areas where you can grow and help you find the resources to do so. In going over cases, the supervisor helps you to trouble shoot, retrace your steps and identify where you can do things differently in the future. This empowers you to grow in your skill and competence. I have enrolled in several CPD



courses after identifying some competencies that I needed, e.g. Trauma Counselling.

Transference and countertransference

Transference happens when a client associates the counsellor with a past relationship, or when an emotion or attitude is displaced from one person in the client’s life to the counsellor.¹

The client can displace their feelings towards a parent or sibling onto the counsellor, and this can be negative or positive attitudes. Countertransference on the

other hand, occurs when the counsellor has a reaction towards the client.

It is important that counsellors be aware of the possibility of transference and countertransference. Because this can be an unconscious reaction, **supervision can help the counsellor to identify situations where this has happened, or where it may potentially happen.**

Putting and maintaining boundaries

In as much as we teach clients to establish boundaries, counsellors also need to implement boundaries in their own lives, personally and professionally.

As a helper, you have other roles and responsibilities in family, church and community. It’s important to safeguard these roles as well as protect your times of rest so that you can be present and efficient in all your roles.

It can be difficult to turn away people who need help but there is a danger of using up all your emotional capacity on counselling work and be completely depleted when you are with family and friends. **Supervision can help a counsellor identify areas where boundaries are needed or where they need to be tightened and implemented more efficiently.**

Here are a few examples of issues that I needed to address in my own counselling:

- Having a separate phone and contact details for business and for personal use. That way, I can protect my business hours and also protect family and rest time.
- Having a network of colleagues and mental health practitioners to refer clients to when I am unable to assist them or when their needs are out of my scope of practice. When I travel or I am on vacation, my clients will still be cared for. It also useful to have a list of emergency contact details such as SADAG toll-free number for clients who may need help urgently.
- Maintaining boundaries in conversation at church, with family or other social circles. It is possible to redirect conversations so that you don’t inadvertently end up in

a counselling conversation with a friend or cousin. I learned to encourage friends and family to book an appointment or if I cannot assist them with their issue, I will offer to give them contact details of someone else who can help them.

- The issue of boundaries also goes hand in hand with self-care. It is necessary for counsellors to care for their own physical, emotional, mental and spiritual needs. I have learned to be more intentional about getting enough sleep, exercising, drinking water and eating food that supports my well-being.

Identifying, treating and preventing burnout

In our quest to help and be used as instruments of God, we can sometimes overstretch ourselves. We run the risk of burning out when we pour out more than we are filling our own cups. **People-helping, though often a calling, is hard work and can be psychologically, physically, mentally, and even spiritually draining.**

A supervisor can help the counsellor to identify when they might be getting burned out because it may not be so obvious to the counsellor. **Being in supervision helps to raise self-awareness, and with increased self-awareness comes better self-care.**

It is important to prevent and address burnout because it can impact the effectiveness of the counsellor. When someone is experiencing burnout, they can struggle to be as present as they need to be, and they can lose patience with clients. Selfcare practices mentioned above can help to prevent or alleviate the effects of burnout.

Debriefing and dealing with triggers

In the process of counselling, a client's story can trigger an emotional reaction in the counsellor. A client's story might bring back a memory for the counsellor. In such instances, it is important for the counsellor to have a place where they can debrief, and a supervisor can do that for them. **Debriefing helps the counsellor to understand why they reacted the way they did to the client's story, and to resolve the emotions that they experienced.**

If it turns out that there are deeper issues that the counsellor needs to deal with the supervisor can also refer them to another mental health practitioner depending

on what the issues are. I have learned to seek debriefing when I deal with trauma cases, even if it initially feels like I don't need it. This, together with additional training in trauma counselling, has helped me to deal better with trauma cases.

Conclusion

Supervision in one way or another will always need to be part of Christian counselling, because it can never be an isolated profession.³

Supervision is used in other professions that work with people. Its primary purpose is to ensure that the needs of the client are met. The counsellor will learn from their own professional experience, and progress in expertise and competence.

My experience of supervision has helped me to grow as a person and as a counsellor. It has increased my professional confidence and helped me to continually look for growth opportunities in all my experiences.

BIOGRAPHY

Mercy Manyema is a Christian counsellor in private practice in Johannesburg. She is passionate about helping others navigate the difficult circumstances of life and helping them gain healing and wholeness.

Mercy believes that no one needs to face tough times alone. With a background in public health research, she strongly believes in the integration of psychology (science) and theology.

She views her counselling room as a space where she meets with clients, in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, who uses her skills and knowledge as a tool to bring healing and wholeness.

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When a patient says, "I want to die"

By Bonitta Pretorius

Giving a pastoral response to a patient's request for euthanasia in geriatric palliative care is an increasingly difficult situation that pastoral counsellors have to contend with in end-of-life care.

In South Africa the law does not permit euthanasia, but this does not hinder the patient's question: "Why must I continue living like this?"

For elderly patients in palliative care, their desire for death does not start with philosophical considerations about euthanasia, but rather with suffering itself. They are most likely experiencing physical pain, loneliness, loss of independence and depression, which in palliative care is called "total pain". **This describes the totality of the patient's pain: the physical, social, emotional and spiritual distress.**

In South Africa, where palliative care resources are limited, families are overwhelmed and feel under a lot of pressure. This intensifies the suffering, making it unbearable to the point that death seems like a viable option to gain control. **For a pastoral counsellor, the need is not to provide a quick theological answer, but to first listen to the reason behind the patient's distress.**



A request for euthanasia is rarely just about the patient's physical pain. It often reflects deeper struggles such as spiritual questions about meaning and purpose, loss of identity and dignity, unresolved relationships, the fear of becoming a burden and depression or hopelessness. When these challenges are addressed in a compassionate way, the desire for death often goes away. However, if left unattended, it makes the desires even more pronounced.

In pastoral counselling, the older person is given the space to share their story and to talk about their journey, their fears and regrets. Where their story is acknowledged, it makes them more resilient, and suffering becomes more bearable. Still, depression plays a major role in despair and the desire for death. Terminal illness places a person in a state of dependence, with the loss of health, relationships and no foreseeable plans. This can induce distorted thoughts in a person, like "My life has no value anymore" or "Everyone would be better off without me." **Pastoral counsellors can help patients challenge these thoughts by focusing on relationships, faith, meaning and finding dignity in purpose in the final**



stage of their lives. It does not remove suffering, but it could influence the way suffering is experienced.

The pastoral task at the end of life is to accompany and guide the person through suffering. Through narrative conversations, the patients rediscover their values and deepen their faith and relationships. Addressing distorted beliefs about worth, guilt, and hopelessness can be done through spiritual reflection and counselling. Finding meaning and purpose by reconnecting with loved ones, the faith community, and God brings many patients to a place where they seek peace instead of death.

A unique challenge in South Africa is an increasing ageing population with palliative care resources unevenly distributed, increasing the stress upon families having to take care of elderly relatives. In this context, **pastoral care becomes important because it provides spiritual support that is accessible, affordable, effective, and relational.**

Pastoral care cannot eliminate all suffering, but it can help patients find meaning, dignity, peace and reconciliation at the end of life.

End-of-life care is considered sacred ground because this is the space where a pastoral counsellor stands next to a dying person, helping them face their biggest fears, death and the unknown. The aim is not to squabble about euthanasia but to help a person deal with their suffering by listening deeply, restoring human connection and reminding them that even in weakness, life still has meaning.

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Bonitta Pretorius completed a PhD in Pastoral Family Therapy at the University of Pretoria in 2025. Her research is focused on end-of-life care with a special focus on euthanasia among geriatric palliative care patients. She has experience in working with the elderly and patients in different contexts, from an old age home to palliative care and hospice to the general state hospital. She provides pastoral counselling and spiritual support to the sick and terminally ill in end-of-life contexts. ■

Pastoral counsellors have a significant role to fulfil in end-of-life care, especially when faced with a patient's request for euthanasia.

Boundaries (Part 34)

By Dr Hanlie Meyer, Counselling Psychologist in private practice and CPSC affiliate

We often hear the expression: “Children are smarter than we think!”

This is so true. For the developing child, the world is an unknown place to explore. They are curious and do not know the limits of their own (in)abilities! They should in fact always reach for more than they can grasp to retain the initiative and curiosity necessary to drive development. Parents are the initial vehicles and focus of their curiosity.

Principles of early childhood development indicate that resilience is not an internal character strength but is something that must be built through the combined impact of genes and environment.

Dr. Pat Levitt explains that the developing brain architecture is powerfully influenced by positive as well as negative early experiences:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1pD50ISxP3k&t=649s>

Dr. Clyde Hertzman states that the developing child’s world centres around what they see and hear from their caregivers – hopefully their biological parents. Their visual systems are connecting to the deep structures in the brain that are associated with emotional control.



According to him this means that children who have a consistent set of human faces that they see early on life going through a wide

range of emotions, develop the neurobiological ability to decode emotion and to develop a sense of belonging. However, those children who are neglected or grow up in violent or emotionally barren environments, develop completely different coping styles and a completely different set of biological connections that do not work so well.

According to him, the child’s sensitivity to learn emotional control and build the ability to understand verbal instructions, peak before the child enters the age that he/she goes to school:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M89VFIk4D-s>

The above information emphasises the importance of the communication principles that Cloud and Townsend (2002) explain.

The emotional atmosphere in which the child grows up forms the foundation for future learning. Open and direct communication is of the utmost importance. Scripture also encourages us to live in the light. Parents who



are willing to express openly and directly what they expect or experience -- without threats or nuanced meanings -- help their children to develop the ability to decode emotions and to learn healthy responses.

Parents need to acknowledge that we are relational beings and that early on we learn primarily through relational interaction. The introverted father who just wants to spend time on his phone or in front of the television and the overworked and tired mother

who just wants to get food on the table and have some time to herself, need to take stock of their situation and help one another to get a better solution to their situation.

Non-communicative parents create an impoverished emotional environment which we have now learnt is exactly the environment that hampers brain development across the board.



Cloud and Townsend (2002, p 130) provide six principles of communication based on the “law of Exposure” explained in a previous article, that will help children develop the necessary relational communication skills:

1. Live the law of exposure yourself

This principle must be applied first in the marriage relationship and friendships. Spouses must learn to ask directly what they need from another. Your spouse is not supposed to “know” or “see” what you need from him/her. Express your needs clearly and directly.

Negotiation around how to meet one another’s needs help you as a parent to apply the same skills in communication with your children.

These skills need to be learnt – many adults have not grown up in homes where they have been taught these skills. It asks for an openness to develop and learn new ways. The parent’s brain may also have formed circuits

Your partner is not a mind reader.
Express your needs clearly.

that developed in an impoverished environment which leads to habitual behaviours that are not conducive to healthy relationships.

Communicating your needs also include communicating to other people – starting with your spouse – what they do wrong or what irritates you. Having done marriage counselling for years, I have concluded that couples' ability and willingness to give and receive this direct communication, is very limited. The underlying fear of rejection, fear of failure and even pride and the unwillingness/inability to receive open feedback regarding unacceptable behaviour, are all so debilitating and in this way the patterns are transferred from one generation to the next.

2. Make the boundaries clear

Keep in mind that boundaries are meant to ensure the safety of your children and your relationships in general.

