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Integrating Emotion Regulation Strategies and Religiosity/Spirituality in Counseling Sessions: Perceptions of Counselors in Christian School Settings

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INTEGRATING EMOTION REGULATION STRATEGIES AND

RELIGIOSITY/SPIRITUALITY IN COUNSEING SESSIONS: PERCEPTIONS OF

COUNSELORS IN CHRISTIAN SCHOOL SETTINGS

by

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Abstract

Counselors working in religious schools have a unique opportunity to help students integrate religious/spiritual (R/S) practices, teachings, or beliefs and emotion regulation (ER) strategies to control intense emotions. The primary research question guiding this study was to explore how school counselors integrate ER strategies with R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs to support adolescents in grades 7-12. Eighteen interviews, journal entries, and responses to a vignette were analyzed using grounded theory methodology. Four males and 14 females (ages 32-69) from 15 schools, (4 all female, 5 all male, and 9 co-educational) participated in this study. The findings revealed that counselors are continuously *balancing and attuning* the counseling process, being mindful of the impact of messages from the R/S school culture, as well as their own beliefs and experiences as they strive to maintain a nonjudgmental manner, while still providing emotional or R/S guidance to adolescents. The theory of *balanced attunement* hypothesizes that when there is a balance of maintaining a nonjudgmental manner, and providing emotional or spiritual guidance in the counseling process, effective integration of R/S and ER strategies occurred. This theory provides school counselors working in religious school settings with a framework with which to examine their practice and fills a gap in the school counseling literature in this area.

Acknowledgments

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Elizabeth is a senior at a private, religious school. In my role as the school counselor, Elizabeth and I have developed a relationship over the past two years. She first came to my office because she was struggling with difficult family dynamics. Because of our previous meetings, I know that Elizabeth is a spiritual person who believes in God and identifies herself as a Christian. Today, she enters the counseling office in tears. She is crying so hard it takes several minutes for her to gain enough composure to speak. Finally, she mutters, "You're going to be so mad at me." After reassurance that the counseling office is a safe place to talk, she calms down a bit, takes a deep breath, and begins to talk. Elizabeth shares that a few weeks ago she got drunk for the first time and went too far sexually with a boy that she didn't know very well. Other students know about the incident and are calling her derogatory names. She shares that she doesn't know who she is anymore or what she believes.

The Problem

This fictional scenario is not unusual for a secondary school counselor working in a religious school setting. There are multiple perspectives a school counselor could focus on such as behaviors, thoughts, feelings, or solutions when conceptualizing an approach to help Elizabeth. What do current research findings suggest are important factors to consider when deciding what to focus on in a counseling session with an adolescent and in developing an overall comprehensive counseling program?

There is a body of research that suggests that children and adolescents who are able to demonstrate self-control, which includes the ability to regulate emotions, perform

at higher levels academically, and report higher levels of psychological well-being (McCullough & Willoughby, 2009; Mischel, Shoda, & Rodriguez, 1989; Urry & Poey, 2008; Yonker, Schnabelrauch, & DeHaan 2012). Duckworth and Seligman (2006) found that self-control was a better predictor of academic performance than intelligence. In addition, Vohs and Baumeister (2004) found that people with high self-control have lower levels of alcohol and substance abuse, and fewer depressive symptoms.

There is also a body of research that suggests that religiosity/spirituality (R/S) can positively influence an individual's physical health, psychological well-being, and academic performance although the mechanisms of why this positive correlation exists remain unclear (Berry, 2005). For example Hill, Burdette, Ellison, and Musick (2006), found that youth who score higher on measures of religiousness are less likely to drink and smoke. Berry (2005) pointed out that there are several variables that have been empirically studied and shown to some of the positive effects of R/S. For instance, religious/spiritual teachings, beliefs, and practices are believed to promote healthy coping strategies and a healthy life style. Other variables include the social support that a religious community can provide, and religion's influence to "socialize children to conform with society's norms" (McCullough & Willoughby, 2009, p. 2). However, George, Larson, Koening, and McCullough (2000) pointed out these variables account for only an estimated 35-50 percent of the relationship; therefore, other explanations need to be explored.

McCullough and Willoughby (2009) suggested that self-regulation may be one of the variables that contributes to the positive correlation between R/S and overall physical, and psychological well being as well as higher levels of academic performance.

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McCullough and Willoughby (2009) defined self-regulation as "the process by which a system uses information about its present state to change that state" (p. 3). These authors pointed out that self-regulation is a broad concept that includes self-control and the ability to regulate one's emotions. McCullough and Willoughby (2009) stated that self-regulation, thus far, has been overlooked as a possible explanatory factor that might contribute to the positive effects of R/S.

Yet, as will be explained later in this chapter, while there is some research in the school counseling literature that has discussed the importance of the role of R/S in school counseling there are no research studies that have explored R/S in a religious school setting. In addition, there is very little research in the school counseling literature that informs counselors about how they might incorporate self-regulation or emotion regulation in a counseling session. If McCullough and Willoughby (2009) are correct, school counselors working in religious school settings have a unique opportunity to thoughtfully integrate R/S practices, teachings, and beliefs and self-regulation, including emotional regulation, into counseling sessions and a counseling program.

Background on Research Studies on Emotion Regulation

The research literature on emotion regulation is found in journals from a variety of disciplines. A PsycINFO search of the terms "emotion regulation" and "adolescents" in peer reviewed journals published in the last decade yielded 305 articles. The types of journals in which most of these articles were published were psychological, psychiatric, specific to adolescent development, or in the behavioral science domains. A similar search with the addition of the term "counseling" yielded 28 articles. A majority of these articles were found in the *Journal of Counseling and Development*, the *Journal of*

Counseling Psychology, social work journals focused on adolescents, or journals focusing on adolescent development. A search of the *Professional School Counselor* journal yielded 34 articles on self-regulation, two on emotion regulation, and one on a program that incorporates emotion regulation into a school counseling program.

A review of *School Psychology Review,* one of the major professional journals for school psychologists, using the term "self-regulation" yielded five articles while the term "emotion regulation" yielded no articles. Searching the same journal, using the term "emotion" 14 articles were found; however, only one of those articles focused on adolescents. Although emotion regulation is a widely studied topic in early childhood and adults, Gullone and Taffe (2012) point out that few studies examine emotion regulation during adolescence. It seems reasonable to conclude that while emotion regulation is viewed as a cornerstone of mental health, and there is research taking place on this topic throughout several disciplines, there is still much to know about how adolescents develop healthy emotion regulation skills; especially how these skills might be supported and developed in a school counseling setting.

Background on the Concept of Emotion and Emotion Regulation

The term emotion regulation was first studied in the late 1970's and originated in the field of developmental psychology; however, interest in the construct of emotion can be traced to early philosophers (Gross, 1998; Gross & Barrett, 2011). Solomon (2008) stated early philosophers such as Descartes, Plato, and Aristotle often used the master-slave metaphor when discussing emotions and this metaphor still influences psychologists' and counselors' view of emotion today. That is, early philosophers thought emotions were inferior to reason in that they were primitive and even dangerous;

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thus, the thinking was that emotions should be controlled. Emotion and reason were thought to be "two conflicting and antagonistic aspects of the soul" (Solomon, p. 3). Emotions were generally thought to be confused perceptions and distorted judgments that need to be overruled by reason. There was great emphasis placed on the cognitive aspect of emotions and some emphasis placed on the physiological and behavioral aspects of emotion while little if any attention placed on the social dimension of emotion (Solomon, 2008). Overall, early philosophers valued cognition and the use of cognition to control or master emotions was encouraged (Solomon, 2008).

Today, there are generally four areas in the field of psychology that study emotion regulation, each from a different theoretical lens (Gross & Barrett, 2011). First, the Freudian perspective views emotion regulation as a defense mechanism. For example, Freud believed that suppression and avoidance behaviors, two emotion regulation strategies, were subconscious defense mechanisms used to protect one's ego. Thus, the purpose of emotion regulation, using a Freudian view, is ego protection.

A relational model, based on Lazarus's work on stress and coping, is the second lens through which emotion regulation can be viewed (Gross, 1998; Gross & Barrett, 2011; Saarni, 1999). In this model, each emotion has a relational theme that elicits an appraisal process that assesses if the relationship between the individual and the environment is either harmful or beneficial. Lazarus (1993) views coping as a process that is dependent on both intra- and inter-individual traits and circumstances. He hypothesized that there are two major functions of coping, problem-focused and emotion focused. Problem-focused coping strategies emphasize changing the relationship between the person and the environment by acting on either the individual or the

environment. Emotion focused strategies seek to change either the way the stressful

situation in the environment is attended to or to reframe the relational meaning of what is

occurring between the environment and the individual. Lazarus (1993) stated that

western cultures tend to favor problem-focused strategies while distrusting emotion-

focused strategies, a possible remnant of early philosophical thinking.

Third, attachment theory represents a functionalist approach to emotion regulation

(Bowlby**,** 2005**;** Calkins & Hill, 2007; Saarni, 1999). Through this lens the social

response others give to us is important and becomes the basis for subsequent

relationships (Hazen & Shaver, 1994). Calkins and Hill (2007) suggested that successful

and flexible emotion regulation strategies are developed as a child's caregiver helps an

infant to minimize distressful emotions by reading the child's emotions correctly and

responding in ways that minimize the child's distress. Bowlby (2005) hypothesized that

these repeated interactions between the caregiver and infant create internal working

models that form templates for future relationships. This lens acknowledges the

importance of social interactions, primarily with caregivers, as the cornerstone of healthy

emotion regulation.

Finally, the social-constructivist lens of emotion, like the functionalist approach,

emphasizes the social context in which emotion is experienced (Saarni, 1999). However,

in addition to the social context, the social-constructivist view also takes into

consideration the individual's unique social history and one's current cognitive and

developmental level of functioning (Saarni, 1999).

For the purpose of this study the author is influenced by Lazarus's (1993)

relational model which considers an individual's relationship with one's environment,

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and the social-constructivist model, which emphasizes the importance of the social

context in which emotions are manifested. Emotion regulation will be theoretically

examined under the social-constructivist lens with its emphases on not only one's social

experiences but also one's developmental level as each play an important role in the

understanding of emotion regulation. Emotion regulation strategies are defined as tactics

that help one "respond in a more flexible. . . way. . . in order to obtain a more adequate fit

with situational demands" (Stegge & Meerum, 2007, p. 267). Later in this chapter,

Lazarus's relational theory and the social-constructivist theories of emotion will be

discussed in a larger, theoretical framework.

Background on Research Studies on Religiosity/Spirituality

There is research that supports incorporating R/S into school counseling programs

because R/S has been shown to be a protective factor for adolescent development in some

studies (Davis, Lambie, & Ieva, 20011; Sink, 2004). In fact, research suggests that there

is a positive inverse correlation between poor mental health as measured by substance

abuse, depression, and suicidal ideation and level of spirituality (Dew, et al. 2008).

However, it is important to note as Berry (2005) pointed out that there is criticism

of the quality of research that promotes R/S as a protective factor for psychological

health. For example, there are concerns about construct measurement because the terms

R/S are often not consistently, clearly, and conceptually defined (Miller & Thoresen,

2003). Another concern that Miller and Thoresen (2003) discussed is the highly abstract

nature of R/S making these variables latent and multidimensional. In other words, R/S

can only be measured through outward indicators such as the number of times one self

reports attending church in a month. These types of indicators miss the complexity of the

constructs of R/S by ignoring the "behavioral, affective, cognitive, and volitional dimensions" (Berry, p. 635). Another criticism discussed by Berry (2005) is that studies often do not attempt to provide the mechanism explaining the "whys" of the relationship between R/S and health. There may be a correlation between R/S and physical and emotional health but we don't understand why that correlation exists.

In spite of these criticisms, Berry (2005) stated that research in this area seems to have provided evidence, albeit weak, for a relationship between R/S and overall physical and psychological health. McCullough and Willoughby (2009) reviewed literature on possible links between R/S and overall well being, using a model of self-regulation as a lens through which to organize the empirical studies and, like Berry (2005), concluded that there seems to be a weak correlation between R/S and physical and psychological health. Both Berry (2005) and McCullough and Willoughby (2009) suggested continued study in this area and stated the role of qualitative research could help to better understand how and for whom R/S might be a protective factor.

In 2004, an entire volume of the *Professional School Counselor* journal was devoted to the topic of incorporating spirituality in school counseling programs. However, since that time there have been only nine articles devoted to this topic. A PsycINFO search of the terms "religion or spirituality" and "counseling" and "adolescents" in peer reviewed journals from 2002 through 2013 yielded 51 articles. A perusal of those 51 articles found that four were related to a school counseling setting. Moreover, there were no articles that examined the integration of R/S and emotion regulation strategies in a school setting.

Background of the Study of Religiosity/Spirituality as an Academic Discipline

There are researchers who think that religion and spirituality are powerful social and psychological forces (McCullough & Willoughby, 2009; Urry & Poey, 2008). Although early philosophers and psychologists such as William James were interested in religion's impact on individuals, for most of the 20th century the field of psychology ignored the academic study of religion which during this time period was not yet separate from the concept of spirituality (Schlehofer, Omoto, & Adelman, 2008). The field of psychology focused on studies that examined the use and impact of psychoanalysis and behaviorism, which were on the rise during the early years of the 20th century rather than the study of religion (Roehlkepartain, Benson, King & Wagener, 2006; Weaver, Pargament, Flannelly & Oppenheimer, 2006).

However, in the mid to late 20th century, there was a renewed interest in the academic study of religion within the field of psychology (Corrigan, 2004; Paloutzian & Park, 2005). This upsurge in interest is thought to have occurred for several reasons. According to Corrigan (2004), one possibility was the influence of Paul Tillich, an influential Protestant theologian, who referred to religion as "one's ultimate concern" (p. 4). Corrigan (2004) stated that Tillich's interest in religious signs and symbols may have contributed to an upsurge in academic studies on hidden influences of religious symbols and one's behavior. Thus, there was a renewed interest in studies focused on individuals involved in religious practices, symbols, and activities.

The results of studies on resilience and coping suggest R/S are protective factors in adolescent development and are thought to be another contributing factor to the increased interest in the academic study of R/S (Kim & Esquivel, 2011; McCullough &

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Willoughby, 2009). Kim and Esquivel (2011) stated that psychologists theorize that religion serves as a "meaning system that provides purpose" (p. 757) in highly stressful situations and that "spiritual values serve to maintain an optimistic outlook on life" (p. 757). According to Kim and Esquivel (2011), psychologists also hypothesize that R/S provides social support, and guidance for moral conduct.

Thus, there were several areas of research that led to increased interest in R/S the later part of the 20th century (Paloutzian & Park, 2005). Paloutzian and Park (2005) stated that this interest in the study of religion as an academic study led to the establishment of a new division of the American Psychological Association, the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality in 1976. The addition of this division suggests that the academic psychological community recognizes that R/S impacts the emotional well-being of many people (Park, 2005).

One of the problems when studying religion is finding agreement on a definition (Roehlkepartain, Benson, King & Wagner, 2006). In addition, in the past 35 years, there has been an interest in the term "spirituality" (Weaver, Pargament, Flannelly & Oppenheimer, 2006). At one time, the terms religion and spirituality were seen as synonymous (Hill & Pargament, 2003; Schlehofer, Omoto and Adelman, 2008; Seifert, 2002). That is, throughout most of history the term "religion" was viewed as both an individual and an institutional construct (Hill & Pargament, 2003). Hill et al. (2000) stated that R/S are multidimensional, complex concepts. Hill and Pargament (2003) stated that more recently "religion" has evolved into meaning the institutional construct that is focused on a "fixed system of ideas or ideological commitments" (p. 64) and can carry a negative connotation in that institutional beliefs are often viewed as "dogmatic,

authoritarian, and inhibiting expression" (p. 64). In contrast, the term "spirituality" has

evolved to mean the individual, personal experience of one's belief system, god, or a

greater power and can carry a positive connotation in that spirituality is viewed as

"individual, subjective, and freeing expression" (p. 64). Religiosity is briefly defined as

the content of one's religious belief system, the conduct of one's religious activities, and

the centrality of religion in one's life (Pearce & Denton, 2011) but ignores the idea of the

search for meaning of something sacred.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher relied on DeHaan, Yonker, and

Affholter's (2011, p. 193) definition of R/S that states, "R/S is an active personal

devotion and passionate quest largely within the self-acknowledged framework of a

sacred theological community." To further explicate and clarify the construct of R/S for

this research the author relied on concepts from the work of Zinnbauer and Pargament's

(2005) and Pearce and Denton's (2011) definition of the terms spirituality and religion,

religiousness, or religiosity. Zinnbauer and Pargament (2005) defined spirituality as

one's "search for the sacred" (p. 37). As Pearce and Denton (2011) stated, all types of

spirituality at the core involve one's "personal search and desire for a meaningful

connection to something or someone sacred" (p. 15). The terms religiousness, religion,

and religiosity were defined as "a search for significance in ways related to the sacred"

(p. 37). Pearce and Denton (2011) stated that religiosity consists of three components:

the content of one's religious beliefs, the conduct of one's religious activities, and the

centrality of religion in one's life. The centrality of religion in ones life parallels

Pargament's definition that specifically stated "spirituality is the heart and soul of

religiousness and is the core function of religious life." (p. 37). The terms religious,

religiousness, religiosity were used in conjunction with the terms spiritual and spirituality because the purpose of this study is to better understand how school counselors help students integrate their search for the sacred including a worldview that incorporates the sacred in every part of one's life with strategies to regulate the emotions they experience in everyday life situations. Thus, both religiosity and spirituality include the concepts "sacred," "significance," and "search." Chapter Two will further define terms and constructs and explain the author's bias that the terms R/S be incorporated together for the purpose of this study.

Purpose Statement

Religious schools are in a perfect position to incorporate a holistic, relational, developmental, and spiritual approach to a school counseling program as it would be expected that the school counselor would hold to the same beliefs, practices and teachings of the religious school (Goodell & Robinson, 2008). According to the Council for American Private Education (CAPE) approximately 10 percent of all students in the United States enrolled in K-12 grade attend private schools, which would compute to some 5,488,000 students (http://www.capenet.org). There are approximately 33,366 private schools in the United States and 75 percent of all private schools are religious. Thus, some four million students are enrolled in religious private schools.

4,116,000 1,372,000

55,000,000

- All students
- Students enrolled in private religious schools
- Students enrolled in private non-religious schools
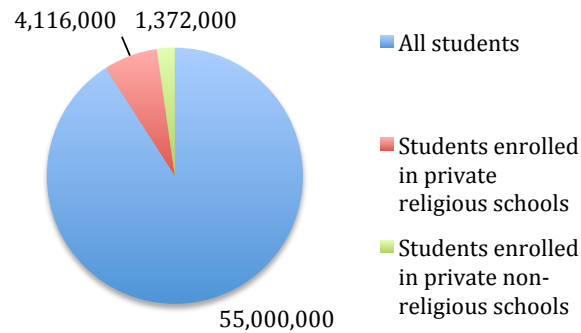
Figure 1.1. Number of students K-12 enrolled in private religious schools.

While the constructs of emotion regulation and R/S are being studied in a variety of disciplines, there seems to be little exploration of how or if school counselors are actually integrating these constructs into practice. McCullough and Willoughby (2009) posited that self-regulation, which includes regulating one's emotions might be one of the variables that help explain why R/S is a psychological, social, and emotional protective factor. Research designed to explore this phenomenon might be the first step in informing best practice. Given that there are close to four million students attending private, religious schools, this setting is ideal for exploring how school counselors might integrate and utilize emotion regulation strategies and R/S practices, beliefs, and teachings.

The goal of this qualitative study was to explore how school counselors working in religious settings, with adolescents, grades seven through twelve, integrate ER strategies and R/S beliefs, practices, and, teachings into counseling sessions. In order to determine if gender influenced a counselor's use of emotion regulation strategies, participants from schools that are all male, all female, or coeducational were included. In addition, this study explored how school counselors working in religious settings perceive the positive and negative consequences of integrating ER strategies with R/S

practices, beliefs, and teachings when working with adolescents, grades seven through

twelve.

Research Questions

The intent of this study is to answer the following research questions.

1.   What specific emotion regulation strategies do school counselors use
     when working with adolescents grades seven through twelve in
     religious school settings?

2.   What are the religious/spiritual practices, beliefs, teachings, that school
     counselors in religious school settings perceive to be most important
     when working with adolescents?

3.   How do school counselors working with adolescents, grades seven
     through twelve, in religious school settings describe ways in which
     they work with students to integrate the emotion regulation strategies
     with the student's religious/spiritual practices, beliefs, and teachings in
     counseling sessions?

4.   What student characteristics do school counselors working with
     adolescents, grades seven through twelve, in religious school settings
     perceive to be the most important to consider when integrating emotion
     regulation strategies with religious/spiritual practices, and teachings?

5.   How do school counselors perceive the positive outcomes of
     integrating and utilizing emotion regulation strategies and
     religious/spiritual practices, beliefs, and teachings?

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6. How do school counselors perceive the negative outcomes of integrating and utilizing emotion regulation strategies and religious/spiritual practices, and teachings into counseling sessions?

I decided a qualitative study using a grounded theory approach was the most appropriate research design to answer these research questions. (This decision making process will be discussed in detail in Chapter Three). I interviewed 18 counselors working in Christian religious school settings. Prior to the interview I asked them to answer guiding questions about a vignette, and asked them to write in a journal after sessions in which they perceived using emotion regulation strategies integrated with R/S into the counseling session. The aim of this study was to fill a gap in the school counseling literature and to begin professional discourse among school counselors concerning best practice when integrating emotion regulation strategies and R/S.

Limitations and Assumptions of the Study

This study was limited to school counselors working in religious, Christian schools located in the Midwest. Because this study is qualitative and designed to understand the school counselors' subjective experiences, it is not generalizable to other settings. A third limitation is that this study focused only on adolescents, grades 7-12. Finally, while the researcher made every attempt to be transparent about her own biases, background, and Christian beliefs, and attempts were made to triangulate the data by coding journals as well as interviews, making decision points clear and transparent to the reader, the researcher's background must be considered when reviewing results of the study.

There are several assumptions of this study. The first assumption is that school counselors working in religious school settings believe that inquiring about a student's R/S beliefs and R/S development is an important and, to some degree, an expected part of what is required of them given the context in which they are working. Another assumption is that school counselors working with adolescents in religious school settings were utilizing ER strategies to help adolescents develop these skills even if the counselor was not aware of using them. A third assumption was that school counselors understand what it looks like to incorporate R/S into a counseling session.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

There are approximately 55,000,000 students enrolled in grades K-12 in the United States (http://www.capenet.org) of which approximately 10%, or 5,500,000 students, are enrolled in private schools (http://www.capenet.org). The Council for American Private Education (CAPE) reports that 75% of all private schools in the United States are religious. Thus, there are approximately 4,000,000 students attending private religious schools in the United States. There are 33,366 private schools in the United States and approximately 78% of them are based on a Christian worldview (http://www.capenet.org). Therefore, there are approximately 25,000 Christian schools that might employ a school counselor who in turn would be serving a significant number of students.