Relationships where boundaries are not set in place or are unclear, normally spiral out of control. People do not want to hurt others, so they do not express their boundaries clearly. This often leads to nuanced communication or avoidance of those who transgress an unspoken boundary. To try and please everybody will inevitably lead to disappointment and hurt.

In all the articles I have stressed the importance of parents not being scared to harm their children by setting clear boundaries, or the fear of falling out of their child's favour due to the enforcing of boundaries. **Clearly communicated boundaries provide relational safety.** The fact that the child pushes back, is not an indication that the boundary is wrong. However, as parents you need to decide from the beginning which values and principles you want to be part of your children's internal structure.

Love and boundaries go hand in hand in connected parenting. By setting clear limits, you show your child that you care about their safety and well-being. And by lovingly communicating those limits, you build trust and respect in your relationship.
@themindfulcorner

These you emulate as part of your own internal structure. The child will most probably not stick to boundaries that are not part of the parents lived example. Use the previous articles to discuss what actions you will take to ensure your children adhere to these boundaries or rules.

3. Cure their fears and make communication safe

Part of your personal development as a Christian parent, is to learn emotional regulation yourself! In previous articles we have repeatedly referred to parents' inability to handle conflict and resistance. The normal ways employed are withdrawal, threats, defending self or open rejection.

The fact that we are the child's parent, does not make the child safe. Our constant behaviour leads to experiences of safety or unsafety. Cloud and Townsend (2002) have emphasised the necessity of consequences for behaviour to be reality consequences not relational consequences.

I have also emphasised the importance of staying relationally connected to the child while you are angry or upset with what she is doing or has done. A constant remark that I hear adults make, is that they do not trust God as a father, due to the behaviour of their parent(s).

We project the relational template we form in interaction with our parents, onto God. It is very difficult to change this template as an adult, as the conviction that God will act like the parent, has been formed with intense emotions accompanying the perceptions and interpretations.

Our introduction to God is very often based only on cognitive information not accompanied by celebration which includes emotional expression. This uninvolved "distanced" learning cannot compete with the emotional sensations triggered by the relational templates.

We are often afraid of words and emotions that express anger or disappointment, because of the possibility of rejection or abandonment involved. **The secure child will learn from the parents that expressing emotions honestly does not equal rejection, relational punishment or withdrawal.** They need to learn to transcend the times of discomfort, learning over time that there is safety in the relationship. This will help them to handle such situations in other relationships.

4. Do not reinforce non-expression

Parenting is probably the most difficult job! All the expectations to remain warm and soft when the child is defiant and withdrawn, are often just too much. It asks for lots of prayer and patience to address underlying fears and uncertainty instead of just thinking "Okay, be like that if you want to!"

As we have seen from the neuroscience, the pre-school child can only learn the words to express its feelings from the parent and needs to learn it at this young age as the sensitivity is at its peak until school age. This must be modelled by the parent. Sometimes using emojis or animal puppets can help to teach the child how to link inner feelings with facial expressions and words.

To communicate to the child that you are on the side of their fear or discomfort, but not on the side of their non-expression, is easier said than done when you are tired or stressed or have already been confronted with their behaviour for an extended period.

5. Don't get in the middle

Siblings need to work out their own conflicts. However, they will rather run to the parent and complain about the

other's behaviour forcing the parent to be in the middle. **These conflicts are the opportunities to teach them conflict management skills.** Showing empathy without getting in the middle, is important. But how will a parent manage this when emotions are high and fights turn physical? Children will tend to deny their contribution to a conflict and will tend to blame the other. The responsibility to teach skills and an attitude of openness, honesty, caring about the other and humility, never ceases.

It is important to teach the child that conflict and the discomfort caused by it, is necessary for good relationships and should be seen as a normal part of life.

Your child's safety is obviously the number one concern. That includes both their emotional and physical safety.

6. Teach your child boundary words that they can use

- "Stop."
- "I don't like that."
- "No thank you."
- "I'm playing with it right now. You can have a turn when I'm done."
- "Please don't touch me."
- "I need space."
- "That's mine. Please give it back."
- "I'm not ready to share right now."
- "I don't want a hug."
- "It's my turn now."
- "Please ask before you touch that."
- "No."

The example you set in the house and the openness with which you are willing to allow them to practice these in your relationship, will empower them to use these words in other situations.

The main guiding principle is that the relationship between you as a parent and your child, and between you as married couple, is more important than the present conflict or hurt.

As your children grow older, you can discuss these communication principles in family meetings and choose one on which the family can focus during the week.

Cloud and Townsend (2002) emphasise that boundaries with your kids is not about "making" your child do things you want them to do. **It is much more about structuring your child's existence so that he can experience the consequences of his/her behaviour.** The end goal is to help your child develop into a caring and responsible adult.

We have come to the end of the book by Cloud and Townsend (2002) on boundaries with kids. A word of encouragement to parents: God loves your child more than you do. He knows that you are not perfect – and so your child may get to know you! This will help the child to accept her own imperfection. It is important to communicate a willingness to acknowledge a mistake and to take steps to overcome it. To ask forgiveness and to forgive oneself stem from a love relationship with God as a Father and from the knowledge and acceptance that Jesus has given His life to demonstrate the love and forgiveness coming from the heart of God.

The next articles will focus more on boundaries with teens.

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When God Is Silent: A Faith That Still Sees

By Jaryd Roy Moore

There are seasons in the life of faith that no one really prepares you for.

Not the beginnings, where everything feels alive and illuminated. Not the moments of clarity, where conviction comes easily and truth feels near. But the middle places — where God seems quiet, distant, or altogether absent.

For those in counselling, ministry, and service, this silence can feel even heavier. You are not only carrying your own questions, but often the burdens, grief, and confusion of others as well. You are expected to speak hope into situations where you may, quietly, be searching for it yourself.

And yet, this experience is far from unusual.



Throughout Scripture, we encounter men and women who walked faithfully with God, only to find themselves in seasons where His presence was not immediately felt, and His voice was not clearly heard. These are not

You are often the steady presence in someone else's storm. But even the strongest among us cannot sustain that without an inner anchoring. That anchoring is not found in constant emotional reassurance. It is found in something deeper: a settled trust that God remains who He is, even when He seems silent.

moments of failure. They are part of the deeper formation of faith.

The difficulty is not only the silence itself — it is what the silence seems to say.

It can suggest distance. It can imply absence. It can even raise the question: Has God withdrawn?

But silence is not abandonment.

There is a difference between a God who is absent and a God who is unseen. Faith, at its core, lives precisely in that distinction. A faith that depends only on what is immediately visible or emotionally felt, will always struggle in these seasons. But a faith that has learned to see beyond — to trust in the character and promises of God even when they are not experientially confirmed — begins to take on a different kind of strength.

This is not a denial of struggle. It is not a call to ignore doubt or suppress honest questions. In fact, many of the deepest expressions of faith in Scripture come in the form of lament — raw, unfiltered, and deeply human.

The key is not the absence of struggle, but the direction of it. Faith does not require that we always feel certain. But it does call us to remain oriented toward God, even when clarity is lacking.

For those who serve others — especially in high-stress and emotionally demanding environments — this becomes crucial. You are often the steady presence in someone else's storm. But even the strongest among us cannot sustain that without an inner anchoring. That anchoring is not found in constant emotional reassurance. It is found in something deeper: a settled trust that God remains who He is, even when He seems silent.

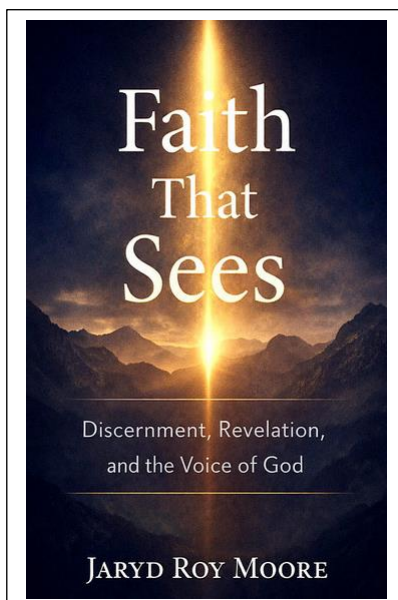
Over time, something begins to shift.

What once felt like absence becomes a space where faith is refined. What once felt like distance becomes an invitation to deeper trust. Not because the silence is easy — but because it forces us to move from relying on immediate perception to resting in something more enduring.

This is the heart of what might be called a faith that sees. It is not sight in the conventional sense. It is not the removal of uncertainty. It is the quiet, persistent conviction that God is present and faithful, even when He is not immediately perceptible.

For those walking alongside others — counsellors, caregivers, ministers — this kind of faith becomes more than personal. It becomes something you carry into the lives of others. Not as a set of answers. But as a steady presence.

And perhaps that is where this message matters most: You do not need to have resolved every question to be



faithful. You do not need to feel strong in every moment to stand firm.

Sometimes, faith looks like continuing. Sometimes, it looks like holding position. And sometimes, it simply looks like refusing to let go — even in the silence.

If you find yourself in such a season, you are not alone. And more importantly, you are not without God.

Even here — especially here — a deeper kind of sight is being formed.

About Jaryd

Jaryd Roy Moore is a teacher, writer, and former journalist with a background in English education and media. His work explores faith, perception, and the

*deeper questions of meaning, particularly in seasons of uncertainty and spiritual silence. Drawing from both personal experience and theological reflection, he writes to support and strengthen those navigating faith in real-world contexts. **Faith That Sees** is his first published book.*

Book review

“Faith That Sees’ is not a call to blind belief. It is a challenge to the modern assumption that faith and reason are enemies.

In an age shaped by scepticism, emotionalism, and fragmented worldviews, many people are left with beliefs that feel unstable, subjective, or disconnected from reality. Faith becomes something private, fragile, or purely emotional—while reason is treated as neutral, autonomous, and self-justifying. This book argues that such a divide is false, and that it leaves both faith and reason impoverished.

Drawing from Christian theology, philosophy, and lived human experience, Faith That Sees explores how belief actually works—how all people, whether religious or not, interpret the world through foundational commitments. It examines revelation, conscience, reason, perception, and truth, showing that faith is not the absence of evidence, but the framework through which evidence is understood.

This book is for readers who are tired of shallow answers—whether from modern secularism or from unexamined religious claims. It speaks to Christians who want a more coherent, grounded faith; to sceptics who are willing to examine their own assumptions; and to thinkers who recognize that every worldview stands on something it cannot prove by reason alone.

Faith That Sees invites you to recover a vision of faith that is intellectually honest, spiritually grounded, and capable of facing reality without fear—because it does not flee from truth, but sees by it.” ■

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Paperback: R269.23

Nature can nurture

By Heinrich Lottering

For many years when I read the creation narrative in Genesis, it always fascinated me why the Lord created a garden for the first human beings to live in, and not a city or mansion? Unless there is a very beneficial purpose for the garden/nature setting?

As it turns out we as human beings draw tremendous value from being in nature and communing with nature. This is both on an emotional and physical level.

When we operate in an urban environment daily, we experience sensory overload resulting in tension and mental fatigue.

What research shows

Research has shown that in natural surroundings we relax and feelings of contentment and pleasure increase, causing improved mental focus. In the outdoors, we experience a mental break which in turn helps with creativity and problem-solving abilities.

Green spaces decreased feelings of anxiety and anger and even lowered the risk of depression. When people spend time outside, they tend to be more social in these adventures which potentially strengthen relationships and all the included mental benefits of good relationships. Regularly spending time outside even improves sleep patterns and nightly rest.

A study done by the US Department of Agriculture showed that people regularly spending time outdoors have longer life spans and better prognosis for chronic diseases. A fascinating point made was that if this green space included water, like a dam, river or the ocean, the benefits were even more outspoken.

According to research time outside in nature and parks has beneficial effects on child development. A study done in Denmark examined 900 000 residents born between 1983 and 2003, and the results showed **children growing up in neighbourhoods with increased green spaces had a reduced risk of developing mental disorders later in life**¹. An interesting result of spending more time in nature which leads to more physical activity, is an increased positive sense of one self, as well as increased self-esteem.

Studies have shown that even brief exposure to natural environments can improve cognitive abilities, better concentration, increased executive brain function and perceived restorativeness. Nature exposure has also been linked to alteration in brain activity in the prefrontal cortex of the cerebrum, which plays an important role in emotional regulation.



A study done among young female students in Japan has shown that exposure to plants had a physiological as well as psychological benefit. The level of oxy-haemoglobin (blood with higher oxygen concentration) in the pre-frontal cortex increased when exposed to real plants and produced an increased sense of relaxation and contentment ².

The physical benefits

The physical benefits for spending time outside in nature are plentiful. People tend to be more active outside and in the sun like walk-

ing distances or jogging, which leads to better weight control, cardiovascular exercise, heart health and increased activated vitamin D levels. Increased vitamin D has a positive influence on one's immunity, calcium and phosphorous absorption and hence bone density.

As little as 5-10 minutes three times a week in the sun ensures higher activated vitamin D levels. We all know good physical health and mental health often goes hand in hand. It has also been reported that regular green exposure has a slight reduction of blood pressure values. It has also been shown that patients who are exposed to green foliage and plants during the first few days post-operatively have improved and shorter recovery periods.

So it is no surprise why the Lord created the first humans in the Garden of Eden surrounded by nature and all its benefits. Let us all be inspired to actively spend more time in our gardens and in nature, especially close to bodies of water!!



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Life as a Rubik Cube

By Mrs Roxanne Bailey, Career Guidance Counsellor, Independent Psychometrist and Pastoral Counsellor

Keywords:

“ 48 And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them.”

KJV Mark 6:48

“ 18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.”

KJV John 14:18

Keywords: Rubik Cube, countless, Rose Model, narrative, active listening, conundrum, dilemma, self-assurance

Introduction

Many Journeys, One Faithful Guide

Many are the journeys we undertake, and many are the tongues that speak across nations and generations. Yet through it all, we lift our voices in praise and worship, giving glory to Him with all our being.

God is our Saviour. He loves us deeply and desires that we abide in Him. In moments of need, He is our guide — ever-present, ever-faithful.

There are times when we grow despondent, when the storms we face feel too overwhelming to bear like the complexity of the Rubik Cube. God, in His mercy, gave His Son to calm the storm. What appears fierce and unrelenting can be transformed by His abundant grace.

Content

Originally called the Magic Cube, the Rubik's Cube is a 3D combination puzzle invented in 1974 by Hungarian sculptor and professor of architecture Ernő Rubik.



Did you know that a standard Rubik's Cube is a 3x3x3 puzzle, made up of 27 smaller cubelets? Interestingly, the centre cubelet is hidden and remains stationary — meaning only 26 cubelets are visible and can be manipulated. Each of the six faces displays nine coloured squares, totalling 54 on the surface.

Life, in many ways, resembles a Rubik's Cube. We twist and turn, trying to align the colours — attempting to solve the mysteries of our own existence. Sometimes, we turn in the wrong direction,

trying to match our lives to what society deems good or admirable, yet we find no resolution.

In the design of the Rubik's Cube, the mortise and tenon method, is used to hold the 26 exterior pieces together — all without a visible central piece. This mechanical structure is remarkable. And just like that unseen centre, it is God — through His Son Jesus and the Holy Spirit — who holds us together, grounds us, and gives us the ability to turn in the right direction, if we simply believe.

Much like the Cube's countless combinations, we often entrust ourselves to the world rather than to God. If only we could shift our mindset and surrender our whole selves to Him... then we would discover the true “magic cube” — a life aligned with divine purpose.

The Rubik's Cube symbolizes life's complexities — and at times, its seemingly unsolvable mysteries. In our daily walk, we rely on working memory and visuospatial awareness. Intuitive individuals may lean more heavily on their senses, while those who feel deeply may favour one sense over another. Still, the riddle of life and existence remains, and we strive to weather the storm as best we can.

According to the Collins Online Dictionary, a *conundrum* is a challenging problem or puzzle, often involving puns or wordplay, while a *moral dilemma* refers to a situation in which an individual must choose between two or more conflicting ethical options, with no clear or straightforward course of action available.

Interestingly, just as the Rubik's Cube offers countless combinations, God offers us countless chances. He gives us grace to realign, to reset, and to complete the puzzle of our lives. Even when we turn away, He finds us in the storm.

There are 52 weeks in a year — and in each of those weeks, God does not limit us to just 54 squares like the Rubik's Cube. His presence is infinite. He awaits



us at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end — and at every crossroad along our journey.

“Now, clearly, we don’t question anymore the reality of near-death experiences,” says Charlotte Martial, a neuroscientist at the University of Liège in Belgium. *“People who report an experience really did experience something.”*

As we busy ourselves with planning and preparing for life’s earthly journeys, He already knows the path that will unfold. None of our stories are concluded. Yet our human nature wrestles with fear, confronted by countless crossroads—like the many possible solutions to a Rubik’s Cube. Still, through His divine will and grace, all things fall perfectly into place. True calm arises when we pause to acknowledge His presence guiding our lives. And though we falter time and again, His mercy steadies us, reminding us that every stumble is met with His unflinching love.

This reflection resonates within the chambers of a mysterious door that opens into an unknown realm: the scenario of a wanderer navigating the countless combinations of a Rubik’s Cube. Each turn represents multiple possibilities, and the use of a key symbolizes the unlocking of many paths.

At the end of life, how do we understand sudden passing? It feels as though one is broken upon the battlefield called life. There is a valley, and in it, a message to a loved one: follow the extended tunnel and do not look back, as in the story of Lot.

Yet the one who conveys this message does so with the mind rather than the heart, for the Rubik’s Cube’s delicate combination would falter if spoken from the heart. With all one’s being, the desire is for the loved one to remain in flesh upon this earthly realm. Seeing the pain, the narrator can only exclaim: *“Maybe.”*

This was the loss my father endured. He could never say goodbye, as he was in a different hospital at the same time my mother was passing. Healing begins within the Rubik’s Cube of the mind, with its endless turns and combinations along the highway of thought. On the last day, in the final moment, there remained the chance to have said: *“I am strong for you. I am here. I am brave... I love you.”* Yet those words, unspoken, could never resonate.

Think of life as an atom with electrons orbiting around the nucleus with different energy levels, constantly moving and shifting. The emotions of someone who is in mourning, or even any human being, will experience dynamic changes and unpredictable emotions depending on how deep the loss was felt, the extend of the loss and the support base.

We try to maintain a neutral thus equal proton and neutron harmony, yet this is not always achievable since we all interact differently within the world; there will be lighter weight elements and heavier elements. If our protons and neutrons are equal, the atom is often more stable.

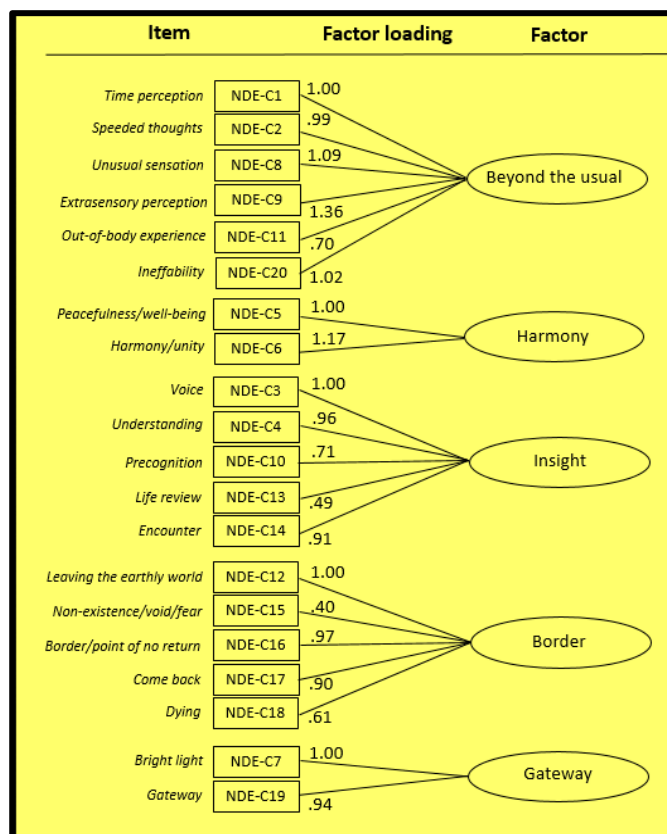
Thus, when our inner “positives” (hope, love, resilience) are balanced with our “neutrals” (patience, acceptance, calm),

we live in harmony. If there is too much negativity or unchecked positivity it can destabilize us, leading us to feel ‘like vibrations in an unacceptable nonresponding atmosphere of atoms.’

Maybe!

“There might be things said, but it should not have been said. It might be advice, but it fails on vibrations in an unacceptable nonresponding atmosphere of atoms, in escaping the exception of the unpleasing vibration!” - Frater Johann D’

Fig. 3. The 5-factor structure of the NDE-C scale: factor loadings (estimates) obtained from the confirmatory factor analysis (Study 2):



According to Neuroscientist such as C. Martial (2020), Near Death Experiences exist and this is seen as a complex field of study.

Many other neuroscientists, such as E. Facco and C. Agrillo (2012), tried to explain this Rubik’s Cube of Life by suggesting that they stem from brain disorders and/or psychological reactions to approaching death - a sort of wishful thinking in response to the perceived threat - instead of something spiritual or unexplainable; as seen by the image displayed above.

They even used a real-life case study of an unbeliever’s Near-Death-Experience to provide evidence to substantiate their point of view: the connection between brain disorders, psychiatric disorders and neurobiological disorders to end of life experiences (e.g. a tunnel and bright light). However, they could not

reach to a distinct conclusion or provide proof against the spirituality variable.

CASE REPORT by E. Facco and C. Agrillo (2012):

'Subject was an electro technician who came under our observation because he was trying to understand the meaning of a strange experience he had had a few years earlier, when he was divorcing from his wife. He told the following story:

"I was spending my summer holidays in the mountains with my four-year-old child. I had recently separated from my wife; it was a difficult time. One evening, while I was in the room where we were staying, I suddenly saw a great white light.