Academic achievement and psychological well being are both important factors in adolescent development (Erickson & Phillips, 2012; Matson & Coatsworth, 1998; McCullough & Willoughby, 2009). There is evidence to suggest academic achievement measured not only by grade point average, but also by the number of years of higher education in which a student participates can have long-term effects on one's lifelong socio-economic status (Erickson & Phillips, 2012). Matson and Coatsworth (1998) identified academic achievement as a developmental task to be accomplished in adolescence so that a firm foundation is laid for higher education. In addition, psychological well-being is linked to higher levels of emotional health and overall measures of subjective well-being (McCullough & Willoughby, 2009). Since school counselors are encouraged to develop comprehensive programs that focus on students' academic performance, social-emotional functioning, and career development (ASCA, 2005) it is important for counselors to have an understanding of the complexities of

possible mediating factors that contribute to a student's academic success and psychological well-being.

There are some research studies that have found a positive correlation between emotion regulation, higher levels of academic achievement, and psychological well-being (Briggs, Akos, Czyszczon, & Eldridge, 2011; Brigman & Campbell, 2003; John & Gross, 2004; Urry & Poey, 2008). Emotion regulation (ER) and the use of emotion regulation strategies are important to consider when a counselor is developing a comprehensive school counseling program (Brigman & Campbell, 2003). Emotion regulation is defined as "a set of processes by which emotions are regulated" (Gross & Thompson, 2007, p. 7). James Gross and Thompson's (2007) model of the process of emotion generation, and what the authors refer to as the five families, or groups, of emotion regulation strategies will be discussed in detail later in this chapter. It is important to note that there is little research in the school counseling literature that discusses emotion regulation or emotion regulation strategies, especially with adolescents.

Gender creates another interesting dimension to consider when examining a school counselor's use of ER strategies. Men and women from various cultures hold the belief that women are more emotionally reactive than men (Brody, 1997; Hess et al., 2000). There is some empirical evidence that supports this widely held stereotype (Bradley, Codispoti, Sabatinelli, & Lang, 2001; Lucas & Gohm, 2000). In general, however, results of empirical studies of gender differences in emotion reactivity are mixed (McRae, Ochsner, Mauss, Gabrieli, & Gross, 2008). Nonetheless, the perception of the stereotype that women are more emotional than men may make a difference in a school counselor's use of ER strategies.

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ER is a complex construct that cannot be studied in isolation (Thompson, Lewis & Calkins, 2011; Urry & Poey, 2008). The literature on ER often overlaps with literature on self-regulation, theories of emotion, developmental psychology, neuroscience literature focusing on executive functioning, and theories of attribution (Urry & Poey, 2008). Since research strongly suggests that emotion regulation must be studied as a set of complex processes, not as a singular phenomenon each related construct will be defined as it relates to emotion regulation and academic performance in the context of schools, and when possible Christian schools.

There is also a body of research that suggests religiosity/spirituality (R/S) are positively correlated with higher levels of academic achievement (Erikson & Phillips, 2012: Jeynes, 2003, 2009; Regnerus, 2000; Regnerus & Elder, 2003). In addition, there is research to support that R/S is positively correlated with psychological well-being (Dew et al., 2008; McCullough & Willoughby, 2009; Urry & Poey, 2008; Wong et al., 2006; Yonker, Schnabelrauch & DeHaan, 2012). For example, R/S is a protective factor against the development and persistence of mental disorders such as anxiety and depression, and risk behaviors such as substance abuse, delinquent behavior in youth (Dew et al., 2008; McCullough & Willoughby, 2009; Urry & Poey, 2008; Wong, Rew, & Slaikeu, 2006; Yonker, et al., 2012). Smith, Denton, Faris, and Regnerus (2002) stated that 85 percent of adolescents between the ages of 13-18 report some type of religious affiliation.

It is unclear why R/S serves as a protective factor for adolescents (George et al., 2000). Variables such as the social support a religious community provides, and the promotion of healthy coping strategies have been empirically studied as possible

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explanations that contribute to the positive correlation between R/S and overall physical and psychological well-being (George et al., 2000). However, George et al. (2000) stated that these variables account for only 35-50 percent of the correlation.

Given the assertion by George et al. (2000) it is highly likely that other mechanisms, yet to be identified, exist that might explain why R/S serves as a protective factor for adolescents. McCullough and Willoughby (2009) reviewed literature on the positive effects of R/S using self-regulation as a framework. School counselors often help students improve self-regulation skills by using strategies to identify goals, monitor progress, and, measure outcomes (Brott, 2008). School counselors also help students improve emotion regulation strategies by helping them identify feelings, recognizing the intensity of those feelings, and learning to manage feelings so a student's goals are ultimately achieved (Brott, 2008). Yet, there is a dearth of research in the school counseling literature that examines how a counselor working in religious school settings might incorporate R/S beliefs, practices, and teachings into counseling sessions and how R/S might impact one's emotion regulation skills.

In sum, there is research that supports an adolescent's ability to regulate emotions can contribute to higher academic performance, and overall psychological well-being (Gross & Thompson, 2007; Gullone, Hughes, King & Tonge, 2012; McCullough & Willoughby, 2009). There is also research that suggests R/S is correlated with academic achievement, psychological well-being, and can serve as a protective factor in adolescent development (Levenson, Aldwin & D'Mello, 2005; McCullough & Willoughby, 2009; Urry & Poey, 2008; Zee, Hermans, & Aarmoutse, 2008). McCullough and Willoughby (2009) suggested that self-regulation, including the ability to regulate emotions, might be

a variable that helps explain why R/S is a protective factor for adolescents. School counselors working in a religious school setting are in a unique position to incorporate both R/S and emotion regulation strategies into counseling sessions. However, there is a void in the school counseling literature on these two topics and no research in the context of a religious school setting.

Filling this gap in the literature is important for several reasons. First, as discussed earlier, there are a significant number of school counselors working in a Christian school setting; therefore, a study of counselors working in this setting seems logical. Second, the stereotypic belief that, in general, women are more emotional than men may impact a counselor's use of ER strategies and is important to examine. Given the body of research that suggests both R/S and use of healthy ER strategies are protective factors in adolescence, it also seems logical to examine how school counselors working in Christian school settings integrate R/S practices, beliefs, and teachings with ER skills. Moreover, McCullough and Willoughby (2009) posited that the ability to regulate one's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors may be a variable, yet to be explored, that accounts for some of the relationship between R/S and overall well-being. The purpose of this study is to fill a gap in the school counseling literature by exploring if there might be a core concept(s) that captures how school counselors working with adolescents, grades 7 through 12, in Christian schools integrate R/S practices, beliefs, and teachings with ER strategies into counseling sessions by answering the following research questions.

1. What specific emotion regulation strategies do school counselors use when working with adolescents grades seven through twelve in religious school settings?

2. What are the religious/spiritual practices, beliefs, teachings, or beliefs that school counselors in religious school settings perceive to be most important when working with adolescents?

3. How do school counselors working with adolescents, grades seven through twelve, in religious school settings describe ways in which they work with students to integrate the emotion regulation strategies with the student's religious/spiritual practices, teachings, or beliefs in counseling sessions?

4. What student characteristics do school counselors working with adolescents, grades seven through twelve, in religious school settings perceive to be the most important to consider when integrating emotion regulation strategies with religious/spiritual practices, teachings, or beliefs?

5. How do school counselors perceive the positive outcomes of integrating and utilizing emotion regulation strategies and religious/spiritual practices, teachings or beliefs?

6. How do school counselors perceive the negative outcomes of integrating and utilizing emotion regulation strategies and religious/spiritual practices, teachings, or beliefs into counseling sessions?

The following section of this chapter will provide the theoretical framework for this study along with a review of Fowler's theory of faith development. The next section will frame ER in the larger construct of self regulation, define emotion and ER, examine

some of the research on concepts related to ER, and review some of the literature on ER strategies. The third section will include a review of the history of R/S education in the United States, a review some of the research supporting R/S as a protective factor in adolescent's overall psychological well-being, a review of some of the research on religious schools in the area of academic achievement, and a review of the literature related to how counselor's might conceptualize integrating R/S into counseling sessions.

Theoretical Framework

Conceptually, it is important to ground a qualitative study in a theoretical framework. A theoretical framework helps provide focus in regard to the concepts and constructs that will be studied (Merriam, 2009). Developmental-contextual theory speculates that there is a bi-directional relationship between an individual and the context in which that individual lives (Lerner, Freund, De Stefanis, & Habermas, 2001). That is, an individual is affected by context, and one's own development. For example, the development of one's temperament varies across different cultures. In addition, studies have shown the level of an adolescent's delinquency is similar to that of one's peers (Ojanen & Little, 2010). At the same time, an individual's development and context is affected by the individual (Vondracek & Porfeli, 2002). Ojanen and Little (2010) pointed out that an individual is not just a passive recipient impacted by one's environment and context. The individual actively processes what is taking place and then acts on the context and environment to make changes. Thus, developmental contextual theory suggests that social, psychological, developmental, and behavioral differences occur not only between individuals but also between an individual and one's social context.

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I have chosen this theory for several reasons. First, the theory encompasses the role of development in an individual's life. Lerner et al. (2001) believe that it is important to consider the role of physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development when working with and studying children and adolescents. These authors state that constructs such as an individual's temperament might impact the manner that one experiences and expresses emotion. There is recent research to suggest that development of the frontal lobes of the brain impacts one's ability to regulate emotions (Paus, Gachter, Starmer, & Wilkinson, 2012). Second, this theory posits that development does not occur in isolation. Instead, there is a bi-directional relationship between an individual and the context in which that individual lives (Lerner et al., 2001). In other words, the context that Lerner et al. (2001) define as the family, community, and society in which a person is placed matters in the development of that person. This is important theoretically to this study given that students attending a religious school setting (context) would likely be exposed to frequent teachings, beliefs, and practices that are germane to the religious school in which they are attending, thus having an impact on the development of the student. Likewise, the student has an impact on the religious school and is not just a passive recipient of the religious school's teachings. As the student actively processes the religious teachings, the student may pose questions, doubts, or disagreements that impact the context. One example of this might be if other students grow tired of a student's questions and doubts and socially pull away from the questioning student. According to developmental-contextual theory, this social isolation would have an impact on the student's further social development.

Developmental contextual theory is consistent with the relational and social-constructivist view of emotion mentioned earlier. Lazarus's (1993) relational model of emotion states that emotions have a relational theme between the environment and the individual. Again, the importance of the relationship between the individual and the environment is evident. Furthermore, this theory serves as a framework with which to view emotion regulation strategies. That is, according to Lazarus (1993) emotion focused strategies serve to either change the way the environmental, external situation is attended to or the relational meaning of what is occurring between the individual and the environment is changed. Thus, Lazarus' (1993) framework of emotion takes into account both the impact of the context on the individual and how the individual can impact the context.

In addition, developmental-contextual theory is compatible with social-constructivist theory because of its view of the importance of an individual's social history (Saarni, 1999). That is, the impact of the social context in which one lives and in which emotion is experienced impacts one's development (Saarni, 1999). According to Saarni (1999), one's social history is defined as the environmental contexts, including the contexts' beliefs and assumptions, to which one has been exposed. A religious school setting is an example of an environmental context that has an impact on how an individual gives meaning to a situation or life event. Saarni (1999) stated that one learns to give meaning to context-dependent experiences through social exposure and one's current developmental level. Thus, developmental-contextual theory is compatible with the view that R/S occurs within the framework of an individual and a community (Zinnbauer, Pargament, & Scott 1999)**.**

Historically, prior to the separation of terms "religion" and "spiritual" the term religion was viewed as both an individual and an institutional construct (Hill & Pargament, 2003). More recently, Hill and Pargament (2003) pointed out that some researchers have used religion to refer to an external institution with fixed doctrines and beliefs while spirituality has evolved to mean an individual's personal belief system and relation with god or a greater power. For the purpose of this study, the researcher will rely on DeHaan et al. (2011, p. 193) definition of R/S that states, "R/S is an active personal devotion and passionate quest largely within the self-acknowledged framework of a sacred theological community." In this study, the terms R/S refer to the combination of one's content of beliefs, religious conduct, and the centrality of religion or "one's search and desire for connection to something of someone sacred" (Pearce & Denton, 2011, p. 15) in a person's life. This search for meaning often includes a community of believers who belong to an institution with an espoused doctrine, beliefs, and practices that in this study are taught and reinforced in the school setting. Developmental contextual theory provides a theoretical framework in which one can examine and take into account an adolescent's R/S given the bi-directional relationship between an adolescent's developmental stage as well as the impact of the context of a religious school.

Religious and Spiritual Development

School counselors are encouraged to develop programs grounded in a theoretical base designed to meet the needs of all students in the context in which they serve (Green & Keyes, 2001). Green and Keyes also point out the importance and complexity of accurately integrating the role and function of a school counselor in developmental

theory. As part of a school counselor's training, coursework is required that prepares the counselor to understand the cognitive, emotional, and psychological development of students (www.cacrep.org/doc/2009%20Standards%20with%20cover.pdf). However, the development of faith or the developmental process of acquisition of R/S beliefs is not typically included in this coursework (Bloch, 2004). The following section will discuss general views on the development of R/S beliefs and Fowler's theory of faith development.

While the scientific study of R/S has received more attention in recent years, the development of adolescent spirituality has been a neglected area of study in the scientific literature (King & Boyatzis, 2004). Cognitively, King and Boyatzis assert that adolescents are able to move beyond concrete cognitions and to begin to reflect on more abstract, existential, and transcendental concepts of God. King and Benson (2006) pointed out the importance of understanding how R/S might serve as a possible protective factor and contribute to overall positive development especially in adolescents, given that this is a developmental stage generally considered to be a time of identity formation. Yet, King and Boyatzis stated that less than 1% of studies in the developmental science literature focus on the development of adolescents' R/S development. It is important for counselors working in religious school settings to be aware of the cognitive, developmental basis of the acquisition of R/S practices, teachings, and beliefs so they can better understand students' struggles and questions.

There is some cross-cultural evidence to suggest that young children have "naturally developing receptivity to many core religious beliefs" (Barrett, 2012, p. 150). Harris and Koening (2006) cited several studies suggesting that children accept the

existence of and draw conclusions on everyday occurrences about the existence of first-hand unobservable phenomena that is normally hidden from view. For example a child as young as five or six, believes that the brain is responsible for thinking skills, such as counting and remembering. By the time a child reaches seven or eight, children connect their identity with the brain. That is, if a pig's brain was implanted into a child, the child would think that he or she was a pig (Johnson, 1990). The reoccurring pattern that was found in children's thinking was that children network information from the discourse, language, explanations, and comments presented by trusted adults about phenomena that cannot be observed first hand. It is hypothesized that children then rework these pieces of information to go beyond the explicit explanations that have been provided by adults and form conceptualizations that make sense to the child at a given developmental stage (Barrett, 2012).

Likewise, children do not receive first hand information about God but in a similar fashion to the way a young child forms conceptualizations of non-observable, but real, science information, children form conceptualizations about belief in God or a higher power (Harris & Koening, 2006). It is important to note that Harris and Koening (2006) do not claim that children are programmed to believe in a certain theological system of belief but these authors hypothesized that children are programmed to believe in the existence of God or a higher power. Harris and Koening (2006) found cross-cultural comparisons about children's acquisition of religious ideas to include the assumptions that "superhuman beings with thoughts, wants, perspectives, and emotions exist" (p.137).

Fowler's Stages of Faith Development

Faith development theory was first conceptualized by James Fowler in the 1970's with the purpose of understanding the process of how one conceptualizes God, or a Higher Being, and how that belief in God or a Higher Being influences one's core values, beliefs, and meanings in one's life and in relationships with others (Fowler & Dell, 2006). In early 1970, Fowler was teaching at Harvard Divinity School and was influenced by the work of Lawrence Kohlberg, who was teaching psychology at Harvard's Graduate School of Education. Fowler's work developing a theory of faith development was also influenced by Carol Gilligan who has studied and written about women's development and Robert Kegan, who has studied and written about the development of "self."

Faith development theory and research has focused on a general understanding of faith that is the foundation of cultural meanings, social relations, and personal identity (Fowler, 1981). Fowler defines faith in an inclusive sense that extends even beyond the largest world religions, Christian, Islamic, and Judaic. That is faith development theory includes how one acquires faith in anything. Fowler and Dell (2006) define faith as:

> an integral, centering process, underlying the formation of beliefs, values, and meanings that (a) give coherence and direction to persons' lives, (b) link them in shared trusts and loyalties with others, (c) ground their personal stances and communal loyalties in a sense of relatedness to a larger frame of reference, and (d) enable them to face and deal with the challenges of human life and death, relying on that which has the quality of intimacy in their lives (p.36).

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It is important to note that while Fowler's stages are based on ages, and rely on

one's cognitive, and social-emotional development a person's faith development can stop

developing at any point. The first stage of Fowler's faith development theory is called

primal faith and is approximately from infancy through age two. During this stage,

Fowler points out the importance of an infant's secure attachment to the parent/caregiver.

Fowler hypothesized that this first attachment builds the foundation for what Erikson's

theory of development refers to as basic trust. Thus, the first step of faith development is

shaping a child's disposition so that (s)he might learn to trust and value meaningful

commitments (Fowler, 1981; Fowler & Dell, 2006).

The second stage is called the intuitive-projective stage and lasts from

toddlerhood through early childhood. In Erikson's stages of development, the

fundamental issue at this age is autonomy versus shame and doubt. Fowler and Dell

(2006) stated that the intuitive-projective stage is characterized by "a style of meaning

making based on an emotional and perceptual ordering of experience" (p. 38). At this

age and stage, death is a focus of danger and mystery for a child. Questions of security,

safety, and power of those the child relies on for protection are common at this stage.

Children of this age are drawn to symbols, images of power and size, and stories that

represent powers of good and evil. Therefore at this stage, there is the potential of

"aligning powerful religious symbols and images with deep feelings of terror and guilt, as

well as of love and companionship" (p. 38).

During middle childhood and beyond, children move into the mythic-literal stage

of faith. At this stage, the child sees fairness as the guiding principle. Therefore,

goodness is rewarded and badness is punished. This stage wanes when one begins to

realize that bad things happen to good people. In fact, Fowler and Dell (2006) coined the term "11 year old atheists" for children who temporarily or permanently give up their faith at this stage. Gilligan's work (1982) suggests that girls often move through this stage more quickly because of their tendency to give more attention to the dynamics of relationships. At this stage, the use of symbols and concepts is still relatively concrete. There is not yet any analytical reflection of one's faith as a part of the narrative story of one's self and life in general.

The fourth stage of faith development, the synthetic-conventional stage appears at the onset of adolescence and is the stage at which metacognition can now occur. That is, an adolescent can now think, reflect, analyze and synthesize on his/her own thinking. At this stage, identity of self and others is of most importance. According to Fowler (1981), adolescents are now able to take another person's perspective into account when thinking about their own identity or the identity of others. Representations of God or a Higher Being at this stage can consist of qualities such as love, understanding, and a source of comfort in times of stress. However, God/Higher Being representations can also result in shaming or narcissistic qualities (Fowler & Dell, 2006). The important milestone that has yet to be achieved at this stage, according to Fowler and Dell, is a "third-person perspective." That is, the adolescent is not yet able to construct a perception of self that takes into account both one's own beliefs about one's identity and others belief about one's identity. Thus, there is an over-reliance on the evaluations of significant others in the adolescent's environment.

The next three stages of faith development are the later developing stages and the differences in these stages are often more subtle than earlier stages. The next stage is one

of individuative-reflective faith. This is the stage in which one develops the ability to think critically on the values, beliefs, and commitments of one's faith. Fowler and Dell (2006) noted that this is often a painful process. Another important marker of this stage involves one's individual struggle with self-identity and self-worth in relation to significant others, institutions, and the worldview that "anchored one's sense of being up until that time" (p. 41). Questions that one often struggles with at this time include: Who am I separate and apart from someone's daughter, son, friend, spouse? Who am I apart from my educational or occupational identity? At this stage, religious symbols, beliefs, and traditions are closely examined.

In stage five, conjunctive faith, Fowler and Dell (2006) hypothesized that a person is reflective of an adult thinker who is able to see that truths of all kinds can be viewed from multiple perspectives. Balancing one's faith and the tension that exists between multiple perspectives challenges a person at this stage.   This is the stage that makes sense of paradoxes. For example, one begins to understand that one can have both masculine and feminine qualities and that God or a Higher Being may be seen as all-powerful yet may limit this quality in order to grant humans agency and freedom. Individuals at this stage are genuinely interested and open to other truths, religions, and cultures and believe that open dialogue with others from truths that differ from one's own help to deepen understanding of self and others. The outcome of this stage is to develop new ways to interact with God, self, and others.

The final stage of faith development according to Fowler (1981) is universalizing faith. This stage is characterized by one's passion that all creation manifests a Higher Being's goodness and all of creation should be one in peace. In this stage, those who at

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an earlier stage of development were viewed as enemies are now viewed as children of a Higher Being who deserve to be loved unconditionally. People who reach this stage are committed to social justice and change. Fowler and Dell (2006) stated that few people reach this change and cite Dr. Martin Luther King, Mother Teresa, and Mohandas Gandhi as examples of this stage of faith development.

Critique of Fowler's Faith Development Theory

There are those who would disagree with Fowler's theory of faith development. Streib (2005) stated that most of the studies done on Fowler's theory have been dissertations and argues that Fowler's theory has not been empirically tested. While Fowler's book on faith development is typically one of the top four best sellers in the area of religious education, interest in faith development is largely found in the United States with only some interest in Europe and virtually no interest in other parts of the world. In addition, the underlying assumptions of Fowler's theory leads to a rather rigid structural model that draws heavily from a psycho-dynamic orientation influenced by Piaget and Erikson. That is, elements of one's life such as experience and function are not adequately accounted for in this theory. In spite of these criticisms, Fowler's theory is important to consider because of the developmental basis of the theory when working with adolescents who disclose that R/S is important to them.

The following section will provide background on the concepts self-regulation, emotion, and emotion regulation.

Definition of Self-Regulation

There are several definitions of self-regulation (Cole, Martin, & Dennis 2004).

Pintrich (2000) defined self-regulated learning as an:

> active, constructive process whereby learners set goals for their learning and
> then attempt to monitor, regulate, and control their cognition, motivation, and
> behavior, guided and constrained by their goals and the contextual features of the
> environment. These self-regulatory activities can mediate the relationships
> between individuals and the context, and their overall achievement. (p.453)

While other definitions of self-regulation exist, the definitions share the importance of planning, guiding, and adjusting behavior en route to a goal, which are all important to academic achievement (Carver, 2004; Carver & Scheier, 1998). In fact, Duckworth and Seligman (2006) suggest that self-regulation can be a better predictor of academic performance than intelligence.

The model of self-regulation proposed by Carver and Scheier (1998) is based on a systems perspective and the theory of cybernetics. In this theory, self-control is viewed as a dynamic process in which behavior conforms to a standard through feedback loops (Vohs & Baumeister, 2004; Wiener, 1948). Generally, the Carver and Scheier (1998) model of self-regulation consists of three functions. The first function is an input function that includes one's perception of the self and the environment. The second function is a comparative function that compares one's current state to a reference value, which is a goal, standard, or ideal. The third is an output function that attempts to reduce any type of discrepancy that might exist.

Carver and Scheier (1998) proposed that this model requires several abilities that are essential for academic and behavioral success. First, clear goals must be set and

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organized as this promotes effective management. Second, sufficient self-monitoring is necessary so that one can identify discrepancies between one's goals and current performance. Finally, sufficient motivation is required to change or continue one's behavior. McCullough and Willoughby (2009) suggested that R/S may influence these abilities.

Self-Regulation and Academic Achievement

The importance of self-regulation, of which emotional regulation is a component, and its effect on academic performance from kindergarten through high school is well documented (Blair & Razza, 2007; Brigman & Campbell, 2003; Lapan, Kardash, & Turner 2002; Zimmerman & Kitsantas, 2005). Shoda, Mischel, and Peake (1990) conducted a landmark empirical study in which preschool students were asked to delay gratification of eating a marshmallow with the promise of receiving a greater reward later. A six-year follow up of those students found a cautious but positive link between a child's ability to delay gratification and performance on the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT).

Brigman and Goodman (2001) developed Student Success Skills for school counselors to use in classroom or group counseling sessions. This program was developed based on research by Masten and Coatsworth (1998) and Wang, Haertel, and Walberg (1994) who found the following skills critical to school success: "cognitive and meta-cognitive skills such as goal setting, progress monitoring, and memory skills; social skills such as interpersonal skills, social problem solving, listening, and teamwork skills; and self-management skills such as managing attention, *motivation, and anger* [emphasis

added]" (p. 93). This list of skills includes both self-regulation skills and the ability to regulate one's emotions.

In 2007, Diamond, Barnett, Thomas, and Munro studied the impact of "The Tools of the Mind" (Tools) curriculum on reading and math competence between two groups of preschool children in a low-income urban school district. Diamond and Lee (2011) stated that recent research suggests four qualities - creativity, flexibility, self-control, and discipline - are needed for school success. These qualities all involve executive functions (EF) of the brain, which include cognitive processes such as "flexibility, inhibition (self-control, self-regulation), and working memory" (Diamond & Lee, p. 959) and are better predictors of math and reading competence than scores on intelligence tests (Diamond & Lee).

Diamond and Lee (2011) explained that the "Tools" curriculum, first developed by Bodrova and Leong (1993), is designed to improve executive functioning (EF) which is defined as (a) "inhibitory control (resisting habits, temptations, or distractions), (b) working memory (mentally holding and using information), and (c) cognitive flexibility (adjusting to change)" (p. 1387). The curriculum focuses on development of (EF) through activities such as child created play plans that help the child plan, and organize their play prior to initiation of an activity.

Blair and Razza (2007) found that EF in low-income preschool children had a moderate positive correlation to math achievement and acquisition of letter knowledge and a significant but low positive correlation to phonemic awareness. There is a growing body of research to suggest that working memory and inhibition is related to reading and math achievement scores in students from preschool through high school (Diamond &

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Lee, 2011; McClelland, Morrison & Homes, 2000). Diamond and Lee found that

students who participated in the "Tools" curriculum scored higher on measures of EF

than students in a control group who participated in the district Balanced Literacy

curriculum. In the following section the concept of emotion and emotion regulation will

be defined and the relationship of self-regulation and emotion regulation.

An Overview of the Definition of Emotion

Before discussing emotion regulation, it is first important to understand the

definition of emotion. Psychologists have had an interesting history of changing outlooks

on what constitutes emotion and whether or not emotion even exists as a separate

construct from basic physiological motivational responses (Frijda, 1986). Frijda

explained that at one point B.F. Skinner, a behaviorist, claimed there was no difference

between tears caused by eye irritation and tears caused by emotional distress. The

thinking was that emotion was merely an organism's reaction to adapt behaviorally to a

situation. In contrast to this thinking, Campos, Campos, and Barrett (1989) posited the

following definition of emotions that is still widely accepted today: "emotions are not

mere feelings, but processes of establishing, maintaining, or disrupting the relations

between the internal or external environment, when such are significant to the individual"

(p. 395).

Gross and Thompson (2007) illustrated a dual-process model of emotion that they

propose captures both the automatic and controlled processes that precede a person's

behavior in response to an emotion (See figure 2.1 below). An automatic response is

defined as the unconscious or implicit processing of information while a controlled

response is the extent to which the automatic processing of information is attended to and

then expressed in thoughts, feeling, and behaviors (Barrett, Ochsner & Gross, 2007; Gross & Thompson, 2007). Controlled responses involve conscious, explicit processing that relies on "attentional resources, is volitional, is largely goal driven, and can be used to modulate automatic processes when the outputs they produce conflict with valued goals" (p.175). In this model, some event or "goal-relevant stimulus," (p. 175) either internal or external occurs. This external event or internal cue is the trigger that produces a sequence of complex brain and physiological changes that make up an emotional response. Gross and Thompson explained that the stimulus situation or internal cue is attended to which gives rise to the next step, appraisal. Appraisal is defined as an individual's assessment of the situation including the situation's importance or power, and its relevance (Gross & Thompson, 2007). Gross and Thompson stated that there is general agreement among researchers that appraisal gives rise to emotional responses. These researchers explained the box between situation and response represents an individual's unique "experiential, behavioral, and neurobiolgical response system" (p. 5).
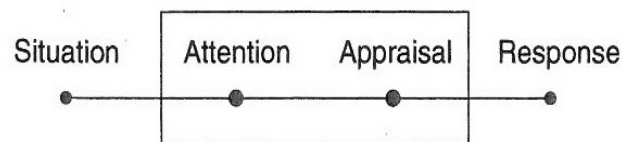
Figure 2.1. The modal model of emotion. Reprinted from *Handbook of Emotion Regulation* (p. 5), J. Gross & R. A. Thompson, 2007, New York: Guilford Press. Reprinted with permission.

Concepts Related to Emotion

The constructs of affect, mood, and emotion episodes can muddy the definition of emotion so clarification of these terms is necessary (Gross & Thompson, 2007). Gross and Thompson (2007) stated that affect is often used interchangeably with emotion; however, affect is more clearly defined as the behavioral or experiential aspects of emotion. These researchers posited that affect, emotion episodes, and mood are subordinate to the overarching concept of emotion. Emotion episodes are referred to as plots or scripts and are the story or sequence of events surrounding an emotion. Finally, mood differs from emotion in that moods are longer in duration, while emotions are more fleeting (Gross & Thompson, 2007).

Gender and emotion. One of the most robust stereotypes about gender differences is that women are more emotionally expressive than men (McRae et al., 2008). There is research that supports this stereotypic belief that is held by men and women of all ages, even across cultural backgrounds (Hess, et al., 2000). Another common stereotypic belief is that the intensity of an emotional experience is stronger for women than men (Fabes & Martin, 1991; Shields, 2003). Shields pointed out that the emotions of pride and anger are the exceptions to this stereotype. That is, men are generally perceived as being more emotionally expressive of pride and anger; however, other emotions such as happiness, sadness, disgust, and fear generally fit the stereotypic belief that women are more emotionally expressive and feel these emotions more intensely (Fabes & Martin, 1991).

Another way to examine gender differences in emotional reactivity is by measuring physiological responses to emotion through measurements such as such as

heart rate, skin conductivity, and facial expressions (Bradley et al., 2001). Interestingly, these physiological studies only sometimes support gender differences (Bradley et al., 2001). Studies have also been done that examined neural differences or differences in brain activity in ways men and women emotionally react. Again, these studies have produced mixed results with some studies supporting increased activity in the amygdala in men versus women (Hamann, Hamann, Nolan, & Wallen, 2004) while other studies show no differences in activity in the amygdala (Wager, Phan, Liberzon & Taylor, 2003). Wager et al. explained that the amygdala is thought to be the part of the brain that is active during emotional reactions, thus seeing a higher degree of activity in men's amygdala was surprising. Overall, the evidence supporting a neurological difference in how men and women react to negative emotional stimuli is unclear (Wager et al., 2003).

Because of the mixed results from research examining physiological and neural gender differences in emotional reactivity, McRae et al. (2008) hypothesized that gender differences to emotional reactivity and intensity might be due to gender differences in emotion regulation. This study included 25 participants, 12 men and 13 women ages 18-22 and utilized both self-report measure and use of an fMRI (functional magnetic resolution imagery). Participants were asked to view a negative stimulus (picture) and to look and let him/herself respond to the picture. Next, participants were asked to look and then attempt to down regulate, or reduce, the negative emotion caused by the picture stimulus using cognitive reappraisal, an ER strategy that will be discussed in more detail later. The participants were instructed to reappraise the negative stimuli using one of the following three statements: (a) It's not real, (b) Things will improve with time, or (c) Things aren't as bad as they appear to me. In addition to the fMRI, participants were

asked to rate on a scale of one (weak) to four (strong) how negative they felt when shown the picture.

McRae et al. (2008) used a repeated "measures general linear model" (p. 149) with the experimental conditions, look negative, decrease negative, or look neutral as a "within-subjects factor and gender as a between subjects factor" (p. 149). Follow-up t tests were analyzed to test for main effects of reactivity (look negative versus look neutral trials) and regulation defined as decrease negative versus look negative trials and interactions with gender. Results indicated that the self-reported feelings of negativity (emotional intensity) were not noticeably different between men and women and both genders were equally able to use the cognitive reappraisal strategy. No nerual differences were noted between men and women when shown pictures of negative stimuli (emotional reactivity) as evidenced by activity in the amygdala. However, when instructed to down-regulate the negative emotion using cognitive-reappraisal, men showed significantly less activity in the amygdala than women. In addition, men showed less activity in the prefrontal region of the brain that have been documented in other studies as being more active during the cognitive regulation of emotion. The third neural difference noted was that women showed more activity in the ventral striatal portion of the brain than men. This part of the brain is thought to be involved in the reward pathway. Overall, McRae et al (2008) concluded that the results of this study may predict that men show greater levels of automatic emotion regulation when down regulating emotions than women. The importance of this finding will be discussed in the next section.

Emotion Regulation Defined

Given the complexity of the definition of emotion, and the influence of stereotypic beliefs, it is not surprising that the definition of emotion regulation is also complex (Eisenberg, Spinrad, & Eggum, 2010; Thompson, 1994). Thompson (1994) defined emotion regulation as "the extrinsic and intrinsic processes responsible for monitoring, evaluating, and modifying emotional reactions, especially their intensive temporal features to accomplish one's goals" (p. 27-28). One can compare this definition to Pintrich's (2000) definition of self-regulation and see the overlap of concepts such as monitoring, evaluating, and accomplishing one's goals. In addition, using Carver and Scheier's (1998) model of self-regulation an individual needs to be able to accurately identify one's emotional state, compare that state to one's goal, standard, value, or ideal, and have the motivation required to change one's behavior if a discrepancy exists.

Gross and Thompson (2007) identified three core features of emotion regulation. First, one is able to regulate both negative emotions (i.e., sadness, frustration, anger) and positive emotions (i.e., joy, gratitude, hope). Second, emotion regulation occurs on a "continuum from conscious, effortful, and controlled regulation to unconscious, effortless, and automatic regulation" (p. 8). Recall the results of the McRae et al. (2008) study that suggested men's ability to down regulate emotion is more automatic than women's ability to down regulate. It may be that this difference in automaticity accounts for some of the perceived stereotype differences between how men and women process and express emotions. Third, no assumption is made as to whether any type of emotion regulation is good or bad. That is "emotion regulations processes may be used to make things either better or worse, depending on the context" (p. 9). An example of this is a parent who down regulates a negative emotional response to an infant's constant crying.

While this strategy is effective in the short-term it may also decrease emotions such as empathy in the parents and results in a decrease in helping behaviors (Gross & Thompson).

The following section will discuss other constructs that are related to and are hypothesized to have an impact on one's ability to utilize emotion regulation strategies.

Contributions from Developmental and Socialization Approaches to Emotion Regulation

There is longitudinal research to suggest that parent/child relationships and parental interventions are strong extrinsic influences on how infants, toddlers, and preschoolers express and manage emotions (Bowlby, 1998; Schore, 2000; Sroufe, 2000). Later, this parental influence is supplemented by other socialization experiences (Calkins & Hill, 2007). The social environment in which a child lives is thought to be an underlying component of a developmental approach to ER (Calkins & Hill, 2007). According to Thompson and Goodman (2010) the development of emotion regulation includes (a) the transition of emotion regulation managed primarily by others to self-initiated regulation, (b) growing reliance on mental strategies of emotion regulation such as attention redirection and cognitive appraisal over behavioral strategies that rely on contextual support, (c) increasing sophistication and flexibility in the use of emotion regulation strategies, (d) utilizing emotion specific regulation strategies such as self-talk, (e) increasing complexity in achieving social and personal goals and incorporating cultural norms in emotion regulation strategies, (f) development of a consistent style of emotion regulation. As will be discussed in the next section, this developmental and

contextual influence on emotion regulation is closely tied to what is known about neurobiological development (Thompson & Goodman, 2010).

Contributions From Neuroscience and the Importance of Executive Functioning

An explanation of research on the neural structure and activation of the brain during emotion regulation will follow. Brain functional magnetic resonance imagine or fMRI, indicate brain activation in the lower parts of the brain stem as well as the mid-sections of the brain such as the amygdala, and the prefrontal cortex (PFC) or the upper parts of the brain during tasks designed to require emotion regulation (Davidson, Jackson, & Kailin, 2000; Eisenberg et al., 2010). The PFC is known to go through a growth spurt during the ages of eight to twelve that continues into the early/mid twenties (Ochsner & Gross, 2007). It is hypothesized that development of the PFC makes up the neurological base needed for what is known as executive functioning (Dawson & Guare, 2004; Ochsner & Gross, 2007). Dawson and Guare (2004) stated that executive skills govern one's ability to organize behavior and postpone immediate desires for longer-term goals. These skills are important for planning, goal setting, sustained attention, and ability to persist to complete a task and are important for both academic and behavior success in school.

Contributions of Attribution Theory

Attribution theory is one broad theory that allows for the possible contributing factors of individual differences in emotion regulation because ER strategies are "ubiquitous in trait, dynamic, and social-cognitive traditions (John & Gross, 2007, p. 367). As related to education, attribution theory posits that students attribute performance outcomes to various beliefs about oneself and one's internal abilities

(internal variables) and the environment or external variables (Weiner, 1985; Schunk, 2008). Attributions are thought to strongly contribute to a student's motivation and emotions (Dweck, 2006; Rowell & Hong, 2012; Schunk, 2008). Weiner presented a theoretical model linking a student's causal attributional structure for explaining performance outcome to emotions such as pride, anger, pity, guilt, gratitude, shame, and hopelessness. Schunk (2008) applied attribution theory to self-regulated learning and concluded that educators can support student motivation and development of self-regulation by providing attributional feedback focused on effort and strategy use.

Emotion Regulation and Academic Achievement

There is a body of research that supports a positive correlation between self-regulation, of which emotion regulation skills are a component, and academic performance that has been previously discussed in this chapter (Blair & Razza, 2007; Brigman & Campbell, 2003; Diamond et al., 2007; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Wang et al., 1994). There is also research that examines emotion regulation specifically, apart from self regulation, and its relation to academic achievement. However, Pintrich (2003) pointed out that much of the research on self-regulated learning focuses on cognitive regulation, not on regulation of emotion or behavior. Pintrich stated that there "has not been much research on the strategies and tactics that students use to monitor, control, and regulate their own motivation, affect, or behavior" (p. 677). The following paragraph discusses a study that is an exception to that void in the literature.

Gumaro and Arsenio (2002) examined the impact of general affective dispositions including emotion regulation, on academic performance with 103 sixth through eighth grade female students in parochial schools. Participants completed a self-report measure

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of negative mood, teachers completed a positive and negative affect scale for each participant, and eight items from the self-report negative mood measures was used to measure emotion regulation. The researchers measured academic performance by teacher assigned grades in English and math, and academic achievement was measured by school administered standardized tests. A hierarchical regression analysis was then used to analyze the data. Cognitive related measures such as academic achievement and academic performance was entered as Step One while Step Two included affect related variable, with the exception of negative academic affect which was entered as Step Three. Results indicated that cognitive-related abilities were a significant predictor of a student's grade point average. In addition, students who reported more negative emotions than their peers had lower grade point averages. Results indicated that both emotion dispositions and emotion regulation predicted school performance.

Emotion Regulation and Psychological Well-Being

Nearly all psychological disturbances are based in one's inability to manage negative emotions in a healthy manner (Werner & Gross, 2010). In fact, Werner and Gross stated that 75% of the diagnostic categories in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition* are problems with emotion or emotion regulation. Southam-Gerow (2013) stated that "children with mental health problems had emotion-related gaps in their understanding . . ." (p. 5). Thompson & Goodman (2010) stated, "The association of emotion regulation with personal adjustment, social competence and even cognitive functioning suggests that emotion regulation is a core developmental achievement with significant personal consequences" (p. 38).

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There has been little research that studies the relationship of implicit (unconscious) emotion regulation processes and psychological well-being (Hopp, Troy & Mauss, 2011). Hopp, Troy and Mauss (2011) studied "the implicit value of emotion regulation with individuals' habitual use of emotion regulation in predicting psychological health" (p. 534) and hypothesized that "implicitly valuing emotion regulation" (p. 532) would predict higher levels of psychological well-being. This study included 222 participants ranging in age from 21-60 who had experienced at least one stressful life event, defined as an event with a specific starting point that had a negative impact on the participant's life. The following are examples of such events: a major change in financial status, difficult work situations, and trouble with an employer. The researchers used a combination of surveys, and questionnaires to measure emotion regulation, psychological well-being. They used hierarchical regression analysis to test the hypothesis that valuing and using emotion regulation strategies predicts psychological well-being.

In step one, the researchers entered the predictor of implicit valuing of emotion regulation, explicit valuing of emotion regulation - use of reappraisal (an emotion regulation strategy) sex, and impact of the significant life event. These variables were statistically controlled because of the "potential confounds between emotion regulation and psychological health" (Hopp et al., 2011, p. 537). That is, the researchers attempted to ensure the relationships that might occur were due in fact to the variables being studied as opposed to a spurious, confounding variable. The second step included entering the interaction of reappraisal and implicit valuing of emotion regulation. Results indicated that reappraisal was positively correlated with psychological well being. In addition,

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results indicated that implicit emotion regulation processes are associated with improved psychological well being among individuals who frequently use a conscious, explicit, adaptive emotion regulation strategy.

In a study that used the experience sampling method, with 152 adolescents in grades seven and grade ten, Silk, Steinberg, and Morris (2003) studied the relation between emotion regulation strategies and adjustment. The experience sampling method was a method of data collection that allowed the researchers to gather information on emotion regulation as it occurred in the participants' daily lives. For five days, participants were instructed to record data by writing their current thoughts and feelings when signaled to do so by an electronic signal emitted from a watch. They were also asked to think about and write in a journal the most negative feeling they experienced in the last hour. Then a set of questions followed to gather information about emotion strategy usage and salience of the negative emotion. This information was then coded using four categories adapted from the Response to Stress Questionnaire (Connor-Smith, Compas, Wadsworth, Thomsen & Saltzman, 2000). Emotion strategies were grouped into four categories and dichotomous variables were assigned to each category. The externalizing scale of the Achenbach Youth Self Report Form and Kovak's Childhood Depression Inventory were also administered.

The researchers used a nested technique to examine the data first, by moments in time (Level 1), and then by individual (Level 2). Hierarchical linear analysis was used to analyze the data. To analyze emotion regulation, the Silk et al. (2003), first analyzed three emotions – sad, angry, anxious, for high occurrence and low occurrence of sampling moments derived from the data by the experience sampling method. The

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second analysis examined individual's peak moments of sadness, anger, or anxiety. Participants who fell one standard deviation above the mean in percentage of sampling moments were placed in the low-regulation group and participants who fell one standard deviation below the mean were placed in the high-regulation group. Adolescents who fell in the low-regulation group scored significantly higher on depressive symptomology and problem behavior than participants in the high-regulation group. Silk et al. concluded that results of this study support a positive correlation between emotion regulation and behavioral and emotional problems in adolescents.

A Model of Emotion Regulation

Based on Gross and Thompson's (2007) model of emotion, five points are highlighted at which an individual can regulate one's emotion: situation selection, situation modification, attentional deployment, cognitive change, and response modulation. Figure 2.1 describes Gross and Thompson's process model of ER. These five points represent five families of ER strategies that Gross and Thompson believe are most beneficial when used "at the point in the emotion generative process at which they have their primary impact" (p.10). The first four processes are considered antecedent-focused as they occur prior to an appraisal, which precedes an emotional response. Gross (1998) proposed that the emotion generative cycle is fast paced and that one's response at one point in a cycle influences the response in the subsequent cycle. Next, each step of this model will be explained in detail followed by examples in which integrating ER strategies into a school counseling program could be based.

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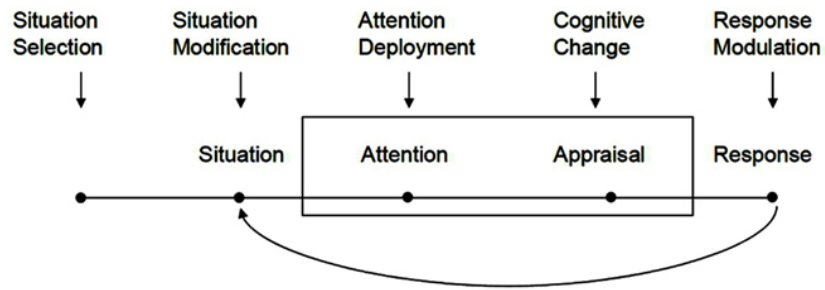
Figure 2.2. A process model of emotion regulation. Reprinted from *Handbook of Emotion Regulation* (p. 10), J. Gross & R. A. Thompson, 2007, New York: Guilford Press. Reprinted with permission.

Situation Selection

Situation selection involves the ability to predict one's emotional response in a given situation (Gross, 1998). Gross and Thompson (2007) explained that this type of ER strategy occurs when an individual takes action that makes it more (or less) likely that he/she will end up in a certain situation that is likely to generate desirable (or undesirable) emotions. Everyday examples of this ER strategy include avoiding driving or walking by a tempting ice-cream shop when you are trying to lose weight, or seeking out a good friend to talk to after a bad day (Gross & Thompson, 2007).

Researchers are beginning to appreciate how difficult it is for an individual to be aware of the likely features of a situation and then anticipate one's likely emotional response (Gross & Thonpson, 2007). Lowenstein (2007) hypothesized that an individual's success in regulating one's affect requires a high degree of accuracy of one's "metacognition" (p. 189) defined as the ability to think about one's emotions and thoughts. A study by Lowenstein (2007) suggested that in general, people tend to incorrectly estimate their emotional responses by overestimating the length of duration of

negative emotions to a situation, and to accurately identify their emotional responses in future situations. Therefore, when using situation selection as a strategy the perspective of the counselor and possibly other people significant to the client is often required (Gross & Thompson, 2007; Lowenstein, 2007). Fox & Calkins (2003) provided an example of situation selection when they cautioned parents of young children to think carefully about their child's schedule and pointed out that parents of young children are often in the role of helping to manage a child's ER. Therefore, before placing multiple activities (situations) on a child's schedule that may trigger emotional melt downs, parents are advised to be aware of their child's temperament, capacity for managing arousal, interests, and activity level.