It was not dazzling, but its whiteness was unnatural, I mean it did not seem to be like the white light from natural or artificial sources we know, nor did it come in from outside. Then, some balls of light appeared; I did not count them, but there were perhaps five or six, and they could have been about 1.5 meters in diameter. These balls were translucent with the same colour as the light, but less transparent and thicker, though I noticed that they did not cast any shadow. At the time, I had a profound feeling as if all the beings of the world were within me and, at the same, I felt as if I were within them. The source of light was ellipsoid. It was Love and Joy, and I felt a sort of stream through me. I use the term 'stream', but it was not so clearly definable. I cannot use the term 'wind', because wind comes from outside, while I felt this stream inside me. I was so enraptured that I had stopped breathing. I was fully lucid, however, and realized that I was not breathing, so I started breathing again, but my breathing disturbed the vision, and, after a few breaths, it vanished."

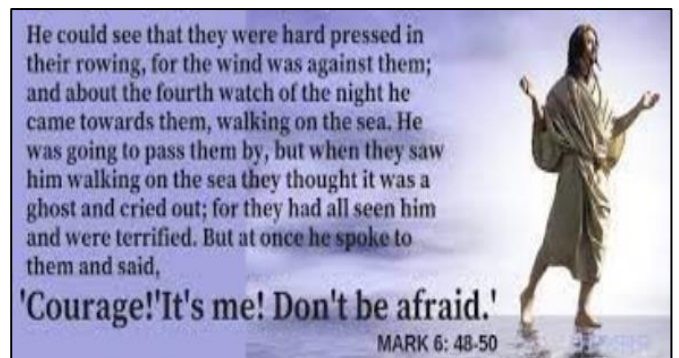
The subject reported that he had rejected any form of religion. The experience was very strong and led to a profound transformation. Now he is happy with his new wife, but he is continuing to study in search of the meaning of his experience, and of life itself.'

We strive to prove ourselves and conquer challenges—often relying on our own will. Like turning the Rubik's Cube in countless directions to suit our lifestyle and desires, we miss the deeper vision God reveals through His Son Jesus and the guidance of His Holy Spirit. Just like this individual in the neuroscientist study: he saw the white light, yet he still wanted to study to find out what happened and make sense of it from a faithless perspective. At times, our stubbornness leaves us feeling as helpless as a thorn tree or as entangled as the sticky gum of a blue gum tree. Even in our weakness, He has never abandoned us. His presence remains constant, patiently waiting to lead us back to His perfect plan.

If only we would pause and listen — with hearts rejoicing and truthful — we would hear His voice guiding us home. This is not easy for any client facing loss- the degree of the experience of the "loss".

When the Wind is Against You, You try your best. You strive to succeed. Yet at times, it feels as though nothing is working — as if every effort is met with resistance.

Mark 6:48 reminds us:



Life can feel like a spider's web — tangled, fragile, and difficult to escape. We may feel trapped, helpless, uncertain, and afraid. But the journey of miracles begins when we surrender everything to God.

There are moments when we feel shipwrecked and alone, fighting through trials that seem insurmountable. Yet even in the fiercest storm, God walks with us through every test and tribulation. Jesus enters our lives when the storm feels unbearable, bringing peace amid chaos.

How to provide guidance to a client in search of understanding of loss, anxiety, depression, fear or uncertainties? In counselling, the foundation of effective practice lies in understanding the client's story. Narrative therapy emphasizes the importance of listening to how individuals construct meaning through their personal narratives. By engaging in active listening, counsellors create a safe space where clients can explore, reframe, and reconstruct their experiences.

Narrative therapy views people as the authors of their own lives. Their problems are not seen as inherent flaws but as stories that can be re-examined and re-written.

The counsellor's role is to help the client externalize issues, identify dominant narratives, and uncover alternative stories that may empower them.

Active listening is the counsellor's primary tool for entering the client's world. It involves:

- Paying full attention without interruption.
- Reflecting and paraphrasing to show understanding.
- Noticing emotional cues and underlying themes.
- Validating the client's feelings and experiences.

Through active listening, the counsellor demonstrates empathy and respect, which strengthens the therapeutic alliance.

Amid loss, anxiety, or fear, the ROSE model designed by R.A. Bailey can be applied."

The Rose and Thorn Framework with Self-Acceptance

1. The Rose (Trust & Safety) – Carl Rogers

- Metaphor: The rose represents the therapeutic relationship—beautiful, inviting, and safe.
- Theory Link: C. Rogers (early 1940's) emphasized unconditional positive regard. By offering empathy and acceptance, you create the soil in which the rose can grow.

Practice: Build trust by listening deeply, validating experiences, and showing genuine care, through active listening.

2. The Thorns (Defences & Pain) – Albert Ellis (1955)- Rational Therapy

- Metaphor: Thorns protect the rose but can also wound. They symbolize irrational beliefs, shame, or self-criticism.
- Theory Link: Ellis taught unconditional self-acceptance—that people must accept themselves despite flaws and mistakes.

Practice: Help clients soften the thorns by challenging harsh self-judgements and reframing them into compassionate, rational perspectives.

3. The Petals (Layers of Identity) – Humanistic/Existential Psychologists

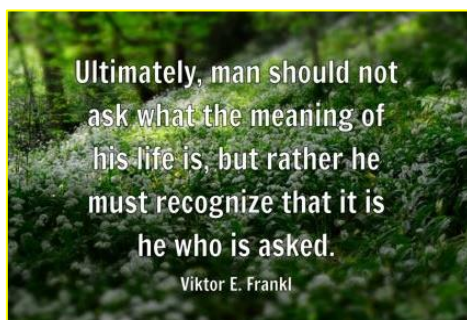
- Metaphor: Petals unfold gradually, revealing the client's values, strengths, and authentic identity.
- Theory Link: Humanistic and existential thinkers (like Rogers, Maslow, and later Hoffman) saw self-acceptance as embracing the whole self, including imperfections.

Practice: Guide clients to explore their stories, uncover hidden strengths, and embrace contradictions as part of being human.

4. The Core (Authentic Self) – Integration

- Metaphor: At the center of the rose lies the authentic self—resilient, whole, and worthy.
- Theory Link: Self-acceptance theories converge here: Rogers' self-actualization, Ellis' unconditional acceptance, and existentialists' radical authenticity.
- Viktor Frankl: Logotherapy teaches that even in suffering, individuals can find meaning. The authentic self is not only resilient and worthy, but also oriented toward purpose, transcending pain by re-authoring life's narrative around meaning.

Practice: Support clients in re authoring their narrative (primarily developed by Michael White and David Epston in the 1980's and 1990's), moving from pain to empowerment, and living in alignment with their true values. Furthermore, help clients explore their values and authentic identity (the rose's core). Guide them to ask



Frankl's central question: "What is life asking of me?" rather than "What do I expect from life?"

Support them in re-authoring their narrative not only toward empowerment, but toward meaningful empowerment—aligning choices and actions with a deeper sense of purpose. Encourage clients to see suffering as an opportunity to uncover meaning, transforming thorns into part of the rose's beauty.

How this helps in counselling:

- Visual anchor: Clients can picture the rose as their journey—trust, defenses, unfolding identity, and authentic core.
- Integration of theory: You're blending Rogers' empathy, Ellis' rational acceptance, and existential authenticity into one coherent metaphor.
- Empowerment: The rose reminds clients that beauty and resilience are already within them; therapy simply helps reveal it.

Conclusion

There are many moral dilemmas in life—conundrums that challenge our values and choices. One such dilemma is the Heinz Dilemma, which considers the situation of Heinz's wife dying while a pharmacist possesses the life-saving drug that Heinz cannot afford. The dilemma asks: since Heinz is not financially able to purchase the drug for his wife, should he steal it to save her life? Amidst life there will be many such turmoil faced and life challenges, to make decisions which are not easy.

During, emotional turmoil, when fear and loss weigh heavily, Scripture offers reassurance. John 14:18 reminds us: "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." This verse speaks to the heart of counselling, where the presence of hope and comfort can be rediscovered even in the darkest seasons. It sets the tone for therapeutic work that seeks to restore meaning and dignity to the client's journey.



The Rose Model provides a powerful metaphor for working with loss, anxiety, or fear. At the centre of the rose lies the authentic self—resilient, whole, and worthy. Viktor Frankl's insights into meaning-making resonate here: the core of the self is also the place

where purpose resides. Just as the fragrance of a rose gives it significance beyond its petals and thorns, the authentic self finds fulfilment through discovering and living out meaning. Counselling becomes the process of nurturing this blossoming, guiding the client toward new worthiness and meaning.

The counsellor's role is to gently unfold the petals of the rose, layer by layer. Each petal represents the client's values, strengths, and lived experiences. Through narrative therapy and active listening, these aspects are brought into focus, allowing the client to see themselves not only in terms of pain but also in terms of resilience. As R.A. Bailey (2026) phrases it: "I begin to gently unfold the petals, revealing the client's inner strengths and values, until we reach the core of the rose—their authentic self, ready to be re-authored into a narrative of growth and resilience." This unfolding is both a therapeutic and spiritual act, affirming the client's capacity to grow beyond suffering.

Ultimately, the Rose Model invites the client to reframe their story. Loss and fear are acknowledged, but they do not define the whole narrative. By reaching the core—the authentic self—the client is empowered to re-author their life in ways that emphasize meaning, hope, and resilience.

In this way, counselling becomes not only a process of healing but also of transformation, where the client's story blossoms into one of renewed purpose.

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Pastoral play therapy

By Dr Linda Grobler

In the journey of life, there is a wonderful time where learning and communication become one through play.

In the Bible there is a reference to play in Zechariah 8:5 (MSG): *And boys and girls will fill the public parks, laughing and playing – a good city to grow up in.*”

This is an important insight into what children do during childhood – they play. All forms of play offer unique opportunities for growth. Play is also considered the natural language of children. In this series of articles the use of play – specifically pastoral play – will be explored.



Why is working with children different from working with adults?

The unique characteristics of the child client are a challenge. **Children function in a totally different way than adults:**

- Children don't realize that they need help in dealing with their problems or that their behaviour is causing problems,
- they are brought for pastoral play, whether they want to come or not,
- they do not have the social or cognitive skills to change by themselves. They often also need help from their parents,
- they don't know what therapy is and what is going to happen and are therefore often anxious when talking to or meeting strangers (like a counsellor), and
- their use of language is often limited.



What is play?

“Playing is how children try and learn about their world. Play is therefore essential for healthy development. For children, play is serious, purposeful business through which they develop mentally, physically and socially. Play is the child's form of self-therapy through which confusions, anxieties and conflict are often worked.

Through the safety of play, children can try out their own



new ways of being. Play performs a vital function for the child. It is far more than just the frivolous, light-hearted, pleasurable activity that adults usually make of it. Play also serves as a

symbolic language. Children experience much that they cannot as yet express in language, and so they use play to formulate and assimilate what they experience.” (Oaklander (1988:157)

These are the additional factors that facilitate the difference between child & adult clients (Porter, 1983; Schaeffer, 1993; Schoeman, 2004):

- Age difference and therefore differences in developmental levels
- Different means of communication
- The way the child client interprets the client role
- child's unique perception of the therapeutic relationship.

1. Age difference and differences in developmental levels

- Short attention span
- Intellectual capacity is still in the process of developing and therefore it takes longer to gain insight into problems
- Use of fantasy is common, and the counsellor must be able to distinguish between fantasy and reality
- Functions from a strong egotistical viewpoint. The child is sometimes impulsive to gain attention and self-gratification
- Child's self-identity is still in the formation process
- Ambivalence (feeling more than one conflicting feeling at the same time) is common

- Cognitive capacity is in the developmental process or not fully developed, which means that the child sometimes does not feel empathy with others.

2. Different means of communication

- The child does not have the verbal capacity of an adult and therefore communicates more on the non-verbal level. This is especially true in play sessions.
- Verbal communication is not always reliable, as verbal capacity is not fully developed. What is said, needs to be tested at the hand of what is played.
- Verbalization of emotions is often difficult as a result of the child's lack of "feeling language".

3. Difference in handling the role of client

- A formal atmosphere is not conducive to children's healing. A counsellor sitting behind a desk immediately creates distance between her and the child.
- The child is normally not with the counsellor out of own choice, but because he was brought by a parent.
- Children have difficulty distinguishing between long-term and short-term needs (a child would rather stay with an aunt that serves ice-cream and spaghetti for every meal, not realizing the importance of balanced nutritional meals).



4. Difference in therapeutic relationship

- Children need time to build a relationship with the counsellor and the child's trust needs to be gained.
- The individual attention that the child is receiving is in itself therapeutic without interaction from the counsellor.
- Children demonstrate their feelings very clearly through actions
- Children are open and honest. If they do not enjoy the sessions, they will almost certainly tell you.

Conclusion

The difference between a child and an adult client can be daunting, but **working with a child by means of pastoral or Biblical play is extremely fulfilling**. As mentioned in a previous article: Play is natural, play is healing, play is Scriptural (Sweeney & Landreth, 1993).

In the next article, information will be given about what is needed when you intend to work with children.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Children and helping with the healing process of children within a Biblical framework has been a lifelong part of dr. Linda Grobler's life. She specializes in traumatized children. She moved her practice to Laerskool Proteapark in 2024, where she is employed to use play in the mornings to help the school's children and has her private practice in the afternoons.

Linda completed her Masters and PhD at North West University. She uses pastoral play. She currently presents 8 courses on the use of play in the pastoral care of children. She believes in experiential learning and therefore all the courses have a lot of practical techniques that can be used immediately.

Linda is happily married to David and they have 4 children and 6 grandchildren. They live on a small farm near Koster. Linda uses two dogs to assist in therapy: Jack and Patch. They are valuable colleagues. ■



Book review: *Pornography in Christian Marriage: A Biblical Healing Guide for Wives and Pastors*

by Rev Diane Pickford (Author)

When pornography is used in a Christian marriage, many women suffer silently. You love God and your husband, but carry grief, confusion, and questions in secret. This book offers biblical healing and trauma-informed wisdom for Christian wives walking through the betrayal of a husband's addiction.



- Evaluating
- Externalizing
- Exploring
- Emending
- Empowering

Other practical spiritual exercises and grounding exercises are written at the end of every chapter.

Blending devotional encouragement with practical guidance, it helps you to:

- 1) Understand what Scripture says about pornography.
- 2) Process grief, anger, and spiritual confusion.
- 3) Implement practical healing exercises.

You are not weak for being confused and sad. You are not faithless for struggling. Start reading today and begin the slow, sacred work of healing.

The book is also a resource for Christian pastors, ministry leaders, counsellors and therapists, with a chapter at the end

of the book which focusses on how Christian leaders can learn to respond better to this growing societal problem. It reveals from the women interviewed, how the pastoral response to women impacted by their husband's pornography use, is generally misinformed and inadequate.

As Christian leaders we need an informed response both biblically and pastorally, and this book offers both. It provides a compassionate framework for caring well for wounded wives. **It moves beyond simplistic answers towards biblically faithful, responsible counsel.**

The chapters hold the stories of women who have been interviewed for Diane's masters research project, a biblical analysis on pornography as well as practical spiritual exercises that promote a woman's healing. It validates a wife's lived experience and gives her hope to move forward.

The book was written so that the findings of the research project is made accessible as a healing resource for Christian women, leaders and counsellors in the church.

It incorporates the 5E Model of Christian Counselling, which integrates the Holy Spirit into the healing process, using 5 steps:

***Pornography in Christian Marriage: A Biblical Companion Guide for Wives and Pastors* by Diane Pickford offers trauma-informed, biblical guidance for healing from the betrayal of a husband's pornography addiction.**

It provides practical tools, pastoral counsel, and theological insights to help women navigate grief and establish boundaries, moving toward freedom and restoration.

The Elephant in the Bedroom.

No one speaks about it to wives. No one communicates what to do next. No one warns a young bride that pornography may one day sit like an elephant in her marriage bed, crushing the life out of her.

The vows are said, the music fades, and yet an intangible presence lingers—the world of secrecy with screens and pleasure from pixels that seem to promise intimacy but deliver loneliness instead.

There is a culture of silence around pornography.

In our gut, we know it's not normal; it has a vortex of evil that sucks people down into a pit of silence and shame. Women whose partners consume pornography often feel isolated, shameful and betrayed.

Who can you talk to about this?

Who would understand without judging you?

Reviews

“Not all wounds leave visible bruises. Some bleed quietly, fracturing trust, distorting intimacy, and causing deep pain beneath the surface. Pornography within marriage is one of those wounds. It often enters silently — dismissed, minimized, or wrapped in spiritual language and cultural normalization. Yet for many wives, its impact is profound.

This book gives voice to what has too often remained unspoken. With compassion and theological depth, Diane Pickford addresses the painful intersection of pornography and covenant betrayal. She neither sensationalizes the issue nor reduces it to simplistic moral instruction. Instead, she listens carefully to the stories of women whose marriages have been altered by secrecy and addiction, naming their trauma while preserving their dignity.

What makes this work especially insightful is its integration of Scripture and psychological understanding. It refuses to separate theology from lived experience. Rather, it shows that biblical truth, rightly understood, protects the vulnerable while confronting sin honestly. The church is called not only to preach purity but to shepherd the wounded, and this book equips leaders to do so.

For wives who feel isolated or ashamed, these pages offer validation and language for long-suppressed pain. For pastors and counsellors, they offer clarity and courage.

Above all, this book points toward restoration and the redemptive work of God."

-- Dr Candida Millar (Head of Christian Counselling, The South African Theological Seminary)

"I thought: "Where was this book twenty years ago? It's so well written and so clear, the truth cuts like a sword. This would have absolutely been a lifeline to me. I would have got so much comfort, knowledge and guidance from it. This book is so comprehensive and covers the topic so thoroughly. All Christian moms who have teenage sons should read this book."

– One of the courageous wives interviewed in this book.

"Reverend Pickford's book brings into the "light" an insidious and rife "secret sin" (Psalms 90:8) by offering hope for the wives of porn-addicted husbands, whose addiction robs them both of real intimacy. This much needed book offers hope for them both and is also a practical guide for pastors."

– Dr. Bernice Borain Ph.D. (English Academic, St. Margeret's Academy, Scotland)

"This book provides a sobering look into consequences of the secret world of pornography in marriages. Written from the Christian perspective, it does not only provide well-researched information, but also the battles that women face in their marriages. The epidemic of pornography that has infiltrated our homes due to the increased usage of online platforms and social media, has had an unbelievably destructive effect on the sanctity of marriage. This affects more than only Christian marriages, but also families, children and communities. This book provides insight, leads the readers to understanding, and provide a clear path towards healing. Well worth the read!"

– Dr Carika de Swart (Head of Culture, Michaelhouse) ■

- Available on Kindle, ebook \$5.99
- Paperback and hardcover on Amazon.com
- South African paperback from author R250.00 plus postage at dianepickford@gmail.com

BIOGRAPHY

Rev Diane is an ordained Anglican priest and Christian pastoral counsellor. She has been mentoring women and girls for over 30 years. She holds a Bachelor's in Theology (Hons.) degree and a Master's in Divinity (Cum Laude). Currently, she works as a school chaplain at an Independent church school in KZN. She is married to Andrew, a specialist psychiatrist, and they have 4 adult children. They live in the beautiful midlands of Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa.

GAMBLING ADDICTION

By Philip Coetzee

Introduction

For many individuals, gambling begins as harmless recreation; however, it can progressively develop into a debilitating addiction. Gambling addiction is a progressive disorder with significant psychological, physical, social, and spiritual repercussions.

Classified in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, fifth edition (DSM-5), as an impulse-control disorder, it is recognized as a clinically diagnosable condition by the American Psychiatric Association.

For the purpose of this discussion, the terms *gambling addiction*, *compulsive gambling*, and *pathological gambling* will be used interchangeably to refer to the same disorder. **From an integrative Christian counselling perspective, this paper explores the categories of gambling, its symptoms, the biblical perspective, the underlying roots of compulsive gambling, its consequences, and appropriate treatment approaches.**



Throughout, counselling perspectives are integrated with theological reflection. Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture references are drawn from the New International Version (NIV), alongside prescribed course material, academic texts, and scholarly articles.

1. Categories of Gambling

A comprehensive understanding of gambling requires differentiation between its various forms. Market Business News (2021) defines gambling as *the practice of playing games of chance for a stake, most often money, although other possessions may be wagered when financial resources are depleted*. Distinguishing between types of gambling assists counsellors in assessing risk levels and intervention strategies.

Four types of gambling are differentiated:

a) Recreational or Social Gambling

Recreational gambling is generally considered non-consequential. Participants maintain control over their

behaviour, compartmentalizing gambling as an occasional leisure activity rather than a compulsive necessity (Van Der Spuy, 2021c, 3-3).

b) Professional Gambling

Pro-gambling refers to individuals who derive their income from gambling activities. While controversial, this form is not automatically classified as addiction unless loss of control and compulsivity are present (Van Der Spuy, 2021c, 3-3).



c) Anti-social Gambling

Anti-social gambling is associated with personality pathology rather than addiction per se. Individuals may engage in criminal behaviour—such as theft or deception—to finance gambling activities when impulses arise (Van Der Spuy, 2021c, 3-3).

d) Pathological Gambling

Pathological gambling is characterized by obsession and compulsivity. The individual will engage in almost any praxis to secure funds for gambling. Increasing stimulation is required to achieve the desired emotional arousal, resulting in escalating behaviour (Van Der Spuy, 2021c, 3-3).

Counsellors must therefore assess which category is applicable and determine appropriate intervention steps. **From a Christian counselling perspective, gambling must be evaluated within Scriptural boundaries.**

Boundaries grounded in God's will provide protection from destructive behaviour and guide individuals toward repentance, redemption, and restoration (Cloud & Townsend, 2011, 304).

Importantly, counsellors must communicate hope. Even in destructive behaviour, forgiveness and restoration remain available through the Comforter—the Holy Spirit, the Parakletos (Jn 14:6–8; 2 Co 1:3–6).

Gambling addiction is a progressive disorder with significant psychological, physical, social, and spiritual repercussions.

2. Symptoms and Biblical Perspective

2.1 Symptoms

Newman (2018) frames gambling addiction not primarily as a financial problem but as “an emotional problem that has financial consequences.” The disorder significantly impacts interpersonal relationships and compels individuals to risk increasing amounts of value to sustain emotional gratification (Van Der Spuy, 2021c, 3-3).