Situation Modification

Situation modification is defined as providing a modification to the environment with the hope that the modification will help regulate emotion (Gross, 1998). Gross (1998) explained that parents of toddlers and preschool children often find themselves in the position of modifying the environment. For example, Gross explained that helping a child assemble a difficult puzzle, or offering verbal prompts to help solve a problem are examples of situation modification. Gross and Thompson (2007) stated that it is important for a parent to confirm the legitimacy of a feeling to a child in a given situation. In adolescents, Gross and Thompson explained that situation modification might involve listening empathically to a teen as he/she describes how unfair it is to not have been chosen for a particular part in the school play or athletic team. Thompson and Meyer (2007) studied the influence of a parent's emotional response on their children and found that parents who respond with empathy tend to have children who are better able to

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cope with their own emotional expression. A practical example of how a school counselor might consider situation modification as an ER strategy is helping students deal with natural times of transition such as minimizing the fear of entering the lunchroom on the first day of middle school. Often students are worried about how to go through lunch line and with whom they will sit. When adults plan times that lunch procedures are taught and structure where students sit the first two weeks based on different criteria each day such as what month their birthday falls, they have modified a potentially anxiety provoking situation for many young adolescents.

Attentional Deployment

"Attention is one of the most fundamental cognitive processes, acting as an all-purpose gatekeeper, that allows passage of goal-relevant information for further processing" (Ochsner & Gross, 2007, p. 93). Gross and Thompson (2007) stated that attentional deployment refers to how an individual directs one's attention when presented with an external situation or an internal representation in order to influence emotions. At this stage in the ER process, the person-environment configuration is not changed or able to be changed, therefore, attentional deployment is used (Werner & Gross, 2010).

Distraction is an example of attentional deployment and seems to be one of the first regulatory processes seen in human development (Gross, 1998). Gross and Thompson (2007) stated that distraction can be achieved by external choices such as physically removing oneself from a situation. This strategy is sometimes used with people struggling with substance abuse in that one chooses to physically stay away from certain places or people (Berking et al., 2008). Distraction can also be an internal choice

such as when an infant looks away from stimuli that are emotionally overwhelming (Rothbart & Sheese, 2007).

The other end of the continuum of attentional deployment is concentration, in which attention is drawn to emotional features of a situation (Gross & Thompson, 2007). However, Gross and Thompson (2007) and Werner and Gross (2010) hypothesized when attention is repeatedly focused on feelings and consequences it can result in rumination, and worry. Werner and Gross pointed out that chronic reliance on distraction is a maladaptive strategy. A school counseling program that incorporates awareness about different forms of distractions that an adolescent might use would be an example of how a counselor could use this strategy in a school setting.

Cognitive Change

Cognitive change is defined as the manner in which a person appraises a situation and alters its emotional significance by changing how one thinks about the situation or by changing one's capacity to manage the situation (Gross & Thompson, 2007). Gross and Thompson pointed out that even after a situation has been "selected, modified and attended to, an emotional response is by no means a foregone conclusion" (p.13). The situation must elicit meaning to the individual and the individual must assess his/her capacity to manage the situation before emotion is elicited. "Cognitive change refers to changing how we appraise the situation we are in to alter its emotional significance either by changing how we think about the situation or about our capacity to manage the demands" (Gross & Thompson, 2007).

The cognitive behavioral strategy of reappraisal is often used to produce cognitive change (Gross & Thompson, 2007). Werner and Gross (2010) stated that in general,

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reappraisal has been shown to be an adaptive ER strategy. One common application of reappraisal is when a situation occurs that results in a negative event and an individual responds by stating, "It could have been so much worse." (Gross & Thompson, p. 14). Gross and Thompson pointed out that because a psychological event can also be internal, such as a physiological response, reappraisal can be applied to internal physiological reactions as well. For example, these researchers stated the physiological feelings of excitement or butterflies in your stomach before a musical or athletic event can be interpreted by such cognitive self-statements as "I'm getting pumped up" (p.14) which leads to enhanced competence or self-statements such as "What if I really mess up; there are so many people watching?" which leads to stage fright and can lead to paralysis or decreased competence during a performance. An example of how a school counselor might use a cognitive change strategies is when the counselor meets with a group of athletes, drama or musical students, or a group of students before exams to help them identify and understand the physiological reactions some situations create. The counselor can help the students develop self-statements that are adaptive and reduce maladaptive responses.

Response Modulation

The emotion regulatory processes described in Gross and Thompson's model (2007), thus far, have focused on interventions prior to an emotion response and have been antecedent-focused. In contrast, response modulation occurs after response tendencies have begun and is referred to as response-focused. Response modulation utilizes interventions that influence physiological, experiential, or behavioral responses (Gross & Thompson, 2007). For example, Gross and Thompson stated that

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psychopharmacological treatment would be an example of one way to intervene at the response modulation point in the ER strategy process. Exercise and systematic relaxation are also techniques to help modulate emotional responses (Gross & Thompson, 2007). Gross and Thompson also point out that smoking cigarettes, food, and alcohol can be used to modulate emotional responses. Being aware of what one is feeling, expressing or verbalizing the feeling, and accepting that emotion are all examples of adaptive response modulaton (Gross & Thompson, 2007; Marcks & Wood, 2005).

Regulating emotion expressive behaviors is another common form of response modulation (Gross & Thompson, 2007). Suppression, or hiding one's true feelings is an example of regulating expressive behaviors. Suppression can be advantageous to an individual such as when a person "hides his/her fear when standing up to a bully" (Gross & Thompson, p. 15). However, suppression can also have deleterious effects (Werner & Gross, 2010). Results of a study by Marcks and Woods, 2005 suggested that individuals who tend to naturally suppress emotions as assessed by the Revised Obsessive Intrusions Inventory, the Maudsley Obsessional Compulsive Inventory, the Beck Depressive Inventory II, and the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory were more likely to be obsessional, anxious, and depressed than participants who reported that they did not naturally suppress emotions. Suppression of positive emotion can also be detrimental as it decreases affiliation and closeness (Werner & Gross, 2010).

Avoidance, another response modulation strategy like suppression can be adaptive or maladaptive (Werner & Gross, 2010). For example, avoiding a person or group whose association tends to lead the individual to make unhealthy or illegal choices might be an adaptive use of avoidance (Gross & Thompson, 2007). However, avoidance is

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maladaptive when it is used repeatedly, rigidly, and with enormous time and effort as an

unwillingness to experience private thoughts, feelings, and events in an effort to control

or escape from them (Werner & Gross, 2010).

Acceptance of one's internal thoughts, feelings, and impulses is an example of an

adaptive response modulation. The practice of acceptance allows emotions to rise and

pass without attempts to avoid or control them in maladaptive ways (Roemer & Orsillo,

2005). Roemer and Orsillo pointed out that acceptance seems to allow for more flexible

responses and seems to help one's internal appraisal to be more positive.

Research on ER Strategies

In 2010, Gullone et al. studied the use and development of suppression and

cognitive reappraisal in participants age 9-15. A second purpose of this study was to

investigate gender differences during this developmental period. Gullone et al. (2010)

stated that much of the research on ER focused on the early years, and the adult years

with a "surprising lack of integration across the developmental and adult literatures on

ER" (p.568). Participants were administered the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire for

Children and Adolescents at three points in time, each approximately one year apart to

slightly over 1,000 Australian students. Results indicated that over time, there was a

decrease in the use of the ER strategy of suppression and an increase in the use of

cognitive reappraisal. However, this trend was more true for females than males which is

consistent with research on ER strategy use in young adults (Gross & John, 2003).

Regarding the use of reappraisal, Gullone et al. (2010) hypothesized that reappraisal use

would increase over time. Surprisingly, in this study there was no difference in

reappraisal use over the follow-up time periods. The researchers stated that it is possible

that reappraisal use had already stabilized by the age of nine, the youngest age in this study.

It is important to note that ER can mistakenly be thought of as regulating and increasing pleasurable emotions while ignoring or suppressing negative or unpleasant ones (Watts, 2007). However, negative emotions can have a constructive role and regulating them out of existence may not be the best strategy. Watts (2007) hypothesized that negative emotions may be keys to unlocking what might be impeding progress to one's goals. That is, one might be experiencing depression due to dissatisfaction with one's personal and professional life. Treating only the depression would leave psychological symptoms untreated.

Berking et al. (2008) did a study that compared a six week cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) program to the same CBT program modified by replacing parts of the CBT strategies with ER strategies of acceptance, tolerance, and cognitive modification. Results of that study indicated that participants in the modified CBT program that included ER strategies reported through self-reports greater gains in skill application than the CBT only group. Moreover, participants in the modified CBT plus ER strategies program reported a greater reduction in depression, and negative affect than the CBT only participants. Berking, et al. (2008) concluded that it is important for counselors to appreciate the value of negative emotions in treatment.

To further illustrate how ER strategies might be applied to therapeutic models that have been shown to have some empirical efficacy, the next section will apply ER strategies to Linehan's Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT). DBT has been shown promising in treating disorders that involve difficult emotion dysregulation such as

borderline personality disorder and eating disorders (Telch, Agras, & Linehan, 2001; Verheul, et al., 2003).

A Brief Look at Applying ER Strategies to DBT

ER strategies in DBT are taught in the context of mindfulness skills (Linehan, Bohus & Lynch, 2007). Linehan et al. (2007) discussed Gross's five families, or groups of emotion regulation strategies and broke down the process of DBT to explain how ER strategies are incorporated into DBT. DBT also incorporates other processes such as biological change, response expectancy, and emotion reactivity change which will not be discussed in this paper.

Linehan et al., 2007 explained that one way to regulate emotions is to "regulate situations that increase unwanted emotions" (p.590). This incorporates Gross's situation selection/modification family of interventions. DBT teaches a set of problem solving skills that help a client to either modify or avoid situations that generate unwanted emotions.

There is agreement that cognitive processes play an important role in eliciting and regulating emotion (Linehan et al., 2007). Some of these processes are implicit and automatic, and some are explicit (Ohlman & Soares, 1993). At the input level, a situation is appraised as either emotionally significant or insignificant, and attention is deployed or the situation is not processed further (Linehan, et al., 2007). Research has shown that negative emotions generated externally or internally tend to engage one's attention (Christianson, 1992). DBT utilizes an approach that trains people to redirect their attention toward elements that are inconsistent with their negative interpretation in order

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to develop a more balanced view of the situation (Philippot, Baeyens, Douilliez, &

Francart, 2004).

DBT utilizes the technique of "checking the facts" (Linehan et al., 2007, p. 590)

to help people cognitively reappraise a situation. This skill focuses on teaching clients to

identify "discriminating assumptions, interpretations, ruminative thoughts, and worries

from the actual observed facts of a situation (Linehan et al., 2007, p.591). Sheppard and

Teasdale (2004) found that improved the metacognitive skills (the ability to think about

thoughts and emotions) in participants who were diagnosed with depression helped these

participants to recognize dysfunctional thoughts and emotions. In other words, improved

ability to discriminate between functional and dysfunctional thoughts and emotions led to

the ability to then cognitively reappraise a situation (Sheppard & Teasdale, 2004).

DBT utilizes two techniques, consequence expectation change and response

appraisal change to help with response modulation (Linehan et al., 2007). Consequence

expectation helps clients to "become aware of both short-term and long-term

consequences of a behavior and the likely positive consequences of changing negative

emotions or enhancing positive emotions" (Linehan et al., p. 592). Linehan et al. (2007)

explained that response appraisal helps a client to change the appraisal of a situation as

one that cannot be tolerated and must be changed, to one of emotional acceptance.

The following section of this chapter will examine the terms R/S and how they are

defined in this study, recent trends in R/S across the lifespan of individuals in the United

States, and the history of R/S as it relates to education in the United States. I will also

discuss some of the research on R/S as it relates to academic achievement and

psychological well-being as well as possible mechanisms as to why R/S may serve as a

protective factor for psychological well-being. Finally, I will discuss general and specific

ways that R/S can be integrated in counseling sessions as supported by research in this

area as well as unhealthy R/S in the lives of individuals.

Religiosity/Spirituality Defined

In the past 30 years, there has been an interest in the topic of R/S within the field

of psychology (Schlehofer et al., 2008; Weaver, et al., 2006). The terms religiosity and

spirituality are complex, multidimensional terms and despite the research on this topic, an

agreement of what the terms mean remains elusive (Moore, Kloos, & Rasmussen, 2001;

Zinnbauer et al., 2001). The following sections will review relevant R/S literature to

explain how the terms R/S are defined for the purpose of this study.

Recent Trends in R/S Across the Lifespan

There are researchers that support the view that R/S plays a major role in one's

development across the lifespan (Levenson et al., 2005). Smith et al. (2002) summarized

findings from three sources - the National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health,

Monitoring the Future, and the Survey of Parents and Youth – and found that nearly 87

percent of United States adolescents 13 to 15 years of age reported that they prayed at

least sometimes. In addition, these findings suggest 85 percent of 13 to 18 year olds

surveyed reported some type of religious affiliation. Protestants, such as Presbyterians,

non-denomination Christians, and Lutherans, accounted for 44 percent of adolescents'

church affiliation with Baptists accounting for 23 percent. Catholicism (24 percent) was

reported to be the largest individual denomination. Judaism, Buddhism, and Islam each

represented no more than 1 percent of the sample.

A recent poll conducted by the Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion &
Public life, (www.pewforum.org/unaffiliated/nones-on-the-rise.aspx) conducted jointly
with the PBS television program Religion & Ethics News Weekly in 2012 found that just
under 20 percent of Americans identify as having no religious affiliation, a number that is
on the rise. Yet, of that 20 percent or forty-six million Americans, further analysis found
that many did have religious and or spiritual beliefs. Specifically, 68 percent reported
that they believe in God, more than half report feeling a deep connection with nature or
the earth, 37 percent describe themselves as spiritual but not religious, and one in five
report that they pray daily. Those who participated in this poll agree that churches
benefit society by helping the poor and strengthening community bonds. However,
participants also report that religious institutions are too interested in money, power, and
politics, and that they are too focused on rules. Adler et al. (2005) found that between one
half and three fourths of Americans identify with both of the terms religious and spiritual.
These statistics reflect a number of interesting trends, but also reflect the public's
perception of possible confusion between the terms R/S (Seifert, 2002).

A Historical Overview of the Definition of Religion and Spirituality

Historically, the terms R/S were not differentiated until the rise of secularism in
the twenty first century. James (1902) described a religious experience as an occurrence
that is individually experienced separate and apart from a religion that is inherited
through tradition; however, both of these experiences fell under the overall umbrella of
religion. Seifert (2002) noted that researchers have defined religiousness as a construct
that deals mostly with external behaviors of one's search for significance means of
connecting with the sacred such as church attendance, and following outward, observable

rules and traditions. Religiosity involves a cognitive dimension that is developmental in

nature as one grapples with existential questions (Fowler & Dell, 2006**).**

In more recent years, the terms, religious, religiousness, or religiosity, tend to

have negative connotations among the general population (Hill & Pargament, 2003). In

the general United States population, there has been a shift to an increased interest in

spirituality but a decrease in confidence and interest in religion (Turner, Lukoff,

Barnhouse, & Lu, 1995). Thus, the recent trend is to define religiosity as external,

observable practices, beliefs, and emotions based on institutional rules and traditions

(Schlehofer et al., 2008; Seifert, 2002; Zinnbauer, et al. 2001).

In contrast, spirituality has been defined as the internal struggles of one's search

for meaning (Jankowski, 2002). Like religiosity, spirituality is a multidimensional,

complex concept that deals with the "cognitive, metaphysical and relational dimensions."

(Jankowski, p. 70) Hill & Pargament (2003) stated that spirituality is increasingly used to

describe the "personal, subjective side of religious experience" (p. 64).   Seifert (2002)

described spirituality as a term that researchers tend to view as a positive quality that

increases self-awareness. According to Schlehofer et al. (2008), spirituality is viewed as

a more internal, personal struggle with relating to a higher power. Components of

spiritual wellness include a personal meaning or purpose in life, inner resources,

transcendence, and positive interconnectedness (Westgate, 1996).

In the United States, Hill and Pargament (2003) posit that research is polarizing

the terms R/S and that the terms are more similar than different. The concept of

sacredness is the core that provides the link between R/S. Hill and Pargament warn of

several dangers to separating the terms. First, Hill and Pargament stated that defining

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religiosity as dealing with the institution and spirituality as dealing with the individual ignores the fact that all spiritual expression develops within a social context and virtually all religions are interested in and deal with the personal spiritual awareness and growth of an individual. Second, a view that religion is bad and spirituality is good overlooks the potential dangers of both R/S. Third, there are several studies that suggest most lay people do not see a difference in terms (Schlehofer et al., 2003; Seifert, 2002; Zinnbauer et al., 1999). Fourth, Hill et al. (2000) argued that a bifurcation of the terms R/S adds to the confusion of terms when applied to a multi-cultural context. For example, while some Scandinavians are concerned with spiritual matters, they tend to prefer the use of religiosity to describe the phenomena. Therefore, it is important to view these terms beyond what they might mean in the United States.

The goal of this study is to look at both the external use of practices, teachings and beliefs of one's R/S, as well as how R/S is actually incorporated into one's internal sense of self and ability to self-regulate. Therefore, the terms R/S will not be viewed as separate constructs throughout this study but as one construct with both external and internal dimensions "spirituality."

History of R/S Education in the United States

For the purpose of this study, Christian schools include all denominations of Christianity with no distinction between Protestant and Catholic schools. However, a review of the history of religious private schools indicates that faith based education in the United States dates back to the early 1600's when the first Catholic school was established in St. Augestine, Florida (www.cardus.ca/research/education/). According to the 2011 Cardus Education Survey, at this time in history, the overriding reason for

education was for religious purposes and for 300 years it was assumed that public education was rooted in the Christian faith. Around the mid-20th century Catholic education began to flourish as Catholic schools were established in the suburbs. These schools offered a competitive college-preparatory curriculum designed to compete with local public schools coupled with the religious beliefs and practices that parents wanted passed on to their children. It is thought that the influence of Vatican II which resulted in documents that encouraged the Catholic church to engage more with all aspects of the modern world and to reconcile with other Christian religions along with the presidential election of John F. Kennedy pushed the Catholic church and Catholic education more into the mainstream of America (www.cardus.ca/research/education/).

Protestant Christian schools have a much shorter history, increasing in number sometime after WWII (www.cardus.ca/research/education/). The Cardus survey reports that in the mid-l960's, 90 percent of school age children attended public schools. After this time, a rise in enrollment in religious schools was seen. Cultural and political influences such as the Supreme Court rulings on school prayer and the desegregation movement of the l960's are thought to have been catalysts in the increase of Protestant Christian schools. Because of these rulings, there was concern that public schools would be hesitant to teach character traits such as love, forgiveness, and turning the other cheek and the absence of these teachings would result in negative academic and behavioral outcomes for children. A study by the National Center for Educations Statistics in 1993 found that 90 percent of Protestant-Christian schools had been founded since the mid 1960's (Jeynes, 2012).

In the past several decades private schools, including religious schools, both

Protestant and Catholic, have become popular alternatives to public schools

(www.capenet.org). During this time period, there has been increasing concern about

America's public school system as evidenced by the 2012 publication of "Achievement

Growth: International and U.S. State Trends in Student Performance"

(www.hks.harvard.edu). This report summarized the history of the rising concern about

American student's academic performance compared to other nations. This concern was

addressed by politicians in 1983 at which time the Regan administration commissioned a

committee to study the state of public education in the U.S. The result of this committee

was the publication of "A Nation at Risk" (www.datacenter.spps.org), which intensified

the concern of the quality of education provided by public schools in the United States.

Again, in 2001 politicians intervened in public education due to continuing concerns that

American students were falling behind their counterparts world-wide with the "No Child

Left Behind Act" (www.2.ed.gov). This Act required that all public schools meet higher

accountability benchmarks as measured by improvement on standardized testing. The

concerns about the quality of public education has made private schooling a popular

alternative to public education (www.cardus.ca/research/education/).

Religiosity/Spirituality and Academic Achievement

There are research studies that demonstrate a positive correlation between a

student's R/S activities, commitment, and academic performance (Erikson & Phillips,

2012; Jeynes, 2003, 2010; Loury, 2004; Regnerus, 2000; Regnerus & Elder, 2003). The

2011 Cardus Education Survey (www.cardus.ca/research/education/) found that Catholic

schools provide higher academic outcomes than public schools. Following, is a more detailed examination of these studies.

Regnerus (2000) used a hierarchial linear model to examine data from the High School Effectiveness Study, a supplement to the 1998 National Educational Longitudinal Study. This model allowed the researchers to examine both the effects of students' individual attributes (i.e., gender, SES, religiosity) to contextual variables such as students' church denomination, school attended, and neighborhood residence. Data was collected on 4,434 tenth grade students from 30 large metropolitan areas of the United States. The dependent variables in this study were a composite math and reading score obtained from an achievement test that was administered to participants and a self-report of educational attainment ranging from high school diploma to PhD/MD. Independent variables included the student's score on reading/math assessment, a high school's reading/math assessment mean score, a student's involvement in church activities, identification as religion being important, religious denomination, academic track (basic high school diploma, college preparatory), race and family socio-economic status.

Results indicated that overall, the average educational expectation level of participants in the study was slightly beyond two years of college. Differences in students' educational expectations were accounted for by differences in individual attributes rather than differences between school contexts. Only 15 percent of variation in educational expectations was accounted for by between school comparisons. In contrast, 33 percent of differences in reading and math achievement scores were accounted for by between school comparisons. On average, students with high levels of church involvement scored approximately two points higher than students with low or no

level of church involvement. When comparing individual students and adding two variables - impact of involvement in church activities and marital status of parents – a 1.4 point increase in reading and math achievement was noted for students who reported one hour or more of church activities per week. This also was considered a statistically significant finding. The benefits of church involvement on increased level of educational expectation and reading/math achievement held true across different levels of socio-economic status.

Regnerus and Elder (2003) also used hierarchical linear modeling to examine data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health to determine if adolescents who identify as religious fared better academically than their non-religious peers. Furthermore, they wanted to know if religious adolescents did fare better academically than their non-religious peers, was this higher level of educational performance seen more in neighborhoods of poverty than in neighborhoods of higher socio-economic status? The dependent variable in this study was academic performance which was labeled as "staying on track" (p. 637) and consisted of six measures – grade point average, homework completion, getting along with teachers, being expelled or suspended, skipping class, and being on track for promotion to the next grade level. Independent variables included religion as measured by church attendance and the importance of religion in the student's life; risk factors such as the student's family socio-economic status, living in a home with one, two, or no biological parents, and presence of a diagnosed learning disability; and demographics such as race/ethnicity, age, and gender. The final sample included 9,667 families with students in grades 7-12. Neighborhoods were divided into three categories of poverty – low, fewer than 20 percent of families

earned $15,000 or less; medium – 20-40 percent of families earned $15,000 or less and high – 40 percent or more families earn $15,000 or less. Approximately 13 percent of variance in academically staying of track was accounted for by differences between neighborhoods. Regnerus and Elder found that as the poverty level rises within a neighborhood, the relationship between church attendance and staying on track in school becomes more positive. That is, in this study, while there was a positive correlation for all students between church attendance and staying on track in school, church attendance was more positively correlated with students staying on track in school for students in high-poverty neighborhoods than for students in more prosperous neighborhoods. This study and the Regnerus (2000) study hypothesized that the socialization experienced by students involved in religious activities and involvement provided "reinforcing values conducive to educational attainment and goal-setting" (Regnerus, p. 363).