The DSM-5 provides structured diagnostic criteria, enabling counsellors to distinguish between situational

gambling and pathological behaviour. Crucially, symptoms describe the disorder—not the identity of the individual (Van Der Spuy, 2021a, 1-2). From a biblical perspective, however, pathological gambling must also be understood as behaviour rooted in sinful patterns that distort one's relationship with God and others.

2.2 Biblical Perspective

Although gambling is not explicitly mentioned in Scripture, biblical teaching repeatedly warns against the love of money and the pursuit of rapid wealth accumulation. A foundational text is 1 Timothy 6:9–

10 (NIV), which cautions that the love of money leads to spiritual ruin.

Similarly, Proverbs 13:11 affirms the value of honest labour and gradual provision (Gen 3:19). These passages provide ethical guidance for individuals struggling with compulsive gambling. Counsellors, as instruments of the Holy Spirit, are called to walk alongside the addicted individual with compassion, humility, and professional competence—“not as Jack of all trades, but the best Jack we can be” (Van Der Spuy, 2021a, 1-2).

3. The Root of Compulsive Gambling and Its Consequences

3.1 Neurobiological Adaptation

Lewis (2015, 32) explains that the brain adapts in response to repeated experiences, becoming “primed to change more rapidly” through highly stimulating engagement. Repeated exposure to rewarding stimuli reinforces neural pathways, consolidating behaviours into entrenched habits (Broks, 2003, 63).

Svanberg (2018, 25) observes that addictive behaviour often appears irrational, raising the question: “Why would someone decide to do some-

thing that is obviously bad for them, and do it repeatedly?” Neurobiological adaptation, combined with emotional vulnerability and temptation, provides part of the answer.

Adams (2012, 17) emphasizes the spiritual dimension of temptation, describing sanctification as an ongoing process requiring decisive action – metaphorically “amputating a limb.” Transformation occurs through illumination (Photismo) by the Holy Spirit (2 Co 4:6) (Van Der Spuy, 2021b, 2-2).

Family members and close associates also experience the collateral damage of addiction (Van Der Spuy, 2021b, 2-2). Rogers (2011, 73) describes the “frenemy” dynamic in addiction, where relationships become transactional.

Counsellors must remain aware of transference and countertransference dynamics, recognizing that “our experiences change our biology” (Svanberg, 2018, 28).

3.2 Consequences

Pathological gambling produces bio-psycho-social-spiritual consequences. Comorbid conditions such as depression, anxiety, personality disorders, and substance abuse frequently emerge. The addiction erodes self-worth, damages family systems, and can distance the individual from Christ, described metaphorically as abandoning their first love (Rev 2:4–6).

Theologically, Christ is the First Parakletos, and the Holy Spirit the continuing indwelling Parakletos. Addiction disrupts this relational communion, intensifying spiritual alienation.

4. Treatment

Effective intervention requires integrated treatment plans addressing biological, psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions. The goal is personal responsibility and spiritual growth—Dunamo (Eph 4:13) (Van Der Spuy, 2021b, 2-2).

Support Groups

Gamblers Anonymous exemplifies communal restoration through shared testimony and accountability. Peer counselling functions as a supportive extension of therapeutic intervention (Collins, 2007:688). Within this relational environment, the counsellee begins to “explore and verbalize their problem” (Kaleo) (Van Der Spuy, 2021b, mod 2-2).

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

CBT assists individuals in restructuring distorted cognitions and weakening compulsive urges (Okuda, 2009). The counsellor maintains consistent engagement, providing supportive care and family collaboration.

Medication

Pharmacological interventions—including antidepressants, mood stabilizers, and narcotic antagonists—may alleviate comorbid symptoms and reduce urges (Newman, 2018). Hartwell-Walker (2017) stresses that treatment begins with recognition of the problem and is most

effective when combining CBT, social support, comorbid treatment, and medication-assisted strategies.

Conclusion

Gambling addiction is a complex disorder requiring multi-dimensional understanding. Participation in any gambling category carries inherent risk of escalation. Self-control and moral accountability remain essential safeguards.

Symptoms must be evaluated clinically and ethically. Christians bear a moral responsibility to align praxis with Scripture, while non-Christians must recognize the broader ethical implications of their behaviour.

Neurobiological adaptation, temptation, and relational dysfunction contribute to compulsive gambling and its destructive consequences. A bio-psycho-social-spiritual framework is therefore indispensable.

Finally, **pastoral and lay counsellors function as instruments in the hand of the Holy Spirit. As “referral specialists”** (Van Der Spuy, 2021a, 1-2), **counsellors are called to guide individuals and families through restoration**

with compassion, competence, and theological integrity—empowered by Christ and the Holy Spirit, the Dunamo (Tan & Scalise, 2016, 28; Van Der Spuy, 2021a, 2-2).

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Traumatic Incident Reduction (TIR) workshop

4 day Workshops, all 09:00 to 17:00 on Zoom:

- 26-29 May 2026
- 16-19 July (weekend)
- 29 Sep-2 Oct
- 10-13 Dec (weekend)

Healing emotional scars, setting you free...

Presented by Rev Louis Hough: Pastoral and Trauma Counsellor, Registered with TIRA and CCSA

CPD's: ACRP/CPSC 18

Organisations and groups of 8 or more can arrange to have their own workshop presented in person or on Zoom and at a discount.

Here is the opportunity you have been waiting for – to **learn effective counselling techniques that will make your counselling much easier and effective!**

Although initially developed for trauma counselling, you can use it in many other counselling situations to free clients from the negative influence of bad experiences that continue to influence them.

Traumatic Incident Reduction (TIR) is a very effective method to lessen the impact of trauma and help the traumatised individual to function at a more normal level.



TIR is recognised by the NREPP of the USA as an evidence based method of treating the negative symptoms of trauma.



CPSC CPD Event

The counsellor helps the traumatised person to work through the particular incident to a point of

resolution.

TIR gives relative (compared to other methods) quick and permanent results, often in just one session. The technique can also be applied to a wide array of other problem areas, e.g. phobias, anxiety attacks, life difficulties, etc. 4 fol-

low-up workshops and internship that leads to higher recognition is also available.

The technique can be mastered in a four day workshop to such an extent that the learner can then use it effectively immediately after the workshop.

After successful completion of the workshop, the learner can join TIRA and be listed on the Traumatic Incident Reduction Association website.

Presenter: The workshop is presented by Rev Louis Hough. He uses TIR since 2008 with excellent results and is internationally accredited by TIRA as a TIR & LSR Facilitator and Senior Trainer (one of only two Senior Trainers in SA).

Workshop cost: R6,500 that includes a workbook, 3 months supervision and 1 year membership of TIRA (International) and TIRA-SA. Discount of R300 if paid in full more than 14 days before workshop. Instalments can be arranged.

See more about TIR at www.tira.org or about Louis at www.traumahelpsa.weebly.com.

For more information or to register contact Louis Hough at 082 772 5559 or houghlouis@gmail.com

Crisis Schema Workshop – Now in South Africa

CPSC CPD Event

By Louis Hough

Are you a First Responder to Critical incidents, or do you feel that you lack in helping clients directly after a Critical Incident?

The good news is that the Crisis Schema Workshop is now available for you to equip you for this task.



The **Critical Incident Stress Integration & Support (CRISIS)** is a psychosocial, systematic, and integrative system for supporting those who have been adversely affected or overwhelmed following a critical incident. The theoretical perspective and practical application of CRISIS is based on the subject of *Metapsychology*.

Therefore, CRISIS is an approach that considers an individual's subjective reactions as being more important than the nature of the actual incident experienced.

The truly person-centered approach of CRISIS enables the provision of support across a broad spectrum of critical experiences, thus providing a functional system which is applicable in many environments.

This CRISIS Schema Workshop provides the student with the basic skills required with which to support individuals who have experienced, witnessed or were called on to help at an upsetting, distressing or traumatic incident.

Application of the CRISIS Schema fulfils several important aims when helping people following a critical incident. It:

- Provides an immediate response for people in distress
- Provides a person-centered approach
- Improves social connectedness
- Focuses on subjective reactions rather than event type
- Provides support for adverse life events not usually considered traumatic
- Enhances natural recovery
- Provides an opportunity to consider the need for further support
- Provides a functional, memorable, and repeatable model for support.



Learn to assist a traumatized person soon after a critical incident

Critical Incident Stress Integration & Support (CRISIS) is a psychosocial, systematic and integrative system for supporting those who have been adversely affected or overwhelmed by a "critical incident".

This workshop was developed for fire fighters in the UK, who help traumatized people and each other on a daily basis with this.

The basics of group debriefing will be included

In this workshop you will be equipped to facilitate a person soon after the critical incident to release emotional charge due to the incident.

This workshop will provide a **handy tool for any first responders** – police, paramedics, fire fighters, rescuers, chaplains, pastors and counsellors and many more.

It is also helpful for peers to assist each other as colleagues after they have responded to a critical incident.

Workshop information

Venue: On-line | **Dates:** 6-7 May and 14-15 Oct

Cost: R3 600 (R300 discount if paid more than 14 days before the workshop)

CPD points: CPSC 8(e2)

Registration: Louis Hough at houghlouis@gmail.com

082-772 5559

The objectives of applying the CRISIS Schema core elements are to:

- Establish and maintain positive relationships with others
- Evaluate *peritraumatic reactions*
- Support *integrative learning* and reduce *emotional charge*
- Support stabilization
- Provide information to support recovery
- Facilitate ongoing support

The CRISIS Schema Workshop is a two-day workshop and CRISIS Schema facilitators are not required to be clinically trained therapists or counsellors.

They may be lay people who are able to demonstrate trustworthiness, discretion, non-judgmental values, and are suitably placed to support their friends, colleagues, and dependents during difficult times

Biblical Foundations for Lay Counselling

Equipping Hearts to Serve

Lay Counselling within the Church Environment Course

By Marilize Howell

This lay counselling course equips pastors, leaders, and volunteers within the church with essential counselling knowledge and practical tools to support those facing emotional, spiritual, and psychological challenges.

Rooted in biblical principles and trauma-informed care, it prepares lay counsellors to offer compassionate, ethical, and Christ-centred guidance in ministry.

Why this course

- **Interactive & Supportive Learning:** Live coaching sessions and connection with fellow learners in a global classroom
- **Flexible, Accessible, Practical:** Learn at your own pace and apply real-world counselling techniques with confidence
- **Faith-Centred Impact:** Gain tools to bring restoration, hope and strength to your church community

Topics covered

- Biblical Foundations for Lay Counselling
- Trauma-Informed Care & Crisis Intervention
- Supporting Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse
- Understanding Addictions & Substance Abuse
- Grief, Loss & Healing
- Self-Care & Emotional Regulation
- Ethics, Boundaries, and The Lay Counselling Process

Ready to make a difference?

Equip your heart, sharpen your empathy, and step into authentic, Christ-centred ministry. Join the Lay Counselling Course and become a beacon of healing and hope within the Church.



CPSC CPD Event

CPD:

8 CPSC CPD points

ACRPCPSC2026/10/31MH

BIOGRAPHY

Marilize Howell is a Christian Pastoral Counsellor, lecturer at Humanitas, and specialist course developer focusing on church-based lay counselling and trauma-informed ministry.

With years of experience teaching future counsellors, she integrates biblical foundations with psychological insights to equip compassionate, effective lay counsellors.

She holds an Honours degree in Psychology, and her passion lies at the intersection of faith, neuroscience, and emotional restoration. She is currently completing her Master's degree in Psychology through Regent University (USA).

As a lecturer at Humanitas, Marilize trains future counsellors while developing accredited courses that equip lay counsellors within the church to counsel ethically, compassionately, and Christ-centred. Her work reflects a deep conviction that healing occurs where Scripture and psychology meet, guided by the Holy Spirit.

Marilize also serves as a course developer for national counselling programmes and facilitates workshops on trauma, marriage, and emotional regulation. Known for her engaging teaching style and compassionate insight, she helps believers rediscover the heart of biblical care — to love well, listen deeply, and restore hope.

Her passion is to see the Church restored to its original purpose — a place of refuge, growth, and renewal.

Marilize lives in Cape Town with her husband and four children, balancing her love for family, creative teaching, and Christ-centred community service.

For Enquiries or Registration

✉ e-mail: marilize.howell@icloud.com

🌐 Website: <https://marilizehowell.learnworlds.com/>

☎ Phone: 083 305 8111

"We don't get traumatised because we get hurt. We get traumatised because we're alone with the hurt."

Gabor Mate



Marilize Howell

☎ 083 305 8111

✉ marilize.howell@icloud.com

🌐 marilizehowell.com

Christian Pastoral Counselling

CPSC 2024P04164

Exploring Images of God in Pastoral Conversations

CPSC CPD Event

Dr Nicole Dickson
– Creative Conversations

This workshop creates a reflective and respectful space to explore how images of God are shaped within pastoral conversations.

There are moments when the name “God” is spoken with ease—and others when it carries hesitation, longing, or silence. For many, these images are deeply storied, formed through family, faith communities, culture, and lived experience. Some offer comfort and companionship; others carry traces of fear, judgement, or absence.

A narrative-informed approach invites participants to listen carefully to these stories, asking where such images were formed, whose voices they echo, and what they make possible—or difficult—in people’s lives.

Rather than offering quick theological answers, the workshop opens space for curiosity and reimagining. Within a collaborative learning environment, participants are invited to notice that the dominant image of God in a person’s story is not the only one available.

Other, quieter images may begin to emerge—of a God who listens, accompanies, grieves, or is present in the ordinary and unfinished. Through gentle practices, shared reflection, and attentive listening, participants will engage ways of tracing these alternative stories, drawing on lived experience as well as scripture and tradition in ways that are invitational and life-giving.

The workshop also invites reflexivity. **As pastoral caregivers, we bring our own images of God into the room, shaped by our histories and contexts.**

To practise responsibly is to remain aware of this influence and to choose humility over certainty.

Exploring images of God, in this space, is not about arriving at a single, correct understanding, but about nurturing a living, evolving relationship with the divine—one that honours dignity, welcomes complexity, and opens space for healing, meaning, and renewed faith.

For more information, or to register, visit <https://www.creativeconvo.org/event-list>.

This workshop is grounded in an integrative pastoral counselling framework that draws on narrative pastoral counselling, contextual pastoral theology, Ignatian spiritual accompaniment, and selected insights from the psychology of religion.

“The images of God we carry often shape our lives more than we realize.”

Exploring Images of God in Pastoral Conversations

A narrative-informed 2-day pastoral workshop
With Dr Nicole Dickson

21 & 22 August 2026

@ Northfield Pastoral Care Centre, Benoni

8h30 to 13h00

Cost: R1200

ACRP
Association of Christian Religious Practitioners



CPSC

CREATIVE CONVERSATIONS
Narrative Practices • Stories • Creativity • Solutions

CPSC CPD points: 5(1E)

visit www.creativeconvo.org to register

BIOGRAPHY

Dr Nicole Dickson is the founder of Creative Conversations, first established in 2015. Her work brings together narrative practices, pastoral care, and expressive approaches to create spaces where stories can be heard, honoured, and re-authored. With a deep commitment to dignity, ethics, and attentive listening, she facilitates workshops, retreats, and conversations that support individuals and communities in making meaning of their experiences.



Foundations of Narrative Pastoral Practices: Meet the Practices & Ideas

CPSC CPD Event

Dr Nicole Dickson
– Creative Conversations

There are moments in pastoral life when familiar words feel insufficient.

When advice feels too quick. When solutions seem to bypass the depth of what is being carried. In these moments, we may find ourselves longing not for better answers, but for a different way of being present.

Foundations of Narrative Pastoral Practices: Meet the Practices & Ideas is an invitation into such a way.

Rooted in the understanding that people's lives are shaped through story, this course offers a gentle yet profound shift—from fixing to listening, from knowing to being curious, from directing to accompanying. Here, pastoral care becomes less about offering answers and more about creating spaces where meaning can be noticed, named, and nurtured.

Participants are welcomed into a learning space that honours dignity, context, and the complexity of lived experience. Drawing on narrative therapy and pastoral theology, the course introduces key practices such as attentive listening, asking questions that open rather than close, externalising problems, and tracing threads of resilience, faith, and hope within people's stories.

Rather than positioning the pastoral practitioner as expert, narrative practice invites a posture of *collaborative curiosity*. It recognises that those we accompany are not passive recipients of care, but active meaning-makers in their own lives. Even in the midst of hardship, there are often stories of resistance, survival, and quiet courage waiting to be witnessed.

This course is not only about learning new skills—it is about cultivating a different attentiveness. An attentiveness to language, to power, to the stories that have shaped us, and to the stories that are still emerging. It is also an invitation to reflect on our own narratives as caregivers: the assumptions we carry, the values we hold, and the ways our presence participates in the lives of others. Set within a reflective and dialogical learning environment, *Meet the Practices & Ideas* offers space to engage,

FOUNDATIONS IN NARRATIVE PASTORAL PRACTICES

Meet the practices and ideas

The course is creative and practical, and participants will gain first-hand experience of each idea through their own life stories, the stories of co-participants, scripture, and theory. Learning takes place through group work, small group work, triads, pairs, and individual reflection.



Explore:

- Pastoral listening
- Socially constructed discourse
- Deconstruction
- Externalisation
- Working with metaphors
- Re-authoring

30 MAY 2026

08h30 TO 13h00

10 weeks (40 hours)

Northfield Pastoral Care Centre,
Benoni

CPSC CPD points: 7(1E)

www.creativeconvo.org



question, and practice. Through conversation, experiential exercises, and shared reflection, participants begin to embody a way of working that is ethical, hopeful, and deeply human.

In a world that often rushes toward resolution, narrative pastoral practice invites us to slow down—to listen carefully, to honour complexity, and to trust that within people's stories there are already seeds of meaning and possibility.

You are warmly invited to join this journey of learning, unlearning, and re-imagining pastoral care—one conversation at a time.

For more information, or to register, visit <https://www.creativeconvo.org/event-list>.

Deepening Presence. Honouring Story. Practicing Hope.

Being heard: Values-based listening with Emotional Logic

In a time where many people carry unseen wounds, deep disappointments, and emotional pain – the need to be *truly heard* has become one of the deepest human longings.

This course invites you into a transformative journey of learning how to listen with purpose, compassion and clarity. Rooted in the call of Isaiah 61:1 – to heal the broken-hearted and set the captives free – this training introduces Emotional Logic, a powerful and practical framework that helps people make sense of their emotions, rediscover their values, and find anchored Hope.

Whether you are supporting others or seeking deeper self-insight, this course equips you to become a safe, grounded and insightful presence in any helping relationship.

What you'll gain

Through this training, you will learn how to:

- Create and hold *safe emotional spaces* for yourself and others
- Understand the deep connection between **emotions, values and losses**
- See how practical **SMART plans** can restore what feels broken
- Navigate **ethical boundaries** in pastoral and helping contexts
- Explore how **expectations and disappointments** shape emotional responses
- Understand the impact of **Guilt** on relationships with God
- Use **Psalms of Lament** as a meaningful tool for processing loss and prayer

Values based listening with Emotional Logic changes the way you listen to people

Every person has a story to tell. When they leave your office, did they feel heard?

People bring their emotional overload into a consultation. Their overwhelm can pose ethical dilemmas which need careful consideration of our values and healthy boundaries.

In this training you will get a new toolkit to equip clients to understand their emotions. You will gain new perspectives of your own.

- Navigate change and loss with resilience
- Rediscover their voice and sense of purpose

COURSE DETAILS:

Format:

Online video training (self-paced)

Duration:

6 hours of engaging content

Flexibility:

Learn anytime, anywhere

CPD Points:

5 CPSC CPD points

Cost:

R500

A key question we explore:

How does guilt affect my relationship with God – and with others?

Who should attend?

- Counsellors, ministers and faith leaders
- Anyone supporting people through emotional or spiritual challenges
- Individuals in any caring or helping role

Join Us:

Step into a deeper way of listening. Transform the way you care. *"To hear with the ear, is an art of the heart"*

Why this training stands out:

Emotional Logic integrates naturally into Christian counselling by focusing on **values** as the foundation of emotional experience. It doesn't just offer theory – it provides a clear, practical toolkit that helps people:

- Make sense of their inner world

Registration:

Website: <https://growwithannette.co.za/helping-professions-training/>

Email: annette@growwithannette.co.za

Annette de la Porte has 43 years' experience as a social worker. She worked in two psychiatric hospitals, two prisons and two government hospitals. Her experience in dealing with emotions was developed in the school of life. She is an international Trainer and Coach in Emotional Logic and the only social worker in the world that presents training in this method.



Hané Bornman is a CPSC registered Pastoral Counsellor and international Emotional Logic and Enneagram Coach. She is also a trained pastor with a Master's degree in Practical Theology. As a farmer's wife and mother, she gained personal experience of having anchored hope in all the seasons of life.



Notes from the Admin Office

By Ilse Grünewald

Dear ACRP CPSC affiliate

The month of May holds significant Biblical and Christian significance, often representing grace and growth. May typically features significant liturgical events like Pentecost, the Ascension, and Trinity Sunday.

Key Aspects of the Month of May

- Significance of "Five" (Grace): As the fifth month, May is prophetically associated with the Biblical number five, which represents God's grace, goodness, and divine favour.
- Fruitfulness and Growth: May is often considered a time for spiritual growth and reflection.

While the Bible does not specifically mention the month of May, understanding the month's place in the calendar can provide context for Biblical events and agricultural practices in ancient Israel. (From <https://biblehub.com/topical/m/may.htm>)

Agricultural Significance

In the ancient Near East, including Israel, the month corresponding to May would typically fall within the time of the barley and wheat harvests. This period is significant in the Biblical calendar, as it aligns with the Feast of Weeks, also known as Shavuot or Pentecost.

This feast is celebrated seven weeks after the offering of the first fruits during Passover. Leviticus 23:15-16 instructs, "From the day after the Sabbath, the day you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, you are to count seven full weeks. You shall count fifty days until the day after the seventh Sabbath, and then present an offering of new grain to the Lord."