Loury (2004) using data from the National Longitudinal Study of Youth (NLSY) looked specifically at the effect of church attendance of any denomination on years of schooling. In this study, Loury used the two-stage least squares (2SLS) method to take into consideration omitted variable bias. Omitted variable bias occurs when it appears that there is a positive correlation between higher academic achievement and church attendance but there may be omitted variables that account for this correlation. For example, variables such as the way parents of students who attend church supervise their child's after school activities, or the amount of time a parents spends reading to a child may not have been accounted for in the study design but may have an impact on the child's academic success. Proxies such as whether or not a parent subscribes to a newspaper or has a library card are often included in studies to minimize omitted variable

bias. The 2SLS method is also a way to minimize this bias if the measure used correlates with one variable only such as church attendance only, not the number of years a student spends in school. For this study, the criteria used for the 2SLS analysis were whether the participant lived in the South which was related to higher church attendance only the ration of the total number of members in a given denomination and the number of participants who identified with that denomination.   The sample included 12, 686 individuals between the ages 14-21; however, for this study the sample was limited to individuals between the ages 14-17, prior to completion of high school. Variables examined included number of siblings, parents' education level, parents' employment, and private school matriculation. Results of this study indicated that 19% of participants who never attended church had .52 fewer years of schooling than the 37% of participants who attended church at least once per week. Overall, results suggested that attending church 52 weeks/year is positively correlated with number of years of schooling and accounted for as much as three additional years of schooling when compared to non-church attenders. Thus, Loury concluded there is a positive correlation between church attendance and years of schooling.

Jeynes (2009) studied 160 students, 80 from public schools and 80 from private Christian schools located in Los Angeles, CA, and Chicago IL. Students completed a questionnaire that collected information about the student's race, gender, grade level, grade point average (GPA), and other information. In addition, each group of students took a ten-question Bible quiz. Logistic regression was used to determine if there was a relationship between Bible literacy and academic and behavioral outcomes. At this point in the data analysis, students' Bible literacy was divided in two groups – high and low.

Students' Bible literacy was then divided into three groups – high, medium, and low and ANOVA was used to determine if there were differences in grade point average, and how teachers' rated behavior among the three groups. Results indicated a positive correlation between a high GPA and the students' amount of Bible knowledge. In summary, there are a number of studies that suggest a positive correlation between involvement in R/S activities and academic achievement although the results are less consistent for students from lower SES communities.

While Jeynes (2000, 2003) hypothesized that the social support provided by religious communities fostered values that supported educational attainment and goal-setting, Erickson and Phillips (2012) hypothesized that mentor relationships might be a variable that accounts for higher academic achievement and attainment among adolescents who identify as R/S. Erickson and Phillips relied on data from Wave I, II, and III of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health. This sample included participants in grades 7-12 in the United States and provided "detailed information regarding child outcomes, family and peer relationships, and school and neighborhood characteristics" (Erickson & Phillips, p. 573). The final sample size included 8,379 participants. The authors of this study used logistic regression to determine if there was a relationship between religious involvement and high school completion or enrollment in college. Multinomial logistic regression was used to determine if adolescent R/S predicts religious mentoring relationships. Results indicated that any religious involvement (any denomination) has a positive correlation with high school completion and enrollment in college when compared to adolescents with no religious involvement. Furthermore, adolescents who identified as participating in R/S and participated in activities such as

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attending church or youth group, praying, and reading religious texts, were 2.5 times more likely to have a religious mentor. Erickson and Phillips stated that adolescent religious involvement could result in long-term life outcomes based on the correlation of educational attainment and higher socio-economic status, health, and psychological well-being.

R/S and Psychological Well-Being

There is some literature that supports a positive correlation between R/S and psychological well-being (McCullough & Willoughby, 2009; Urry & Poey, 2008; Yonker et al., 2012). In other words, adolescents who identify as R/S have lower use of substance abuse, are less likely to engage in delinquent behavior, and are less likely to exhibit symptoms of depression and anxiety. The remainder of this section will provide a closer examination of the academic literature on this topic.

McCullough and Willoughby (2009) reviewed research articles on R/S and used Carver & Scheirer's (1998) model of self-regulation to explore the hypothesis that self-regulation might serve as a mediator of R/S and a given outcome. (Carver & Scheirer's model of self-regulation as it relates to emotion regulation will be discussed later in this chapter). These authors conducted an exhaustive search of PsycINFO through July 2008 as well as additional related published and unpublished works located in the reference section of the selected articles. Based on Carver and Scheirer's model of self-regulation, McCullough and Willoughby identified six areas in which self-regulation might serve as a mediator between R/S and a given outcome. One of the six propositions examined by McCullough and Willoughby was that "religion affects health, well-being, and social behavior through self-regulation and self-control" (McCullough & Willoughby, p. 18).

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Out of five studies that met the criteria for review of this proposition, four supported the hypothesis that self-control served as a mediator between religiosity and lower rates of substance abuse and criminal and delinquent behavior. Only one study did not support this hypothesis. Wills et al. (2003) found that self-regulation did not serve as a mediator of religiousness and of sexual behavior or substance abuse in African American adolescents.

Urry and Poey (2008) theorized how the role of emotion regulation might mediate R/S practices such as prayer and meditation to improve overall psychological well-being (PWB). Ryan and Deci (2001) point out that the literature on PWB can be divided into two philosophical views of well being – hedonic and eudemonic. Hedonic psychological well-being is seen as the subjective sense of pleasure and that one is satisfied with life overall including important life domains such as work and family. The eudemonic view of psychological well-being is defined in terms of the extent to which one feels accomplishment of high levels of autonomy, mastery, personal growth, and takes into account that reaching one's life goals may or may not be accompanied by good feelings. Duckworth, Steen, and Seligman (2005) suggested incorporating both the hedonic and eudaimonic perspectives when defining PWB by defining happiness as: pleasure (hedonic well-being), engagement (using one's strengths to meet challenges), and meaning (belonging to something larger than one's self which gives a purpose in life). Park (2005) studied 169 bereaved college students and found that positive reappraisal, an ER strategy, based in a student's religious beliefs was associated with higher levels of well-being and personal growth of one's ability to manage stress. Given these studies, Urry and Poey hypothesized that a person's R/S beliefs might influence positive ways to

reappraise stressful events and might, at least partly, explain the mechanism in which R/S serves to improve one's PWB.

Using a broader definition of PWB, Yonker et al. (2012) conducted a meta-analysis of literature examining the relationship between R/S and PWB. This review involved qualitative studies that defined PWB by utilizing outcome measures of risk behaviors, depression, well-being and self-esteem. Criteria for a study to be included in this meta-analyses was clearly defined and stated. Only empirical research articles written in the United States between 1990-2010 were reviewed and only studies in which participants that would belong to adolescents (12-17) and emerging adults (18-25) age ranges were included. In addition, studies were considered only if they included a measurable outcome of R/S. Finally, only studies that included a common effect size statistic were included. This resulted in 75 studies and included 66,273 adolescents and emerging adults. The R/S measures used in the studies were coded using DeHaan, Yonker, and Affholter's (2011) research on the conceptualization of R/S which includes: (a) religious service attendance, (b) overt R/S behaviors such as youth group attendance, Bible reading, (c) salience of beliefs which included the degree of commitment or connectedness to God or a spiritual entity, and (d) mixed measures which included two or more of the previously defined measures. After being trained, two researchers were used to code the R/S measures in the study and were found to have an inter-rater reliability of .82. Discrepancies were resolved through discussion. A meta analysis using SPSS was then used to examine the association between R/S and the four measured outcomes – risk behavior, depression, anxiety, and self-esteem. Results of this meta-analysis indicated that R/S served as a protective factor for risky behaviors such as binge drinking,

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marijuana use and is positively associated with higher levels of mood and overall well-being.

It is important to note that not all research supports a positive correlation between R/S and PWB. Wong, Rew, and Slaikeu (2006) reviewed 20 research articles specific to R/S and mental health in adolescents published between 1998-2004. Results of this review found 90 percent of the studies showed a positive correlation between higher levels of R/S and mental health in adolescents. One of the studies that did not result in positive findings was done by Farver, Bhada, and Narang in 2002 and was specific to the Asian Indian immigrant population. Farver et al. found that Asian Indian who immigrated to the United States and who identified as highly religious had separated acculturation styles. Berry, Kim, Power, Young, and Bujak (1989) defined separated acculturation style as identifying with one's own group while rejecting the dominant culture. Farver et al. hypothesized that highly religious Asian Indian individuals chose to separate from the dominant culture or that the religious practices themselves may separate individuals from the dominant culture. Generally, individuals who find great differences between themselves and the new culture demonstrate higher levels of stress (Faver et al., 2002).

The second study by Pearce, Little and Perez (2006) found several R/S factors such as frequency of church attendance, a self-report of salience of religion to the adolescent, and positive interpersonal experiences within the religious context was associated with fewer depressive symptoms. However, increased depressive symptoms were associated with the adolescent's perception that the religious community was critical of one's behavior. In summary, there is an impressive amount of literature that

supports that R/S does serve as a protective factor for PWB; however, whether this is true for all cultures.

Possible Mechanisms Clarifying How R/S Might Serve As a Protective Factor For Psychological Well-Being

Research studies reveal several possible explanations of how R/S might serve as a protective factor of overall psychological well-being, although there is still much to learn in this area (Bloch, 2004; Desmond, Morgan, & Kikuchi, 2010; George et al., 2000; King & Benson, 2006). For example, King and Benson (2006) hypothesized one reason that the positive relationship of R/S and adolescent development exists might be due to the fact that R/S provides a "worldview of pro-social values, behaviors, and norms grounded in an ideology" (p. 392). Another reason, these authors conjectured is that the context in which much R/S worship and practice takes place is intergenerational and provides a strong caring, nurturing network for adolescents. Third, R/S allows adolescents to use their newly developing cognitive skills to think analytically and critically as they question their practices and beliefs within an environment that nurtures a sense of transcendence, promotes connectedness, and a care and respect for others. King and Benson (2006) hypothesized all of these reasons would be very appealing to an adolescent's cognitive, emotional, and social stage of development.

Desmond, Morgan, and Kikuchi (2010) used growth curve modeling to study the influence of family and peers on adolescents' religious beliefs and attendance in religious services. These researchers found that adolescents who live with biological parents and have both high parent and peer attachment are more likely to attend and participate in religious services and believe that religion is important as compared to adolescents with

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low parent and peer attachment. However, as adolescents move to early adulthood church attendance and the importance of religious beliefs may decline more rapidly as reflected in recent polls such as the 2012 Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion and Public Life (www.perforum.org/unaffiliated/none-on-the-rise.aspx).

Bloch (2004) discussed the importance of school counselors' knowledge base to include an understanding of how spirituality might impact adolescents during important times of transition such as entering high school, leaving high school, or entering a career. Bloch theorized that understanding faith development and the developmental process of acquiring R/S beliefs is important for school counselors. She theorized that times of transition may present periods in which the mechanisms that foster R/S and psychological well-being may be impacted by developmental process of acquisition of R/S beliefs.

Integrating General Counseling Techniques and R/S

The American Association of School Counselors (ASCA) has published Ethical Guidelines from which a counselor can base standards of best practice (ASCA, 2010). The multi-cultural section of these standards discusses the importance of a counselor not imposing his/her own beliefs or values on students or other stakeholders. School counselors working in religious school settings might be expected to incorporate the beliefs, practices, and worldview of the religion on which the school is founded into counseling sessions (Goodell & Robinson, 2009). However, as stated in the ethical guidelines, it is important that counselors also respect the individual student and not use R/S to coerce the student in anyway.

Developing a counseling relationship with a client in which the counselor communicates a genuine desire to know and understand the client is a basic goal of the

therapeutic process (Jankowski, 2002). Jankowski suggests taking a "not-knowing

stance" (p.72) by asking questions in a manner that is humble, tentative, and non-

judgmental to help a client who is interested in R/S explore how one's R/S beliefs might

be helping or hindering growth or change. By taking a "not-knowing stance" the

counselor helps the client feel known and understood.

Wolf (2004) cautions against a school counselor not allowing one's own personal

beliefs to influence a student's decision-making process. This requires the counselor to

have a self-awareness of how one's R/S affects both the counselor's professional and

personal life. Wolf acknowledges that taking a neutral stance is difficult and

recommends the counselor mentally ask oneself if the "focus of the session is on the

student's spirituality" (p. 365). If the counselor cannot answer that question

affirmatively, the counselor is most likely drifting toward his/her own personal beliefs

and should redirect the conversation back to the student's beliefs. Providing a safe

environment for an adolescent to discuss his/her own R/S exploration and development

can help that adolescent to view R/S as a source of strength (Magaldi-Dopman & Park-

Taylor, 2010; Wolf, 2004).

A second implication to consider when integrating R/S into counseling sessions is

the counselor's awareness of where the client's beliefs and practices differ from the

counselor's beliefs and practices (Jankowski, 2002). These differences might originate

from differences in religions but also, as mentioned earlier, from differences in stages of

faith development (Fowler & Dell, 2006). Good & Willoughby (2008) stated that

adolescence is considered by many developmental psychologists to be the most sensitive

period for spiritual exploration and development. Again, Jankowski encourages

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counselors to utilize a "not-knowing stance" (p. 72) when questioning to aid the counselor in understanding what the client is thinking, feeling about his/her R/S beliefs and practices.

ASCA's National Model identifies collaboration as an important professional competency for school counselors who are often in a collaborative role (ASCA 2005). Jankowski (2002) suggests that counselors consider collaboration with members from a person's religious community when the client gives consent for the counselor to do so. Jankowski stated that using this technique is a helpful way to strengthen the client's sense of connection with other people in the religious community. School counselors are well equipped to collaborate given their collaborative role when working with teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders.

Integrating Specific R/S Practices, Beliefs, and Teachings Into Counseling Sessions

There are two options for counselors to consider when developing R/S interventions for adolescents (Walker, 2012). One option is to incorporate R/S practices in psychotherapy goals and the other is to take secular models of treatment and incorporate R/S content (Walker, 2012). Walker is a strong proponent of the latter option as a researched based secular model provides a coherent framework from which the counselor can then integrate R/S as appropriate. Spiritual disciplines such as prayer, fasting, meditation, reading sacred texts, and confession are examples of activities that could be incorporated into counseling sessions as a means of strengthening a person's spiritual connection to God or a higher power (Willard, 2000).

Mindfulness is one example of a secular model of therapy that lends itself well to incorporation of some spiritual disciplines because of its focus on "direct experience in

the present moment" which is a fundamental part of several world religions including Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Islamic, Jewish, and Taoist (Siegel, 2007, p.8). Siegel explained that mindfulness includes an "awareness of the flow of energy and information" that enters our conscious awareness in a manner that is intentional and present focused. Broderick and Metz (2009) conducted a mindfulness pilot program that included a treatment group of 120 twelfth grade females and a control group of seventeen eleventh grade females who attended a Catholic school in a suburb of a city located in a Northeastern region of the United States. The purpose of this study was to fill a gap in the literature because as Broderick and Metz stated, "no mindfulness curriculum for adolescents has been reported in the literature, although mindfulness training could be important for facilitation of emotion regulation skills" (p. 37). The study compared the pre-test and post-test scores of four assessments that measure affect and behavior to assess the effectiveness of the Learning to BREATHE curriculum. The curriculum consists of six lessons with the goal of "helping students understand their thoughts and feelings and learn mindfulness tools for managing negative emotions (Broderick & Metz, p. 38). A statistical analysis of the mean gain of post-test scores using Cohen's d for each subtest of the four assessment measures given were compared to the independent t-test score derived from the pre-test. Cohen's d is a measure effect size, the amount of variance in results that can be explained by the study's design. Effect sizes, albeit small, were significant for students who participated in the program in the areas of stress reduction, reduction of negative affect, an increase in feelings of calmness, an increase in emotional awareness and emotional clarity, and less somatic complaints such as tiredness and overall aches and pains. A qualitative process evaluation of the program indicated

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that on a scale of zero, least useful, to ten, most useful, students reported meditation to be the most useful technique.

Meditation is thought to be a "core mindfulness practice" (Burke, 2009). Monshat et al., (2013) explored how young people ages 16-24 engage with the practices of mindfulness using a qualitative approach. The participants in this study did not suffer from a clinical disorder and though the sample was small, the results are promising in that the mindfulness practice of meditation helped these adolescents and young adults grow in their view of this practice as more than a "stress management technique" to a "mindset" (p.5). One participant stated, that the mindfulness practice of meditation allowed me to "distance myself just slightly [from unpleasant emotions]" (p. 5).

Reflective dialogue can be paired with meditation and is another mindfulness skill that can be incorporated when a counselor is integrating R/S into a counseling session (Seigel, 2007). Reflective dialogues are ways a person can learn to focus attention so he/she is able to describe and label linguistical representations that are taking place in one's mind based on sensory experience from one's nonverbal world (Siegel, 2007). Siegel stated that when using reflective dialogue, a person might explore areas of the mind that are based in worry, or fear. Being slightly detached but still aware of one's emotional state, a person is able to recognize that this emotion, albeit real and powerful, is a combination of one's physiological brain anatomy and thought processes (Siegel, 2007). The client can then focus on a reflective dialogue with God, or higher power and use R/S practices, texts, and beliefs to achieve "internal attunement" or a sense of feeling heard and understood (Siegel, 2007; Willard, 2000).

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In summary, mindfulness techniques provide an example of how counselors might use a secular model of intervention to integrate a client's R/S practices, beliefs, and worldview (Siegel, 2007). Siegel discussed how mindfulness practices can impact a person's brain functioning and provides a means to control and improve one's executive functioning, including self-regulation and emotion regulation. While there is a growing body of research suggesting that incorporating R/S into counseling sessions is helpful, it is also important for counselors to be aware of warning signs, and dangers in a student's/client's interest in R/S (Miller & Kelly, 2006).

Unhealthy Religiosity/Spirituality

Although many studies suggest that R/S can improve overall psychological well being, there is also evidence that psychopathology can be inflamed by R/S beliefs; therefore, counselors should also be cognizant of the drawbacks of R/S in a client's life (Miller & Kelly, 2006). Religious belief can sometimes reinforce delusional beliefs or increase guilt, shame, and worry. Wagener and Maloney (2006) discussed the term "spiritual pathology" which they define as "deviations from the normal developmental progression due to aberrant developmental process in the organic, intrapersonal, interpersonal, and cultural spheres." (p. 142). These authors stated that the study of R/S pathology is challenging because of a lack of understanding and a coherent theory of healthy spiritual development.

Wagener and Maloney (2006) proposed four lenses to consider when determining if an individual's R/S is healthy or pathological. The first lens is a functional lens which views the associations one makes between R/S and positive or negative outcome behaviors (Wagener & Maloney, 2006). For example, college students who attributed the

attacks on September 11, 2001 to a demonic type force had a tendency to exhibit more post-traumatic stress symptoms (Wagener & Maloney, 2006).

The emotions of guilt and shame can become excessive and pathological for some religious individuals (Watts, 2007). Watts defined guilt as a "reaction to an observable behavior" while shame "arises from a more pervasive sense of what kind of people we are" (p. 513). Watts stated that the negative emotions of guilt and shame can serve a constructive purpose and should not be regulated out of existence. However, ER can be useful, according to Watts, when excessive guilt or shame is disproportionate to the conduct it triggered.

A cultural consensual approach is another lens through which to determine if an individual's behavior, thoughts, and feelings are pathological (Wagener & Maloney, 2006). These researchers pointed out that spiritual practices in one culture may be considered normal while not in another. This can be problematic when a religious group's values clash with the values of the dominant culture as in the case of the Branch Davidians in which there were concerns of child abuse, neglect, and endangerment (Wagener & Maloney, 2006).

Third, Wagener and Maloney (2006) pointed out that one can use a rational approach to examine the moral virtues or deficiencies of an individual's spirituality. Studying the behaviors of the Dali Lama, Mother Theresa, or a serial killer would be an example of utilization of this approach. Wagener and Maloney stated that few people fall into either the positive or negative end of the continuum of moral virtues or deficiencies.

Finally, one can consider an authoritarian lens through which to view R/S. This approach relies on using a higher source of authority, religious or political, to determine

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what is spiritually healthy or unhealthy (Wagener & Maloney, 2006). For example, Wagener and Maloney stated that one can contrast the current emphasis on social justice as a positive use of higher authority to destructive historical movements such as the Holocaust or ethnic cleansing as a negative use of higher authority. Religious terrorism and cults are other examples of unhealthy religious authority (Wagener & Maloney, 2006).

Religious delusions are often symptoms of poor mental health according to Wagener and Maloney (2006) who stated that "a belief is delusional only to the extent that violates what is known to be true about objective reality" (p. 142). A delusional belief is characterized by complex behaviors such as disorganized thinking, withdrawal, and/or psychosis. Grandiosity or claiming to have special status or powers is another type of delusion.

R/S can sometimes impede the counseling process even in the absence of pathological R/S thoughts, beliefs, or behaviors. (Cashwell, Myers & Shurts, 2004). Cashwell, Myers, and Shurts (2004) discussed examples of how this might come to light in a counseling session. One example is referred to as spiritual bypass which clients might use to avoid psychological pain. Examples of spiritual bypass might be when a client avoids family to do service for others and appears to be "the good servant" or when a husband who has been physically abused by his mother wrestles with anger toward his wife and is encouraged to "turn the other cheek" (p. 404).

Another problem of R/S is that it can promote exclusivity (Trinitalpli, 2007; van der Straten Waillet & Roskam, 2012). Trinitalpli (2007) stated when one religion claims to hold exclusive truth there is less tolerance and the possibility for a greater likelihood of

discrimination. A study by van der Straten Waillet and Roskam (2012) that examined contextual variables that contribute to religious discrimination in children and adolescents found that discrimination is more likely to occur during childhood than adolescence. The authors hypothesized one reason this might be true is because of the adolescent's move to more abstract thinking which allows the cognitive skills and flexibility needed to achieve a higher level of moral thinking. Trinitapoli (2007) found that Mormons and evangelicals were more likely to hold exclusivist beliefs than mainline Protestants. In addition, van der Straten Waillet and Roskam (2012) found that discrimination is more common in homogenous schools. Given these findings, it is important for school counselors working in a religious setting to be aware of the danger of exclusivity. School counselors working in a religious school setting may need to more intentionally help adolescents incorporate tolerance and respect for others within the framework of the school's religious principles.

The Link Between Religiosity/Spirituality and Emotion Regulation

This Chapter began with a review of studies that support the proposition that academic achievement and psychological well-being are both important factors in adolescent development (Erickson & Phillips, 2012; Matson & Coatsworth, 1998). Several studies have found a positive correlation between emotion regulation and higher levels of academic achievement and psychological well-being (Briggs et al., 2011; Brigman & Campbell, 2003; John & Gross, 2004; McCullough & Willoughby, 2009; Urry & Poey, 2008). While keeping the dangers of incorporating R/S into counseling sessions in mind, it is also important for counselors to remember that some research suggests that many adolescents who identify as R/S tend to fare better academically, (Erickson & Phillips, 2012) are less likely to engage in risky behaviors such as substance

abuse and delinquent behaviors, and experience overall healthier psychological well-being than adolescents who do not identify as R/S (Urry & Poey, 2008; Yonker et al., 2012). While there are studies such as those done by King and Benson (2006) and Desmond et al. (2010) that suggest social support, health behaviors, and healthy coping strategies account for some of the explanation between R/S and psychological well-being and higher academic performance there is still much to learn about why this positive correlation exists (George et al., 2000).