Feast of Weeks (Pentecost)

The Feast of Weeks is a time of thanksgiving for the harvest and is one of the three pilgrimage festivals where Israelites were commanded to appear before the Lord in Jerusalem.

Deuteronomy 16:10: "And you shall celebrate the Feast of Weeks to the Lord your God with a freewill offering that you give in proportion to how the Lord your God has blessed you."



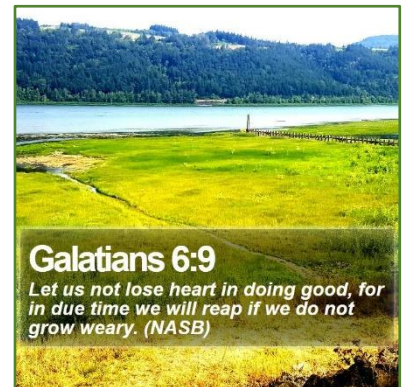
In the New Testament, Pentecost holds additional significance as the day when the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles, marking the birth of the Church. Acts 2:1-4 describes this event: "When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like a mighty rushing wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw tongues like flames of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them."

Cultural and Historical Context

In the context of ancient Israel, the agricultural cycle was deeply intertwined with religious observance. The successful harvests in May would have been a time of joy and gratitude, reflecting the Israelites' dependence on God's provision. The Psalms often reflect this theme of reliance on God for sustenance and blessing. Psalm 67:6 declares, "The earth has yielded its harvest; God, our God, blesses us."

Symbolism and Themes

May, as a time of harvest, can symbolize spiritual growth and the fruits of one's labour in the Christian life. The themes of sowing and reaping are prevalent throughout Scripture, emphasizing the principle that one's actions and faithfulness yield results in due time. Galatians 6:9 encourages believers, "Let us not grow weary in well-doing, for in due time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."



May is also a special month for me, as this is the month my last child was born and the time when I usually go on leave and visit the seaside.

The ocean never fails to fill me with a sense of wonder and peace. (Maybe because I am a Piscean?! 😊)

I will be out of the office from the 15th of May to the 8 June 2026.

Be blessed

Ilse Grünewald ■

Notes from the ACRP Conference Office

Thank you for your attendance of the **CGMP Autumn Zoom Conference** that took place on Thursday, 16 April 2026. We appreciate your participation in the conference activities and discussions.

Our heartfelt thanks to the great team who made this CGMP Conference possible, with a special thanks to Drs Nadine Dunn and Candida Millar who always manage the conference with great dedication and enthusiasm. Finally, thank you to all our excellent speakers: you were amazing, and what a learning experience for all! Well done!

As you are hopefully aware, we make recordings of the Conferences and share it with all who had registered for the conference. All the certificates have already been sent to those who attended long enough and letters with the link and Summary form have also already been sent to those who did not attend or attended for an insufficient amount of time. When you follow the link, you will not only find the recordings of the Conference, but also the notes of the speakers' presentations.

For those who did not attend, or did not attend long enough, for you to still obtain your 8 ACRP CGMP CPD points, please watch the videos, then complete and submit the Summary form to maria.jansen@acrp.org.za (Attention: Maria)

All ACRP affiliates will have their CPD points automatically recorded!

To those of you who missed the CGMP Autumn Conference that took place in April 2026, we have good news!

You can still register and receive the recordings of the presentations and Roundtable discussion. Please use the following link to register (remember to click "submit" once you have completed the form online): [Recording Reg. CGMP Autumn Conf: 16 April 2026 – Fill out form](#)

If you struggle to use the online form for your registration, please contact the ACRP Office (andrea.leipoldt@acrp.org.za) to provide you with the registration form in *Word* format.



The theme of the 2026 CGMP Autumn Conference: *The Church's Edge: Preaching, Leading, Caring, and Thriving in a Digital Age*

Fees for the above-mentioned conference recordings are:

ACRP Affiliates (in good standing): R270

Non-Affiliates: R540

Please ensure that you use the correct banking details and beneficiary reference!

ACRP Banking details

Here are the correct ACRP Banking details for the 2026 CGMP AUTUMN CONFERENCE:

Bank: ABSA

Account name: ACRP

Account number: 4085403421

Branch code: 632005

Account type: Cheque

Beneficiary Reference: (Please use your [SurnameInitialsConf25G](#) as reference for us to be able to allocate your payment).

Send your Proof of Payment (POP) to Andrea at andrea.leipoldt@acrp.org.za.

Once we have received your registration and proof of payment, you will be sent a link to the recordings, as well as to the Summary form you need to complete. To receive 8 CGMP CPD points, you will need to correctly complete and submit the relevant Summary form.

The next Conference is the 2026 CPSC Spring Conference that will be held on Thursday, the 3rd of September 2026. I hope to see you all again!!!

Maria Jansen ■

***God can take the worst things in our lives
and make them our greatest blessings
- Joyce Meyer***



Notes from the Finance Office

Dear CPSC Affiliate

I can't believe how time flies as autumn rapidly moves towards winter and we can already feel the nip in the night air.

Winter fortunately also means mostly lovely crisp sun filled days and leisurely meals in front of the fireplace with hearty soup and crusty bread at night!

Fees payable to council



CPSC Certificates

If you have paid your fees in full and checked your inbox and spam folders, but did not receive your 2026 certificate, please do not hesitate to contact me at anita.snyders@acrp.org.za or send me a WhatsApp to 066 3456 842.

The email dispatched with the 2026 certificate will come from the central ACRP system admin@pastors4africa.com

(a non-reply email address) and the subject of the email is "Re: ACRP Certificate", you might have missed it if you expected it to be from one of my email addresses.

If you paid within the last 30 days please check the spam folder as the 2026 CPSC Certificate will still be there.

The importance of a Good Standing

1. Good Standing is not a "nice to have" but an ACRP and SAQA requirement.
2. CPSC Good Standing status lapsed on 31 March 2026 for everyone with unpaid 2026 CPSC subscriptions.
3. To be in Good Standing the annual fees may not be more than 3 months overdue from 31 March 2026.
4. **115 affiliates are still not in Good Standing on 30 April 2026**
... what happens now and how can you fix it?
5. You currently have only an expired 2025 certificate, and your subscription needs to be renewed to obtain your active 2026 CPSC certificate.

If Good Standing status is lost

Within our CPSC community It also means that several of our affiliates may soon face the stark reality of:

**What happens after the Good Standing status is lost?*

**What happens if the 2026 annual fee is still outstanding by 30 June 2026?*

Let me start with the positive...

- Thank you to the more than 85% of CPSC Affiliates for paying your annual fee in full up to 30 April 2026, all still maintaining your Good Standing status.
- If you have paid your annual fee and received your 2026 certificate the rest of the message does not apply to you. May you experience a fulfilling winter season under the auspices of CPSC.
- 3rd term 2025 applicants (September, October, November and December 2025) have already paid until 31 December 2026 on registration and are all in Good Standing.
- Student affiliates don't have an annual fee until they upgrade to designated affiliation registration.

If you have not yet paid your full 2026 CPSC subscription...

This message from the Finance Office serves to remind the remaining 121 affiliates who lost their Good Standing status on 31 March 2026 of their outstanding subscriptions;

...the good news is that you can still fix it!

If you are one of those affiliates whose 2026 CPSC Subscription is still unpaid or partly paid, please make every possible effort to settle this outstanding fee ASAP. Your payment immediately restores the status.

NB: If you made special arrangements with me, please don't stress. I definitely know and remember who personally contacted me regarding payment of the annual fees.

NB Please take note

Please do not ask Ilse Grünwald for help with your 2026 CPSC Certificate, renewal notice or any other finance related matters; please contact me (Anita) at the Finances Office.

Reminders and renewal notices by e-mail

The 5th reminders of the 2026 renewal notices were distributed on 24 April 2026, sent from the ACRP central system and it will be in your inbox or spam folder.



Please remember to check your spam folder where it will remain for 30 days.

Very important: If you received an email with a renewal notice in your inbox or spam folder from ad-min@pastors4africa.com, please don't ignore it as you are definitely the intended recipient.

It is a personalized email, and you are still receiving it because your annual fee has then not yet been paid in full; you are one of the above-mentioned 121 affiliates...

The P4A system was programmed to issue a certificate on a zero balance only.

Renewal notices and certificates come from admin@pastors4africa.com.

If your fees are still fully or partially outstanding, I urge you to pay the outstanding subscription as soon as possible.

This is imperative to restore your Good Standing status.

If you for any reason didn't receive any P4A email with renewal notice at all, please don't hesitate to contact me at anita.snyders@acrp.org.za and I will gladly download and send it to you



Serious implications for cat 5, 6 and 7 affiliates with outstanding fees and lapsed Good Standing:

Affiliates who advertise on the CPSC website (Cat 5, 6 and 7) with outstanding 2026 subscriptions: The advertisements will unfortunately have to be removed from the CPSC website because you are no longer in Good Standing, and we can only have affiliates who are in Good Standing listed on the CPSC website.

This will be done on 31 May 2026 so there is still time to prevent being removed.

Please give this payment your most urgent attention!

Important notes and requests

- An EFT is the recommended method of payment if possible.
- Proof of payment (POP) should only be sent to me (Anita) at anita.snyders@acrp.org.za.
- Please do not send the POPs to Ilse Grünewald.
- **Reference to beneficiary:** Please make sure that your name and surname and reference number are in the correct field.
- The certificate should follow shortly after the allocation of payment notification email as I do the allocation and activation of the certificate simultaneously.
- Please remember to always check your spam folder after you have received your allocation of payment notification email.
- Please let me (Anita) know if you didn't receive or don't see the CPSC certificate anywhere but please remember to check your spam folder first before you contact me, as that is usually where it will be found.
- Affiliates with outstanding fees on 30 June 2026 run the serious risk of being suspended, as the ACRP Rules state that affiliation fees may not be overdue for more than six months and such affiliates need to be suspended. Please settle the fee without delay.

FINANCES OFFICE

I am the only person working with finances.

Anita Snyders | Cell: 066 345 6842 (am)

Email: anita.snyders@acrp.org.za

Working hours: Mon to Fri: 09:00–13:00

Thank you in advance for adherence to my requests as this is truly instrumental to keep the Finance Office running smoothly and sufficiently.

As always warmest regards and blessings, Anita Snyders■

<p>■ ADMINISTRATION OFFICE: Ilse Grünewald Cell: 072 705 1183 (am) Email: ilse.grunewald@acrp.org.za Mon to Wed 09:00–17:00 Thursday 09:00–15:00</p> <p>■ FINANCES OFFICE: Anita Snyders Cell: 066 345 6842 (am) Email: anita.snyders@acrp.org.za Working hours: Mon to Fri: 09:00–13:00</p>	<p>■ ACRP CONFERENCE & CPD OFFICE: Maria Jansen Email for ACRP (CPSC & CGMP) conference registrations, questionnaires, certificates, and CPD points: maria.jansen@acrp.org.za Working hours: Mon to Fri: 08:00–13:00</p>	<p>BANKING DETAILS CPSC (The Council for Pastoral and Spiritual Counsellors) Nedbank Branch: Woodlands Branch code: 136-305 Account no: 1020501553 <i>E-mail proof of payment to the Finance Office at anita.snyders@acrp.org.za. Please state your initials and last name as reference for any deposit made.</i></p>
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