McCullough and Willoughby (2009) hypothesized that self-regulation may be one of the factors, yet to be studied, that might further explain the positive correlation between R/S, academic achievement, and overall well-being. As discussed earlier in this Chapter, self-regulation is a broad concept that involves planning, guiding, and adjusting behavior to achieve one's goal (Carver, 2004; Carver & Scheier, 1998). Emotion regulation as defined by Thompson (1994) includes the extrinsic and intrinsic processes that help an individual "monitor, evaluate, and modify emotional experiences in order to accomplish one's goals" (p. 27-28). McCullough and Willoughby (2009) stated that emotion regulation is a specific form of self-control defined as "behaviors designed to counteract or override a prepotent response" (p. 4).

Based on the hypothesis that self-regulation may be a mechanism that accounts for some of the positive correlation between R/S and academic achievement and psychological well-being, McCullough and Willoughby (2009) used six propositions originating from Carver and Scheier's (1998) model of self-regulation to organize a literature review of research studies. The six propositions are (a) religiousness can promote self-control, (b) religion influences self-regulation by influencing people's goals,

(c) religion influences self-regulation by promoting self-monitoring, (d) religion influences self-regulation by building self-regulatory strength, (e) religions influence self-regulation by prescribing and promoting mastery with specifically religious outputs for self-change, and (f) religion affects health, well-being, and social behavior through self-regulation and self-control (McCullough & Willoughby, 2009). The review consisted of an exhaustive search of PsychINFO through July 2008 as well as a review of additional published and unpublished works referenced in the studies found in the PsychINFO search. The authors attempted to locate studies that contradicted the six propositions as well as studies that supported the propositions in order to provide an unbiased, systematic review. Overall, McCullough and Willoughby found there is existing evidence that reasonable supports the proposition that some religious rituals such as prayer, meditation, scripture reading, and religious imagery support self-regulation.

Since the emphasis of this proposed study is emotion regulation, a specific type of self-regulation, I will review in more detail two propositions that specifically mention the concept of self-control which McCullough and Willoughby (2009) purport includes emotion regulation. First, McCullough and Willoughby (2009) found strong evidence to support the proposition that religiousness can promote self-control. In a review of personality research on religiousness and self-control, eleven studies found positive, albeit moderate, associations with either standardized regression coefficients ranging from .21 to .38. Overall, the studies reviewed supported that individuals with higher scores on measures of self-control tend to be more religions, and children who are raised in a religious family tend to have higher self-control and lower levels of impulsivity.

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For example, Lodi-Smith and Roberts (2007) conducted a meta-analysis of the Big Five dimensions of personality (i.e., Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism) and found that Agreeableness and Conscientiousness were the most reliable correlates of religion. This positive correlation was found in studies that relied on self-reports, informant, and expert reports of personality traits. Moreover, when studies were included based on other theoretical models of personality such as Eyesnck or Cattel the finding still held true in studies that included Christian, Jewish, and Muslim participants.

Second, the proposition by McCullough and Willoughby (2009) that religion affects health, well-being, and social behavior through self-regulation and self-control was supported. Social behavior includes emotional health, drug use, and school achievement making this proposition relevant to the research questions in my study. McCullough and Willoughby (2009) reviewed 19 studies that supported this proposition.

For example, Hopp et al. (2011) conducted a study that found that individuals who habitually reported using emotion regulation strategies had higher levels of psychological health. In addition, Duckworth and Seligman (2006) suggested that self-control is a better predictor of academic achievement than intelligence. A longitudinal study by Shoda et al. (1990) found that preschoolers who were able to delay gratification scored slightly higher six years later on the Stanford Achievement Test. Studies such as this have led to the development of preschool curriculums that focus on activities designed to strengthen a child's executive functioning (Brigman & Goodman, 2001; Diamond & Lee, 2011).

In addition, McCullough and Willoughby (2009) reviewed papers that used data from five independent data sets that supported the proposition that religion affects well-being through self-control. Four of the five data sets supported the proposition that "self-control mediated the associations of religiousness with these [positive] outcome variables" (McCullough & Willoughby, 2009, p. 17). Only one study of 297 African-American adolescents, that focused on predicting sexual behaviors and substance abuse using a structural analysis equation found no correlation between self-control and religiousness (Wills et al., 2003).

One of the conclusions of McCullough and Willoughby's (2009) literature review is a call for further research to distinguish the aspects of religion that are associated with better self-control or self-regulation from those that are related to poorer self-control or self-regulation. Approximately 85 percent of adolescents between the ages of 13-18 report some type of religious affiliation (Smith et al. 2002). Moreover, approximately four million students attend private religious schools in the United States (www.capenet.org). It is my hope the results of this study will begin to raise the professional discourse so that school counselors working in religious school settings and any counselor working with adolescents can begin to identify and intentionally utilize the aspects of R/S that are associated with higher levels of self-control or self-regulation and avoid those that might be associated with poorer levels of self-control.

Chapter three will discuss the research design for this qualitative study using a grounded theory approach to better understand how counselors working in religious school settings perceive integrating ER strategies with R/S practices, teachings, and

beliefs. The study will consider student gender as a factor that might impact the

counselor's perceived use of ER strategies and R/S practices, teachings, and beliefs.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This study utilized a grounded theory approach to describe and better understand how school counselors working with adolescents in grades seven through twelve in religious school settings utilize emotion regulation (ER) strategies in counseling sessions. Chapter three describes my design of a grounded theory research study, and why this method was chosen. In addition, I discuss in detail how research will be conducted, including participant selection, data collection, data analysis and interpretation, and trustworthiness. The following research questions frame this study:

1. What specific emotion regulation strategies do school counselors use when working with adolescents grades seven through twelve in religious school settings?

2. What are the religious/spiritual practices, teachings, or beliefs that school counselors in religious school settings perceive to be most important when working with adolescents?

3. How do school counselors working with adolescents, grades seven through twelve, in religious school settings describe ways in which they work with students to integrate the emotion regulation strategies the counselor is trying to help the student develop with the student's religious/spiritual practices, teachings, or beliefs in counseling sessions?

4. What student characteristics do school counselors working with adolescents, grades seven through twelve, in religious school settings perceive to be the most important to consider when integrating emotion regulation strategies with religious/spiritual practices, teachings, or beliefs?

5. What do school counselors perceive to be the positive outcomes of integrating and utilizing emotion regulation strategies and religious/spiritual practices, teachings, or beliefs?

6. What do school counselors perceive to be the negative outcomes of integrating and utilizing emotion regulation strategies and religious/spiritual practices, teachings, or beliefs into counseling sessions?

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research emerged from the disciplines of anthropology and sociology with the purpose to "understand how people make sense of their lives and their experiences" (Merriam, 2009, p. 23). It is based on a constructivist viewpoint in that it allows for different interpretations of an event to exist based on "how people interpret what they experience" (Merriam, p. 14). The purpose of qualitative research is to describe, understand, and interpret the phenomenon, person, or group of people that is being studied (Merriam, 2009). Creswell (2007) stated, "the researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting" (p. 249). The questions that I was seeking to answer in my research reflect a desire to better understand how counselors working in a religious setting make sense of the ways they utilize emotion regulation strategies. I was not seeking to find one truth but instead, I was seeking to gain knowledge from multiple perspectives, and then analyze those data to find categories that emerge. I used the counselors' descriptions and interpretation of their experiences in counseling sessions to reach a better understanding of what emotion regulation strategies they perceived using and how they perceived integrating R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs with those

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emotion regulation strategies. Thus, it was apparent to me, as the researcher, that a qualitative study based on a constructivist philosophical assumption was the best choice to answer the research questions in this study.

Researcher's Perspective

In qualitative research, "the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis" (Merriam, 2009, p. 15). Merriam pointed out that from a constructivist perspective, on which qualitative research is based, it is understood that a reflection on the researcher's own interpretation based on cultural, social, gender, and class is what will be brought to the research. In order to increase the credibility of a qualitative study, Merriam discussed the importance of "reflexivity" (p. 219), a strategy in which the researcher makes transparent his/her "assumptions, experiences, worldview, and theoretical orientation to the study at hand" (p. 219). Therefore, as Merriam (2009) suggests, it is important that I clearly state my role as the researcher in order to identify potential bias and reduce it.

I was the Director of Guidance and Counseling for seven years at a Christian high school located in an upper-middle class area of a metropolitan city in the Midwest. This school enrolls students in grades seven through twelve. The following statement is included in the school's mission statement: "Faculty and staff enable students to discover and embrace a biblical view of the world and integrate that worldview into every area of life." In my role as a counselor, I wondered what it looks like to integrate a biblical worldview into every area of life, especially in the emotional life of adolescents. The topic of emotions, and learning how to accept and manage them is often neglected in the school counseling literature. Personally, I believe that religiosity/spirituality (R/S) can

be integrated with the emotion generation process and ER strategies to enhance one's psychological and subjective well-being. As a mother of three children, I attempted to integrate R/S with my understanding of the emotion generation process and emotion regulation (ER) strategies so that my children could find strength and comfort in their R/S, and use it in ways to accept and manage their own emotions. Likewise, as a school counselor it was important to me that the students I worked with find strength and comfort in R/S as they develop their own ER strategies, if they are open to using their R/S as a source of reference to guide their feelings, thoughts, and behaviors.

Research Design

I will describe different types of qualitative research in order to provide a context to explain the research design used for this study. Basic qualitative research is the most common type of qualitative research and used frequently in education (Merriam, 2009). Merriam explained that basic qualitative research includes the same characteristics found in all types of qualitative research without "an additional dimension" (p. 23). For example, narrative research adds the dimension of "first-person accounts" (p. 32) of stories that are used for data analysis. Case study, another type of qualitative research, is the study of a system of "interrelated parts that form a whole" (Creswell, 2007, p. 244). Creswell explained that a case study has "boundaries, often bounded by time and place" (p. 244). Stake (1995) pointed out that the case must be bounded and part of a system. A third type of qualitative research, phenomenology, according to Moustakas (1994), adds the dimension of understanding the "essence of human experience" (p. 105) by reducing data to a "basic structure" (Merriam, p. 25) that cuts across all pieces of data.

Building a theory, Merriam (2009) explained is what "differentiates grounded theory from other types of qualitative research" (p. 30). The type of theory that is developed is usually "substantive" (p. 30) rather than "grand" (p. 30) theory (Merriam, 2009). According to Merriam, substantive theory is useful for "specific, everyday-world situations" (p. 30) and has "usefulness to practice often lacking in theories that cover more global concerns" (p. 30). Strauss and Corbin (1998) describe grounded theory as:

> Theory that is inductively derived from the data, systematically gathered and analyzed through the research process. In this method, data collection, analysis, and eventual theory stand in close relationship to one another. A researcher does not begin a project with a preconceived theory in mind (unless his or her purpose is to elaborate on and extend existing theory). Rather, the researcher begins with an area of study and allows the theory to emerge from the data. (p. 12)

Because of my interest in school counselors working in a religious school setting and wondering what it looks like to integrate a biblical worldview into every area of life, grounded theory seemed to be a logical methodology to choose, with the hope that a theory might emerge from the data. I left open the possibility that my research would result in a grounded theory study. However, there was the possibility that the data from this study may only describe and not explain (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) the phenomenon of school counselors' perceptions of ways in which they integrate ER strategies and R/S. In that case, the study design would have been basic qualitative research.

Before deciding on grounded theory or basic qualitative research, I considered two other potential qualitative designs for this study, case study and phenomenological. Narrative analysis, ethnography, with its focus on study of "human society and culture"

(Merriam, 2009, p.27), and critical research, with its goal to "critique and change society" (Merriam, p. 34) were not considered due to inconsistencies between my research questions and the purpose of these specific research designs.

I considered a case study approach because I was studying counselors working in religious school settings. Creswell (2007) explained that the focus of a case study is to develop "an in-depth description and analysis of a case or multiple cases" (p. 78). However, Stake (1994) also explained that case studies are based on issues that "foreshadow a problem" (p. 448). The focus of this study was to understand how counselors perceive integrating ER strategies and R/S in counseling sessions and did not fit Stake's criteria for studying an issue that might create a potential problem.

I also considered a phenomenological approach to this study because I am interested in the school counselors' experience of their attempt to integrate R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs, and ER strategies in their practice. Merriam (2009) described such a design as useful when "studying affective, emotional, and often intense human experiences" (p. 26). I further thought this design could be applicable after reading Caelli's (2000) description of modern phenomenology as the study of "everyday understandings of experience" (p. 371). Since the purpose of this study was not to understand the "essence" (Merriam, 2009, p. 38) of school counselors' perceptions and experience without also exploring their perception of the students' beliefs and reactions to these interventions, I decided that a phenomenological study design was not appropriate for my research questions.

Population and Sample

I used purposeful sampling to select "information-rich cases" (Coyne, 1997, p. 627) "strategically and purposefully" (Patton, 2002, p. 243) for this study. First, I began with criterion sampling that Patton (2002) described as "picking cases that meet some criterion" (p. 243). In thinking about the sample I wanted to capture, I carefully considered the selection criteria that I wanted to include so as to "reflect the purpose of the study" (Merriam, 2009, p. 78). The first criterion was that the school counselors must currently be employed in a religious school setting, since I was interested in exploring the counselors' perception of their opportunities to integrate ER strategies with R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs. For the purpose of this study, I used Christian schools that included both Protestant and Catholic denominations.

The second criterion included a screening question in which the counselor was asked if the he or she participates in the Christian traditions and practices promoted by their school. I wanted to insure that the counselors' beliefs about Christianity are consistent with those of the religious school in which the counselor is employed. Third, I decided to seek school counselors working with adolescents, grades seven through twelve because of the need for research with this age group called for in the literature on emotion regulation (McCullough & Willoughby, 2009). I also screened to determine if the counselor has a master's degree in the area of school counseling or a related field (i.e., school psychology).

A fifth criterion was that I studied school counselors working in school settings structured by gender - male only schools, female only schools, and coeducational schools. The research on gender differences of emotion expression and reactivity (discussed in detail in Chapter Two) suggests that when studies relied on self-report,

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males reported being more expressive of certain emotions such as anger or pride than females who were more expressive of emotions such as happiness, sadness, disgust, and fear (Fabes & Martin, 1991; Shields, 2003). Because of the research on perceived gender difference in emotion expression and reactivity, I was interested in examining if counselors' use of ER strategies was influenced by the student's gender, or if there were astrategies that cut across all settings.

In order to increase the likelihood that the counselors I chose would be "information rich cases" (Coyne, 1997, p. 627), I used a snowball technique. Merriam (2009) stated that this technique is "the most common form of purposeful sampling" (p. 79). Merriam explained that snowball sampling begins by "locating a few key participants" (p.79) who know other school counselors who would be "good interview participants" (Patton, 2002, p. 243). I belonged to a local independent school counselors' group who meets periodically throughout the school year, and I began the sampling process with this group.

I also used theoretical sampling to decide the participants needed for this study. Merriam (2007) stated that grounded theory is guided by theoretical sampling, which will be discussed in more detail in the data collection section of this chapter. Strauss and Corbin (1998) explained that, "The first step in theory building is conceptualizing" (p. 103). Thus, as concepts from the data began to emerge I decided which participants would provide the information needed to determine if, in fact, I had identified an important concept.

Initially, I was unsure exactly how many participants I would need to interview. Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) conducted a study that indicated data saturation

occurred between twelve and fifteen interviews when the study consists of a fairly homogenous sample. Creswell (2007) stated that a grounded theory study is best suited for a group that is homogenous enough from which a theory can be developed. Since my group is not as homogenous as the participants in the Guest et al. study, I anticipated that I would need a minimum of eighteen interviews in order to provide the information necessary to answer my research questions. Data saturation was the decisive factor and eighteen participants was the final number needed.

Institutional Review Board

IRB approval was gained from the University of Missouri - St. Louis and a modification report was approved in March 2014. Initial participants were approached by this investigator through conversations at a monthly gathering of school counselors working in independent schools. This researcher approached participants from this group because of their interest in, and ability to discuss topics related to counseling interventions used with students. Additional participants, were referred from the initial participants, and were contacted via a phone call in which the school counselor was invited to participate in this study. The purpose of the study was explained, as well as the nature of what was required from the counselors should they choose to participate.

The potential participants were pre-screened to determine if they participate in Christian traditions and practices as expressed by the denomination of choice and if their beliefs about Christianity are consistent with the religious school in which the counselor is employed. I first informed the potential participant that the information obtained from the screening was confidential. The counselor was also screened to determine if the counselor has a masters degree in counseling (or a related field), and to determine the

counselor's years of experience. In order to find eighteen willing participants, years of experience, was not used to exclude a counselor. When these criteria were met, verbal consent was obtained. If the criteria were not met, I thanked the counselors for their time and explained that they did not meet the criteria needed for this study. For those who did meet criteria and verbal consents were obtained, a meeting was offered to explain the consent form (See Appendix A). Due to participant's time constraints, they often asked that forms be sent to them and a follow-up phone call was scheduled to answer any questions, review the consent form, and to schedule an interview. The consent form explained the time involved, that the involvement is entirely voluntary, and that a participant may choose to withdraw at anytime. Other than possible low-level emotional discomfort from answering questions, little risk was involved. The participants were asked to read through and sign the consent form if they agreed to all aspects of the study. One counselor agreed to participate, received the forms, and subsequently decided not to participate. No other counselors dropped out of the study. In addition to the consent form, the counselor was asked to have a school administrator sign an assent form to ensure the administrator was comfortable with, and aware of the counselor's participation in this study (See Appendix B).

Participants

Eighteen school counselors participated in this study, four males and 14 females. Counselors ranged in age from 32 to 69. Six counselors were between the age of 30-39, three between 40-49, eight between 50-59, and one was between 60-69 years of age. The mean age of the counselors was 47.5 years.

All counselors were from the Midwest and the schools were located in a metropolitan area. Two counselors were from the upper Midwest, and participated in a phone interview rather than a face-to-face interview, due to distance. Seventeen counselors were Caucasian and one identified as a Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander.

Counselors ranged from having three to thirty-plus years of counseling experience. Three counselors had thee to five, years of experience, eight counselors had six to ten years of experience, four counselors had 11-15 years of experience, two counselors had 16-20 years of experience, two counselors had 17-25 years, and one counselor had 30 plus years of experience. The mean years of experience of the counselors were 11.7.

Data Collection

Three complementary methods of data collection were used with each participant – a vignette, a journal entry, and an individual interview. The vignette used at the beginning of this paper was given to each participant along with questions asking the counselor to identify what he or she perceives the problem to be, how the counselor might intervene, how he or she might work with the student so as to help the student make healthy choices, and how the counselor might help the student spiritually wrestle with his or her doubts. (See Appendix D for the Vignette). Barter and Renold (2000) discussed the use of vignettes in research and stated that vignettes have been "widely used as a complementary technique alongside other data collection methods" (p. 311). Barter and Renold (2000) stated that a vignette is defined as a story that allows the participant to respond as they would in a similar situation. While a participant's response

to a vignette provides a general "snapshot" of the participant's attitudes, beliefs and perceptions of a topic individual interviews can be used to gather more specific data (Barter & Renold, 2000).

   After completing the questions from the vignette, participants were asked to write in a journal about a specific student with whom they have worked and to answer the following questions: (a) "What types of strategies did you use to help the student control and/or adjust different emotions that seemed to be problematic? Please identify what you perceived the problematic emotion(s) to be"? (b) Describe any R/S practices, teachings, beliefs, overall worldview that you utilized, if any". (c) "Did you integrate the strategies you identified in (a) and (b), and if so, how"? The purpose of the vignette and journal was to help the participant begin to reflect on questions that were asked in the interview. The investigator collected the vignette and journal at the time of the interview.

   Data was also collected through the use of in-depth interviews, which are thought of as the "most common form of data collection in qualitative studies" (Merriam, 2009, p. 86). Individual interviews rather than a focus group were used to protect the schools' and counselors' privacy since the questions are personal in that they revolve around the counselor's therapeutic methods of practice. Additionally, since the interviewer in a focus group "has less control over the direction of the discussion … than a one-to-one setting" (Bender & Ewbank, 1994, p. 73), individual interviews were preferred to be certain that, as much as possible, all of the major interview questions were discussed. Since I was interested in each participant's experience, rather than the "interaction between or among" (Bender & Ewbank, 1994, p. 64) the participants to the detriment of

not gaining a full picture of each of their experiences, a focus group interview did not seem appropriate for this research study.

I used semi-structured interviews utilizing open-ended questions (Flick, 2006; Merriam, 2009). Interviews are commonly utilized in collecting data for qualitative research designs, and semi-structured interviews allow for flexibility in conducting interviews while also allowing for a level of consistency between all interviews conducted (Merriam, 2009). The semi-structured interview was a conversation guided by the interview protocol that was adapted to obtain, clarify, or expand specific information about the counselor's use of the five families, or groups, of strategies identified in Gross and Thompson's (2007) process model of emotion regulation discussed in Chapter Two. In addition, questions included how counselors integrate their use of ER strategies with R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs. Because data collection and data analysis occur concurrently in grounded theory, in the data analysis section of Chapter Four 4, I discussed choosing and adapting interview questions based on the participants responses and the initial process of building categories. A semi-structured interview guide that I have developed based on Gross's process model of ER was used and can be found in Appendix B.

The interviews were conducted at a location most convenient for the participant. My goal was for the participant to have a safe, private place where we were able to talk candidly. The length of the interviews was approximately one hour, and the interviews were audio taped.

Theoretical Sampling

Corbin and Strauss (1990) explained that theoretical sampling, a technique that is central to grounded theory, is not based on specific individuals or groups of individuals but on "concepts, their properties, dimensions, and variations" (p.8). Consistent with Corbin and Strauss (1990) I was alert to identify "all important concepts " (p. 9) that were represented in every interview, and then to reduce my analysis to examine "the conditions under which the phenomena occur, the action/interactional form they take, the consequences that result" (p. 9).

For example in this study, I was alert to explore if a category began to emerge from the data of counselors working in all female schools, to then choose participants from other school settings (male and coeducational) to see if that category holds true under different conditions. However, this was not always possible due to the need to find willing participants. In addition to gender, other factors that I considered that might influence my sampling included the counselor's years of experience, and Catholic versus Protestant religious schools.

When counselors reported integrating an emotion regulation strategy with the student's religious/spiritual practices, teachings, or beliefs (interaction) I explored with specificity how the counselor used that strategy when working with a student, what might have motivated the counselor to use that technique or combination of techniques, and how did they know if the technique was helpful to the student (consequences).

This process allowed me to maintain representativeness and consistency in my data collection (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). I followed Corbin and Strauss's (1990) recommendation, as much as possible, to sample incidents, and conditions under which

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an event occurs to determine which potential participant to interview so that I could determine if the concept that is emerging is "representative" across all settings, under all conditions and with similar results (consistency). "It is by theoretical sampling that representativeness and consistency are achieved" (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 9). I used theoretical sampling throughout all phases of data analysis, which will be discussed in more detail later.

Data Management

I used the services of rev.com to transcribe all of the interviews because as Easton, McComish, and Greenberg (2000) explained, hiring a trained professional can help reduce the likelihood of transcription errors. A computer was used to audio record the interview; no video was used. Easton et al. pointed out that equipment failure can be a pitfall of data collection; therefore, I also had a Flip Camera that could have been used along with an extra set of batteries. This camera was not needed, but if it had been, the camera would have captured the researcher's image, not the participant's. The interviews took place in a quiet, private location so that environmental background noise would not override the voices on the recording, making transcription impossible (Easton et al., 2003).

I am aware of Merriam's (2009) cautions about hiring a transcriptionist, but I still had the ability to gain an "intimate familiarity" (p. 110) with the interviews, even though I did not transcribe the audio recordings, by re-reading them numerous times during data analysis. In addition once a transcript was received, as Merriam (2009) suggested, I simultaneously read through each of the interviews "while listening to it in order to correct errors and fill in blanks" (p. 110). I kept the name of the participant, contact

information, and name of the school in a locked file in order to keep access to this information secure.

To further protect the identity of the participant and the school, I maintained a list of the participants' names and the corresponding interview number along with schools, which were assigned corresponding numbers that served as the key to the location. No identifying information regarding the participant or the school was included in the file sent to the transcription service.

The entire interview was double-spaced so that the researcher could make notes during data analysis. The transcriptionist was asked to transcribe fillers, such as "um", "like", "you know" in order to duplicate the exact words of the speaker. McLellan et al. (2003) pointed out that researchers begin taking the first step of data reduction when deciding what will or will not be transcribed. Because data analysis in grounded theory is focused on the content of what is said rather than how participants expresses themselves, it was not necessary to have transcription rules for tone of voice, emphasis on certain words, etc. (Merriam, 2009).

Data Analysis

Constant Comparative Method

Data analysis in grounded theory is "not a structured, static, or rigid process" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 58) but rather an inductive, creative process in which the researcher "moves back and forth between [different] types of coding" (p. 58). Corbin and Strauss (1990) stated, "data collection and analysis are interrelated processes" (p. 6).

In analyzing the data, I used the constant comparative data analysis method as suggested by Corbin and Strauss (1990) and Strauss and Corbin (1998) in their writings on grounded theory. Corbin and Strauss (1990) stated that during the process of the constant comparative method of data analysis, "As an incident is noted, it should be compared against other incidents for similarities and differences. The resulting concepts are labeled as such, and over time, they are compared and grouped" (p. 9). Corbin and Strauss (1990) described the usefulness of the constant comparison method in grounded theory data analysis as not only "guarding against bias" (p. 9) but also in achieving "greater precision…and consistency" (p. 9). Merriam (2009) described such a method of data analysis as "inductive and comparative" (p. 175) and one that allows the researcher to make meaning of data by "consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said" (p. 175-6).

Open Coding

I used line-by-line open coding as I analyzed my data (Strauss & Corbin 1998). Strauss and Corbin (1998) defined open coding as "the analytic process through which concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions are discovered in data" (p. 101). Concepts are defined as "a labeled phenomenon" (Strauss & Corbin, p. 102) and phenomena are "important analytic ideas that emerge from our data" (Strauss & Corbin, p. 114). Concepts are important in grounded theory because they are the "basic units of analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p.7), and the "building blocks of theory" (Strauss & Corbin, p. 102).

Once I accumulated a list of initial concepts, I moved to the next phase of open coding in which a concept's "properties and dimensions are discovered in the data"

(Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 101). In doing so, I compared the concepts with one another to determine their characteristics (i.e., properties), and ranges (i.e., dimensions). This comparison process allowed me to determine which concepts could potentially form unique categories and which concepts would best be combined to form unique categories. Specific examples of this process are given in Chapter Four. Since "not all concepts became categories" (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 7), I was careful while considering properties and dimensions to ensure that I formed categories that were truly unique from one another.

Strauss and Corbin (1998) explained that categories are important because they reduce the number of number of analytical units with which the researcher is working. "In addition, categories have analytic power because they have the potential to explain and predict" (Strauss & Corbin, p. 112). In line with grounded theory data analysis, I constantly compared and grouped the concepts in different ways, while referring to the data to guide these decisions regarding category construction (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 9). As categories in the data emerged, I began to formulate hypotheses that defined the links between categories and properties (Merriam, 2009). Consistent with Merriam, these hypotheses were tentative and became clearer as I progressed through the iterative process of data analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Because I planed to record all concepts which I consider as potentially being able to become categories or which might be grouped together to form categories (Corbin & Strauss, 1990), it was important for me to utilize theoretical memos to keep track of my "analysis, thoughts, interpretations, [and] questions" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 110) as I processed the data in an inductive manner. My memos allowed me to keep a record of my

"thinking processes" (Montgomery & Bailey, 2007, p. 68). Consistent with Corbin and Strauss (1990), I considered each of these concepts "provisional" (p. 7) as potential categories.

Axial Coding

At the same time that I determined the properties and dimensions of the potential categories, I will also engaged in axial coding. Strauss and Corbin (1998) defined axial coding as "the act of relating categories to subcategories along the lines of their properties and dimensions" (p. 124). While formulating the categories and their subcategories, I continued to "form more precise and complete explanations about phenomena" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 124) including their properties, dimensions, and data illustrating them.

Subcategories that may have begun to emerge in open coding were examined and become clearer to the researcher, because early in the coding process it was difficult to determine the difference between categories and subcategories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Subcategories, like categories stand for a phenomena but instead of being able to stand on its own, like a category, a subcategory "answers questions about the phenomenon such as when, where, why, who how, and with what consequences" (Strauss & Corbin, p. 124).

A major task of axial coding is "identifying the variety of conditions, actions/interactions, and consequences associated with a phenomenon" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 126). Strauss and Corbin (1998) explained that when the researcher is involved in axial coding it is imperative to "locate [the category] within a conditional structure and identify 'how' or the means through which a category is manifested" (p. 127). That is, Strauss and Corbin (1998) explained, during the process of axial coding

one must relate the "structure" or circumstances in which the category manifests itself with the "process" or how the category manifests itself. This is important because "process and structure are inextricably linked" (Strauss & Corbin, p. 127) and when we understand why and how a category occurs we are better able to capture the complexities of life.

Strauss and Corbin (1998) defined a paradigm as "an analytic tool devised to help a researcher integrate structure with process" (p. 123) because the connections between structure and process are not always explicit.   There are three components of a paradigm (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The first of the three components, conditions, are "a conceptual way of grouping answers to the questions why, where, how come, and when" (Strauss & Corbin, p. 128) and "together form the structure or set of circumstances or situations, in which phenomena are embedded." (p. 128).   The "strategic or routine responses made by individuals or groups to issues, problems, happenings, or events that arise under those conditions" (Strauss & Corbin, p.128) are actions/interactions, the second component of the paradigm. Strauss and Corbin (1998) explained that actions/interactions answer the questions "by whom, and how" (p.128). The third component, consequences are the results of the actions/interactions (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

For example, in my study if a counselor talked about a student similar to the one in the vignette in Chapter One who got drunk and had sex at a party, the category "coping" might have been impacted by the student's stress, being at a party with peers, and having access to alcohol (condition).   The student's choice to cope by drinking in this situation is the action/interaction. The consequence was that the student got drunk,

had sex, and now is feeling shame and embarrassment. This type of analysis helped to explain the relationship between categories and subcategories. I used the components of this paradigm as an organizational scheme to see subtle, implicit connections between a category and the conditions, actions, and consequences that might relate one category to another (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

Selective Coding

Selective coding is defined as "the process of integrating and refining the theory" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 143). Once the researcher begins to see the connections between categories one further level of abstraction is needed to determine if a central category, sometimes known as a core category, exists that cuts across all categories, dimensions, properties, and hypotheses (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Merriam, 2009). According to Strauss and Corbin (1988) the following criteria need to be met in order for a category to rise to the level of a central category: (1) A central category must be related to all other categories and must occur frequently in the data. (2) There must be a logical, not forced, explanation that emerges in relating all the concepts to the central category. (3) The central category used must be "sufficiently abstract" (p. 147) so that it can be used for research in other areas that will lead to "development of a more general theory" (p. 147). (4) The theory grows in depth as the concept is "refined analytically through integration with other concepts" (p. 147). (5) The central category should be able explain variation including contradictory cases.

Once a central category evolved that fits the data, properties and dimensions will be defined in order to refine the theory to assure internal consistency and to look for gaps in the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). I attempted to identify the properties or

characteristics of the central category, and reviewed all the categories to determine how much this property occurred within the structure of the theory as Strauss and Corbin (1998) suggest. I will looked at the central category, as well as all other categories, to determine if they were "sufficiently developed in terms of properties and dimensions to demonstrate its *range of variability* as a concept" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 159). Strauss and Corbin (1998) defined range of variability as the "degree to which a concept varies along its properties, with *variation* built into the theory by sampling for diversity and ranges of properties" (p. 143).

Record Keeping

I listed my original descriptive concepts in the margin of each interview, vignette, and case conceptualization, and then made a running list using a separate memo of all of these categories across all my data, as Merriam recommends (2009). As I collapsed and combined concepts, categories, and subcategories I kept memos of my decision making process. I was alert to identify the central category that emerged from my data, which became the conceptual cornerstone of my theory. The categories, subcategories, properties, dimensions, and data examples will be placed into a codebook in the Appendix F to better visually conceptualize and understand the emergent findings.

Trustworthiness

The design and methodology used in this study were chosen in an attempt to follow rigorous guidelines so as to ensure a high level of trustworthiness. Merriam (2009) stated that research results are trustworthy "to the extent that there has been some rigor in carrying out the study" (p. 209). Miles and Huberman (1994) proposed the

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following five standards with which could be used to judge the conclusions of qualitative research: "objectivity/confirmability, reliability/dependability/auditability, internal validity/credibility/authenticity, external validity/transferability/fittingness, and utilization/application/action orientation" (p. 277). Each of these standards will be discussed as they relate to this study.

First, the conclusions of a study are objective and relatively free from "researcher biases" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 278). That is, the conclusions should be able to be confirmed by another researcher (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In order to assure confirmability (objectivity) in this study, I attempted to clearly and explicitly state the methods, procedures, and the sequence of procedures I used in detail. I collected and coded three sources of data (responses to questions from a vignette, journal responses about a student with whom the counselor worked, and individual interviews with counselor) for each participant in the study, and I provided an audit trail of my decision-making processes in memos and a codebook. I have also been transparent to the reader about how my own "personal assumptions, values and biases" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 278) led me to an interest in how school counselors might integrate R/S with ER strategies, so that it is apparent to the reader if my values played out as biases in this study.

Dependability (reliability) is another important standard for qualitative research (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Miles and Huberman (1994) point out how important it is that the "process of the study is consistent, reasonably stable over time and across researchers and methods" (p. 278). In order to increase the dependability of my study, I clearly stated my research questions, and how those questions drove my decisions in

choosing this study's design, so the reader can see how the design fits the questions. The analytic paradigm I used to find relationships among categories included examining the structure (why) and process (how) these relationships might occur so as to capture the complexities of life (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

In addition as Creswell and Miller (2000) suggested, I utilized an external auditor whose role was to "examine the narrative account and attest to its credibility" (p.128). The goal of an audit is to "examine both the process and product of the inquiry, and determine the trustworthiness of the findings" (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 128) and is often used in dissertations. Morrow (2005) also stated that use of an auditor is one way to increase the credibility of a research study. The auditor serves as an unbiased, external person familiar with the qualitative research process who considers whether or not the findings are grounded in the data (Creswell & Miller, 2000). The auditor questioned, and critiqued my thinking in order to determine if the concepts, properties and dimensions, categories, and subcategories, that are beginning to emerge after five interviews accurately represented the data. Dr. Brian Hutchison, Associate Professor at the University of Missouri – St. Louis served in this role. Dr. Hutchison has experience in the area of qualitative research and has served as an auditor in research studies.

After I coded data from five interviews, I provided Dr. Hutchison with a copy of the original transcripts, along with my emerging concepts, categories, properties and dimensions, and subcategories. Dr. Hutchison and I met for an hour and a half meeting in which he provided feedback to me as Creswell and Miller (2000) recommend. If we were not in 80 percent agreement, I reviewed the feedback from Dr. Hutchison along with his evidence from the transcripts, and either made changes, or discussed areas that

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were in question at later meetings. Through dialogue at these meetings, we worked until we reach 80 percent agreement. Theoretical memos from these meetings were written.

Dr. Hutchison and I also met after interview 12 was conducted to discuss category development. Dr. Hutchison and I met four times with Dr. Wolfgang Althof, Theresa M. Fischer Endowed Professor in Citizen Education, to insure the project adhered to grounded theory methodology, and to discuss category development during data analysis. Theoretical memos from these meetings were written.

Credibility (internal validity) is a standard by which to judge the truthfulness of a study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Letts, et al. (2007) defined credibility as presenting a "true picture of the phenomenon" (p. 8). I used a reflective approach, so that it was apparent to the reader that the "results are consistent with the data collected" (Merriam, 2009, p. 221). Therefore, I referred to memos that included my own thoughts, questions, perceptions, and biases. It is also important to remember that the constant comparison method of data analysis, and the three sources of data I will collect are both forms of triangulation, according to Merriam (2009). Merriam (2009) defined triangulation as using "multiple methods, multiple sources of data, multiple investigators, or multiple theories" (p.215), and explained that is a "well known strategy to shore up internal validity" (p. 215).

Transferability, or "the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations" (Merriam, 2009, p. 223), is also important to consider when judging the trustworthiness of a qualitative study. It is important that the results of a study can be transferred or generalized beyond the participants of the study in order for the research to have a usable purpose (Merriam, 2009). Unlike generalizability in quantitative research

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that is achieved by random selection of participants to match the population of interest, a nonrandom purposeful sample is chosen in qualitative research to study participants in depth (Merriam, 2009). I have clearly and explicitly described the "sample of persons, settings, [and] processes" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 279) in this study so that comparisons can be made to other similar settings.

The last standard that Miles and Huberman (1994) discussed is "application" (p.280). Miles and Huberman (1994) pointed out that "even if a study's findings are 'valid' and transferable, we still need to know what the study does for the participants, both researchers and researched – and for its consumers" (p. 280). My hope is that users of this study, school counselors working in religious school settings, will have a better understanding of what it looks like to integrate ER strategies with R/S when working with adolescents in counseling sessions and that counselors will be able to apply that understanding to their work.

Limitations

As with all research, there are limitations to any study. One limitation of this study is that all interviews were conducted in the Midwest and with Christian religious schools only. A second limitation is that only one researcher conducted this study. While I attempted to be as transparent as possible about my own worldview, there may be biases that might have been eliminated by working as a team with other researchers from various religious and experiential worldviews. Finally, data collection relied only on self-reported practice through interviews, responses to a vignette, and journals.

Chapter Four: Research Findings

The purpose of this study is to understand how counselors working in a

religious/spiritual (R/S) setting integrate emotion regulation (ER) strategies with R/S

practices, teachings, or beliefs. School counselors working in religious school settings

have a unique opportunity to thoughtfully integrate R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs

and self-regulation, including emotional regulation, into counseling sessions.

McCullough and Willoughby (2009) suggest that self-regulation, which includes emotion

regulation, may be one factor yet to be studied that contributes to positive correlation

between R/S overall psychological functioning as well as higher academic performance.

Yet, there is very little research in the school counseling literature that informs counselors

about how to integrate ER into counseling sessions.   In addition, this researcher could

find no articles that explored how counselors working in a religious school setting might

integrate R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs into counseling sessions. This chapter will

provide a brief overview of the rationale for using a grounded theory approach for this

study, a brief summary of how data was analyzed, and a review of the participants. The

remainder of the chapter will present the findings organized by category. Regarding

school counselors working with adolescents in religious school settings, the following

research questions framed this study:

1. What specific emotion regulation strategies do school counselors use when
   working with adolescents grades seven through twelve in religious school
   settings?

2. What are the religious/spiritual practices, teachings, or beliefs that school counselors in religious school settings perceive to be most important when working with adolescents?

3. How do school counselors working with adolescents, grades seven through twelve, in religious school settings describe ways in which they work with students to integrate the emotion regulation strategies the counselor is trying to help the student develop with the student's religious/spiritual practices, teachings, and beliefs in counseling sessions?

4. What student characteristics do school counselors working with adolescents, grades seven through twelve, in religious school settings perceive to be the most important to consider when integrating emotion regulation strategies with religious/spiritual practices, and teachings?

5. What do school counselors perceive to be the positive outcomes of integrating and utilizing emotion regulation strategies and religious/spiritual practices, beliefs, and teachings?

6. What do school counselors perceive to be the negative outcomes of integrating and utilizing emotions regulation strategies and religious/spiritual practice, teachings, and beliefs?

A grounded theory approach was chosen for this study because it allows the researcher to build a substantive theory. Merriam (2009) describes substantive theory as being useful for "specific, everyday-world situations" (p. 30) and states that substantive theory has "usefulness to practice often lacking in theories that cover more global concerns" (p. 30). Since the purpose of this study is to provide a relevant theory for

school counselors working in a religious school setting to utilize, grounded theory was the best choice. The constant comparison analysis method of data analysis was used. Merriam describes this method as "inductive and comparative" (p. 175) and one that allows the researcher to make meaning of data by "consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said" (p. 175-6). Corbin and Strauss (1990) describe the usefulness of the constant comparison method in grounded theory data analysis as not only "guarding against bias" (p. 9) but also as achieving "greater precision…and consistency" (p. 9).

Eighteen school counselors from 15 schools participated in this study. Counselors ranged in age from 32 to 67 with three to 30 plus years of experience. Participants working in R/S school settings were chosen in order to select "information rich cases"(Coyne, 1997, p.627). In addition, counselors were screened to determine if their R/S beliefs were consistent with the schools teachings and to determine if the counselor participated in the R/S practices of the school. Fourteen females and four males participated in this study; four worked in schools serving female students, five worked in schools serving male students, and nine counselors worked in a co-educational setting. All schools are located in a Midwest suburban area.

Discussion of Research Findings

Four categories along with subcategories emerged from the data which provided insight into the decisions counselors make and the thought processes they use when deciding whether or not to integrate R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs with ER strategies. The chart below illustrates the categories and subcategories that emerged from the data. The remainder of this chapter will discuss how the categories, subcategories,

and properties that emerged from the data. Quotes from participants are included to

provide the reader with the experience of hearing the counselors' voices as they navigate

the decisions they make while helping students regulate their emotions.

Table 4.1 Categories and Subcategories

Category	Subcategories
1. R/S school culture and its impact	1. R/S school culture as described by school counselors 2. Impact of the R/S school culture on students 3. Impact of the R/S school culture on counselors 4. Impact of the R/S school culture on the practice of counseling
2. Emotion regulation strategies	1. Ways counselors perceive they modify a situation's emotional impact on students 2. Ways counselors perceive they reframe a student's beliefs, thoughts, feelings or behaviors 3. Ways counselors perceive they help students regulate emotional responses 4. Ways counselors perceive they focus or distract students from their emotions
3. Integrating R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs into counseling sessions as perceived by counselors	1. Choices counselors perceive making when integrating R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs into counseling sessions 2. Ways counselors perceive integrating R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs into counseling sessions 3. Counselors' perceptions of pitfalls of integrating R/S practices, teachings or beliefs into counseling sessions 4. Counselors' perceptions of the effectiveness of integrating R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs into counseling sessions
4. Counselors' beliefs and experiences that impact their work with students	1. Adolescent development 2. Beliefs about gender and emotion 3. Counselors' style of processing their own emotions

Category 1: Religious/Spiritual School Culture and Its Impact

The religious school culture is a fundamental piece of this research study because of the impact it has on the counselor's everyday work. For example, there is an expectation that counselors will support the mission of the school in which they are employed and in a R/S school, that mission includes a R/S component (Jeynes, 2012). Counselors must decide when, where, and with whom to integrate R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs when working with students. This category is first because it is essential to understand the R/S school context and culture in order to make sense of the decisions counselors make in their work with students. It is also important to understand this category to make sense of the other three categories, as well as their actions and interactions.

Initially, a R/S school setting was a subcategory labeled situation selection under the emotion regulation (ER) strategies category. Emotion regulation strategies will be discussed in detail in the next section. However, at this time it is important to understand the process of the development of this category, so situation selection will be discussed briefly. Based on Gross and Thompson's (2007) modal model of ER, there are five points in the process of generating an emotion at which emotion regulation can occur. Strategies that occur at these points are called a family or group of ER strategies. These points are identified as: situation selection, situation modification, attentional deployment, cognitive change, and response modulation.

Situation selection is the first point of the generation of emotion along Gross and Thompson's (2007) process model at which specific ER strategies might occur. Gross defines situation selection as, "taking action to make it more or less likely one will be in a

situation that gives rise to an emotion" (Gross, 2014, p.9). There is some research to suggest religious symbols may subconsciously (Weisbuch-Remington Mendes, Seery & Blaseovich, 2005) cause one to feel cautious and more likely to regulate oneself. Thus, a student viewing a R/S symbol might make it more likely for that student to regulate emotion, which is why the subcategory R/S school setting was originally placed under the ER strategy. However, it became apparent that the R/S school setting encompassed more than R/S activities or symbols, and their possible impact on students' emotion regulation, and that R/S school culture was a more inclusive description of the phenomena. Therefore, R/S setting was moved from a subcategory of emotion regulation strategies to a separate category of its own. For the purpose of this study, school culture is defined as the "beliefs, perceptions, relationships, attitudes, and written and unwritten rules that shape every aspect of every aspect of how a school functions . . ." (http://www.edglossary.org).

The following four subcategories will explain in more detail the broader impact of the R/S school culture on school activities, students, counselors, and the practice of counseling: (a) R/S culture as described by school counselors, (b) the impact of the R/S culture on students as perceived by the school counselor, (c) the impact of the R/S culture on counselors, and (d) the impact of R/S culture on the practice of school counseling.

Religious/Spiritual school culture as described by school counselors. There are two properties that make up this subcategory: (a) R/S background of students' beliefs and (b) the frequency of R/S practices and activities.

R/S background of students' beliefs. In other school settings it is expected that students come from various religions, church denominations, and worldviews. However,

in order to support the school's mission there is a R/S component counselors need to consider when working with students enrolled in a R/S school setting. Yet, not all students' R/S beliefs are aligned with the beliefs reflected in the school's mission. Two-thirds of the counselors discussed the various R/S backgrounds of students in their school. For example, three participants shared that they were aware of families who did not identify as Christian. Participant 8 stated, "We have a couple of Jewish students . . . we have a couple of Muslim students" (p.15, L.4,6). For some schools, accepting students from other religions is a fairly new phenomenon as evidenced by Participant 13: "I would have said all Christians up until last year. Now we have a couple of Muslim girls" (p.14, L.21-22).

Several counselors mentioned that even if the student or family identifies as Christian, the student's church affiliation might be different from the school's religious denomination. As Participant 14 said, "There are so many varying degrees of beliefs. Yes, they come to school here, yes, they pray everyday but that doesn't mean they are a practicing Catholic outside of here" (p.13, L.30-32). Participant 11's comment illustrates the diversity of the student body that many counselors expressed: "We have over one hundred churches represented in this school . . ." (p.17, L.25).

These finding suggest that the R/S background and beliefs of students in a religious school may vary from being very similar to that of the school's beliefs to very different (i.e., not a Christian religion). It is important that counselors be aware of these differences when working with students, as they can create tension from conflicting expectations of the school and parents, which the counselor must manage. This point will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Frequency of religious/spiritual practices or activities. Counselors were asked about the type and frequency of R/S activities that occurred within the school day. R/S schools intentionally designate time during the school day for students to participate in R/S worship or activities, which is unique to this setting. The data that emerged led to the following two properties: (a) corporate worship, and (b) corporate or small group devotions and/or prayer.

Corporate worship. Corporate worship is a time in which all students, faculty, and staff meet together to participate in singing, prayer, and teaching. Corporate worship services were mentioned by twelve participants and ranged from occurring monthly to four times per week. While all schools have a time of corporate worship, not all participants discussed this for various reasons. During one interview a prayer occurred on the PA system. This led to an opportunity to discuss that particular R/S practice and corporate worship was not discussed. Two interviews were done with counselors working in the same setting as the researcher; therefore, the researcher was already aware of these activities. In other interviews the topic didn't come up because of the semi-structured nature of the interviews. Regarding the frequency of corporate worship during the school day Participant 15 said, "We have a first Friday mass (p.7, L.22), while Participant 16 said, "Four days a week, we have chapel (p.12, L.12).

Participants' comments indicate the frequency of corporate worship activities as ranging from four days per week to once a month. As will be discussed later in this chapter, a student might seek out the school counselor based on a topic that was discussed in a time of corporate worship.

Corporate or small group devotions and/or prayer. Almost half of the

counselors discussed times of corporate or small group devotions or prayer that were part

of the school day. For example, in Participant 10's setting, "The first hour of every class

there's a devotion that the teacher leads, then they do prayer in class . . ." (p.15, L.9-10).

Similarly, Participant 11 shared, "everyday begins with a homeroom. It's ten minutes

where there's pledges and prayer and devotion. . . . and they pray at lunch (p.7, L.4-6,19).

Participant 2 discussed a corporate prayer called the Examen, which is done daily around

noon: "We do . . .what we call, The Examen . . . which is the examination of conscience .

. . We started doing it in the middle of the day . . ." (p.5, L.6-7, 32). The Examen will be

discussed in more detail later in this chapter, as it is also an example of an ER strategy.

Participant 14 stated, " A lot of classes pray before each class" (p.8, L.5).

Findings indicate corporate or small group devotions and/or prayer occur more

frequently than corporate worship, and in some cases prayer might take place every class

period. Some aspects of corporate or small group devotion or prayer fit into Gross &

Thompson's (2007) family of ER strategies, which will be discussed in more detail later

in this chapter.

Impact of the R/S school culture on students as perceived by the counselor.

This emerged as the second subcategory and includes the following properties: (a) overall

feel of the school, (b) students' relationships, (c) students' feelings of safety, (d)

emotional dissonance for a subset of students, and (e) counselor's perception of over-

protection within the overall student body.

Overall feel of the school as perceived by the school counselor. Nine

participants described a school culture that ranges from authoritarian and rigid, to one

that is more authoritative and flexible. Other participants did not specifically discuss this topic as the question was not directly addressed in interviews. Nonetheless, half of the participants commented in some way on the overall feel of the school. For example, Participant 5 stated, "There is a very traditional, kind of rigid [feel] . . ." (p.20, L.2). One counselor commented on certain behavioral expectations of students, such as the " . . . expectation that they won't be engaging in premarital sex" (p.12, L. 6). Participant 3 commented on the content of the curriculum, "They're not going to be taking a class that deals with the sacredness of marriage and vocations. I think these things are instilled in them" (p. 19 L. 8-9).

On the other hand, some counselors thought working in a R/S might be rigid and authoritarian but found that was not the case. Participant 9 stated, "I expected it to be a little more regimented, and it's not" (p.15, L.23, 28-29), and another counselor shared, "I think there is a lot of compassion here. We're really here to care about the whole child" (p.18, L.10, 13).   Participant 11's comment is especially insightful as it illustrates both the positive and the negative impact of the school culture on students: "Christian schools are wonderful and awful at the same time because they [students] think they have to act in a certain way. . . . Can I still be a Christian and make that mistake?" (p.15 L.23, 28-29).

Findings indicate that counselors describe a range in the overall feel of the school culture and one counselor stated that in some ways the culture can be seen as both authoritative, and rigid/authoritarian.

Impact of the R/S culture on student relationships. Counselors talked about student relationships in two ways: (a) student-to-student relationships, and (b) student-to-

teacher relationships. Overall 14 counselors talked about relationships within the R/S

school culture. Of the 14 participants that discussed relationships, nine mentioned

student-to-student relationships and ten mentioned student/teacher relationships.

     Student-to-student relationships. Nine participants talked about their perceptions

of student-to-student relationships. Participant's statements ranged from caring, non-

judgmental to not caring, judgmental. Participant 7 stated, "They really care about each

other. . ." (p.39, L.13) and Participant 18 shared, "Student to student . . . there is very

much a desire and love for one another . . ." (p.15, L.32-p.16 L.3). The school's mission

and values also seemed to be reflected in counselors' perceptions of student relationships.

For example, Participant 8 stated, "And at our school there is kind of an emphasis on

brotherhood and being brotherly to each other" (p.26, L. 12-13), and Participant 9 shared,

"There are slogans and Salesian values and things that are kind of language students have

that are designed to set a standard of kindly behavior . . . I see that as very strong" (p.9,

L.1-3).   These quotes are consistent with the counselor's perceptions that students feel

school is a safe place. Students can also be very caring when they are aware another

student is experiencing a very difficult time as Participant 3 pointed out: "[Talking about

a student whose mother died] . . . He had over 90 fellow freshman students send him text

messages" (p.23, L.1).

     While counselors perceive student-to-student relationships as caring and

supportive, they also perceive an element of judgment that exists in these relationships.

For example, Participant 4 stated, "They can be very judging of their peers" (p.23, L. 27-

28), and Participant 6 mirrored this comment, " Outside the walls [of the counseling

office] it seems like there's a lot of judgment" (p.16, L. 17). Participant 6 went on to

describe this judgment manifesting itself in students viewing others as hypocrites, "I guess the biggest thing I hear . . . is that there is somebody being a hypocrite. You know, saying one thing and doing another . . ." (p.33, L. 19-21). Students in roles of spiritual leadership seem to be targets of this judgment. Participant 6 shared, "I know that some of the girls look at girls in campus ministry and say, 'Oh well, they're in campus ministry, they should be this way but I hear them talking about this or I see her doing that . . .'" (p.35, L. 20-22).

This judgment can also take the form of cliques, or insider/outsider groups based on student's perception of the level R/S commitment of other students. Participant 11's comment illustrates how students perceive each other in terms of Christian cliques:

Students are trying to define themselves and they tend to put themselves in different types of groups like athletic, or musical, or smart . . . and they almost put themselves in Christian groups . . .I'm sold out or I'm sort of on the edge . . . it's gotten better around here because I think more students are able to say, I don't think I believe that right now. . . . I'm glad they're voicing that instead of just expecting themselves to have it all together." (p.17, L.23-25-p.18, L.1-3, 15-16)

These findings describe student relationships as being very caring and supportive, especially in times of crises. The values of the school also permeate student relationships in some schools to create a feeling of brotherhood and kindness. At the same time, counselors describe a tension that exists in student-to-student relationships because of real or perceived feelings of judgment.

Student-to-teacher relationships. Student/teacher relationships were discussed by half of the participants. Participants' comments describe teachers using a close,

supportive, nonjudgmental approach to help support students learning, and to help them develop their own faith. In addition, teachers sometimes share very personal information with students.

Participant 18 describes how teachers worked with a student whose behavior and attitude were challenging:

> [Talking about a student new to the school] . . . he was making it pretty clear that he wasn't wanting to cooperate, or be there, or have anything to do with God while he was there. He has slowly softened, he has sought out his teacher. He has slowly asked questions and began to let the walls down. . . . There's a great change in the way he approaches things. There's a great change in the way he wants to succeed and learn. I can't say exactly where he is with God or where he is with his feelings on Christians as a whole but being in a faith environment for two years, I've seen softening. . . . I attribute it to some long suffering teachers. . . . They were amazing. They really just put down some boundaries and every time he pushed that line, they held it, and met him with love. . . . He got relationships out of it. He didn't really want it but that's what they were going to give him. (IV 18, p.17, L. 2-5,10-14, 16, 21, 23-25)

Several participants also spoke to the relational nature of the staff and their desire to support students emotionally and spiritually. Participant 3 stated, "I remind them [the students] that we're here to support them anyway we can to help them deal with the distress . . . There's going to be people here at school, our teachers and faculty . . . they're very supportive" (p. 23, L.2-5). Participant 17 talked about how the relational nature of

teachers in a R/S setting and their desire to help students grow in their faith might

manifest itself in a corporate school wide time of worship:

> To me some of the most practical things that we hear about in chapel are when
>
> teachers taught, when teachers share a story about their life or about a life
>
> circumstance . . . We have an awesome staff here that's very relational and wants
>
> to connect with kids. (p. 12, L. 30-32; p.13, L. 24-25)

Teachers are often willing to share very personal information with students as this quote

from Participant 5 points out:

> One of our teachers is very close to this girl in class [who had been hospitalized
>
> for a suicide attempt] has a teacher-student relationship, and this girl was just
>
> having a horrible day. So the teacher called me and I was able to just sit there. I
>
> didn't really participate in the conversation. This teacher disclosed incredible stuff
>
> about her early years, the fact that she, herself, had been suicidal. . . . and this girl
>
> just sat there looking at her. She couldn't believe . . . and I just sat there, just let
>
> her talk. And the reassurance that gave that child, I couldn't have done that . .
>
> .this girl really now feels as if she has a resource here. (p. 11, L. 16-22, 31-32)

Participant 10 talked about teachers being accepting of what students share and then

talking through the situation with the student and integrating R/S faith messages.

> It's important for kids to have an adult be real with them about what the
>
> gospel looks like in your life . . . we have a ton of teachers that are that way. . .
>
> a kid comes in maybe saying I made a mistake and I drank and went too far
>
> with my boyfriend . . . for them to tell that to an adult and the adult not freak
>
> out on them but talk through that with them, talk about the difference between

making a bad choice and/or you are a mistake [pointing out] the difference

between guilt vs. shame. (p.7, L.24-p.8, L.2)

Findings indicate that half of the counselors described various ways teachers

demonstrate their commitment to establishing close relationships with students and

encouraging them in their faith. The R/S school environment is unique in that it allows,

and to some degree expects, teachers to speak openly about their faith with students.

These comments point out the power of a teacher being honest about his or her own

personal life struggles as well as the importance for teachers to have a non-judgmental

attitude when a student is vulnerable and shares a struggle or a time of personal failure.

Students' feelings of safety as perceived by the school counselor. One third of

the counselors stated that they perceive students feel their school is safe. These

comments were not directly part of the semi-structured interview; therefore, not all

counselors commented on this topic. The context of these comments suggests that

counselors perceive students are not concerned about violence or frequent fights in the

R/S settings in which these counselors are employed. Participant 14 stated, " Most of

our students, I think, feel this is a safe place to come" (p. 11, L. 24-25), and Participant

12 shared, " . . . there are no fist fights here" (p.26, L.16). Public schools are required to

track and report incidents of violence in schools, and it is not uncommon for this to be a

concern of parents. These comments suggest that there is little fighting or other forms of

violence in R/S schools.

Emotional dissonance in a subset of students. Emotional dissonance is defined

by Janz (2002) as "a feeling of unease that occurs when someone evaluates an emotional

experience as a threat to his or her identity" (p.79). While counselors perceive that

students feel their school is physically a safe place, almost one third of the counselors mentioned a subset of students that find the R/S message disconcerting enough that it triggers a visit to the counselor's office. For example, " Something going on in Bible class, or something that's been talked about in chapel can stir up things and students come in and want to talk" (p.15, L.21-22). Participant 12 stated, " If somebody is talking about depression [in chapel]. . . I will probably see a couple of students that week related to depression" (p. 15, L.12-14), and went on to state, "another topic that can bring up things. . . is sexual purity. . . and that will cause people to come in" (p.15, L. 16,18,20). Participant 17 shared, " Another teacher had come to me and said, 'Did you see [student name] walking out of chapel today? She was really teary.' I said, 'Okay, I need to make sure I follow up with her and I'll see what's going on" (p. 13, L. 6-8).

Findings indicate that counselors perceive most students generally feel school is a safe place. Nonetheless, the R/S messages that are taught can create enough emotional dissonance in a student that they seek out the school counselor. These messages can range from sensitive topics such as expectations of sexual behavior to mental health issues such as depression.

Counselors' perceptions of over-protection within the student body. Four counselors talked about their perspective of students and stated that they believe that students are sheltered or over-protected by being in a R/S environment. For example, Participant 1 stated, "They're still kind of protected and in a bubble in a way where they just like, you know, love their teachers and . . . listen to everything they say and kind of are still soaking it in" (p.17, L.21-22, 24). Participant 15 also described students as sheltered and stated that they seem to have a new appreciation of this comfortable setting

after returning to visit from college, a less protective environment: "They're kind of sheltered. They come back and say 'I really appreciate what I had here'" (p.30, L.1-2). Participant 5 stated concern about students' experiences making decisions, "So, you have some kids who come in lacking in experience around making decisions for themselves" (p.6, L.23-24).   Overall, four counselors discussed their perception of students in a R/S culture as being sheltered, and one counselor described how this negatively impacts some students ability to make decisions.

  Impact of the R/S culture on counselors. The impact of the R/S culture on counselors emerged as the third subcategory under the category R/S culture and its impact. There are three properties in this subcategory (a) the choice to integrate R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs into counseling sessions, (b) the choice to display religious artifacts, and (c) counselors' attitude toward their job. The choice to integrate R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs into counseling sessions.

  Choice to integrate R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs into counseling sessions. Seventeen participants made comments about whether or not they integrate R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs into counseling sessions. One counselor did not specifically answer the question in the context of a counseling session but instead discussed integrating R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs in the context of a classroom setting. This section is focused only on whether or not counselors choose to integrate R/S practices, teachings, or belief. The type of R/S practice, teaching, or belief will be discussed in detail in the next section. Overall, counselors' comments ranged from strongly agreeing that R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs should be integrated into counseling sessions to strongly disagreeing.

Six counselors shared that R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs are integrated into most every session in the counseling office. For example, Participant 4 shared that, "We definitely want to create a culture that is supportive and encouraging and is a faith-oriented culture that points to God in everything we do [in the counseling office]" (p.19, L.10-11,12,14), and also stated "I think that's what we [counselors] try to do in a religious setting . . . going back to we're made in the image of God . . . I have attributes of God's relationship towards people . . . His compassion (p. 7-10,12,14-15). Participant 15 expressed a similar view stating, "First and foremost with all students I would assure them that they're loved by God and, you know, they still have the same worth of Jesus in their lives no matter what they're talking about or what they've done . . ." (p.23, L.24-25-p.24 L.1-2).

Six participants expressed a more cautious view of integrating R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs in counseling sessions. For example, Participant 2 stated " Well let me tell you what worked . . . why God works for me. And I would just say, 'You know what, it might not be for you'" (p.15, L. 12-14), and went on to state, "I just throw in little things, I do not put it down their throats" (p.15, L.20-21). Participant 14 had an interesting perspective as she discussed adjusting to a religious school setting after having worked in a public school: "Sometimes I'll throw it out [a R/S practice, teaching, or belief]" (p.7, L. 11) and later shared, "I came from a public school . . . I'm sort of re-learning. At first, last year I had to tell myself, 'It's okay to talk about God and religion . . .'" (p.8, L.26-28). Participant 17 shared the tension she feels when trying to integrate R/S:

I'm cautious about when I don't know a student very well about not wanting

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to put pressure on them about how their faith might play a role in this . . . but also making sure that it's very open for them to be able to talk with me about how their faith plays a role in their life because I think that can be a very helpful in terms of where my conversation goes with them. (p.10, L.19-23, 25-27)

In contrast to the counselors that always attempt to integrate R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs into counseling sessions, five of the 18 counselors felt strongly that it was inappropriate to integrate R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs into their work. For example, Participant 1 stated, "I try to go by more of the strict counseling code . . ." (p.6, L. 13-14). Participant 9 had a similar stance in response to a question in a journal prompt that asked the participant to describe R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs utilized, if any. In response to this question Participant 9 wrote, "I am very secular in my approach to counseling; to me it would be unprofessional and inappropriate to espouse or promote my own beliefs in a counseling setting" (Q.3, L.1-3). Question four of the journal prompt asked participants to describe ways in which the counselor connected the student's emotion(s) with religious/spiritual practices, teachings, or beliefs. Participant 7 wrote, "I don't know that I've used any R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs specifically. I believe that I have just modeled composure, persistence, goal setting, and affirmation" (L.1-3).

The choice to display religious artifacts. All interviews except three were conducted in the participant's office so the researcher visually observed the R/S artifacts that were displayed. All offices displayed some type of R/S artifact, often a cross or crucifix hanging on a wall. If the researcher observed more artifacts counselors were directly asked about the display of these items. The three counselors that were not interviewed in their office were asked directly about the display of artifacts in their

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office. Artifacts were considered to be any R/S symbol, Bible verse, or R/S well-known role model.

In total, eight counselors talked about displaying religious artifacts in their offices. Participant 3 stated, "I have a statue of Mary there. I have a crucifix. I think they notice those things. I don't think they really bring it out, but I think they notice" (p.26, L. 5-8). Participant 6 shared:

> I have pictures of prayer cards . . . I have St. Pope John Paul, Saint Frances,
>
> Mother Theresa . . . and different quotes [from them] . . . I do have a crucifix here,
>
> when I came here my office did not have one. So I spent time trying to find one
>
> that I wanted to put there" (p.20, L. 19,21,13 & p.21, L.15-17).

Participants 11 discussed having his or her favorite scripture verses displayed in their offices. "Yes, I have my favorite scripture over there [points to a frame on a bookcase] and a Bible on my table" (p.5, L.2-3). Participant 17 stated, "I have one [a poster with a spiritual message] on my door. I have one of my favorite verses, 'Be still and know that I am God' [on my bookshelf]" (p.13, L.30-34).

These findings indicate that R/S artifacts were displayed in all of the counselors' offices. Almost half of the counselors added their own R/S artifacts that were meaningful to them beyond those that were found in all rooms within the school.

Counselors' attitudes toward their jobs. Almost one third of the counselors interviewed talked about their job being a calling, or a blessing not just a career, which were the dimensions of this property. For example, Participant 2 stated, "It's not a job to me, it has to be a vocation. And it's a calling" (p.3, L.19-21). Similarly, Participant 17

discussed the role of being a counselor was more than a job and went on to discuss the
connection among co-workers.

I'm so passionate about working with these kids and you know it's such a

blessing to be in a Christian school. . . .The people that I work with are incredible

and to me it's not a job. It's an extension of my family. . . (p.18 L. 6-7, 11-12)

Participant 4 added additional insight about the freedom to discuss R/S matters, " . . .

there is something to be said for. . .a school setting where you have the common bond of

faith, it's a blessing. It really allows a certain freedom that you don't have in public

education around the needs of students (p.3, L.27-31). These finding suggest the

counselors' attitudes toward their job has an existential quality.

In summary, findings in this subcategory indicate counselors have unique choices

to make because the R/S culture in which they work is different from other school

settings. One choice is the freedom to integrate R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs into

counseling sessions. Six counselors always try to integrate some R/S practice, teaching,

or belief into a session, six indicated they would cautiously integrate R/S into counseling

sessions, and five explained they would never integrate. Some counselors that reported

they never attempt to integrate R/S practice, teachings, or beliefs often felt that ethically

it would be unprofessional to do so unless the student first brought up the topic. Others

were concerned about damaging the counseling relationship if a student didn't share the

school's R/S beliefs.

The second choice counselors in a R/S school culture have is whether or not to

display R/S artifacts. All counselors had some type of religious symbol in their office

either a cross or a crucifix and almost half of the counselors interviewed display personal religious artifacts that are meaningful to them in their offices.

The third choice counselors have is the choice of their attitude toward their job. Counselors used terms like "blessed", "it's a calling." Counselors seem to feel the purpose of their work has an existential quality, which is very meaningful to them.

Impact of the R/S culture on the practice of school counseling. This subcategory is comprised of two properties: (a) the impact of the R/S culture on establishing the counseling relationship, and (b) counselors sense a tension between R/S messages students receive from the home, school, and church. In the early process of data analysis, both of these properties were separate categories. The first property was a category named core conditions, and the second property was named the home/school/church dynamic. However, there were no other subcategories that emerged in connection within these initial categories. It was decided that since both of these categories are related to the practice of school counseling in the R/S setting, it made sense to make them properties of the category R/S culture and its impacts.

The impact of the R/S school culture on establishing the counseling relationship. Findings indicate that creating a safe, nonjudgmental atmosphere is often the counselors' first goal in the counseling process. Seventeen of the eighteen counselors interviewed mentioned in some form, use of establishing the three core conditions identified by Carl Rogers as the first step of the counseling process (Cottone, 1992**).** The conditions are (a) empathy or the ability to see the world as the client sees the world, (b) congruence or how genuine the counselor is, and (c) unconditional positive regard, or the ability to allow the counselor to be open and honest without the fear of being criticized or

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judged (Cottone, 1992). For example, Participant 1 stated, "First and foremost you want to have a connection with the student" (p.7, L.15-16). . . . so I think just to let them know they can come in here and that, you know, it's safe . . ." (p.9, L.9-10). Almost two-thirds of the counselors used the word "safe" or "nonjudgmental" when describing the relationship they are trying to create in the beginning stages of counseling sessions. Participant 8's comments are a good representation of what other participants expressed:

My goal it's to have those [students] know that it's a safe and secure

place to share with the scary stuff, the stuff that they think adults don't want to

here. The tough stuff (p.7, L.1-2). . . I go for comfort and nonjudgmentalness,

very important to me because it's such a challenge to have teenagers trust. (p.7,

L.20-22)

Findings indicate that creating a counseling relationship that is safe and nonjudgmental is of paramount importance to the counselors. Twelve counselors mentioned that creating a safe environment is their first goal when working with students. Almost one third of the counselors specifically mentioned creating a nonjudgmental, accepting counseling environment.

Counselors sense a tension between R/S messages students receive from home, school, and church. Fourteen counselors either through interviews or journal prompts, described situations in which counselors were aware of the tension between R/S messages that differ in opinion in the school, home, and church. Participants' comments ranged from sensing this tension to not sensing it. After five interviews, directly asking about this dynamic became part of the semi-structured interview protocol because it emerged as an interesting piece of data in the early coding process. Participant 15

summed up this tension by stating, " . . . what is the church, the school stance . . . we have certain stances and doctrines that we support (p.35 L. 16-18) . . . [It] becomes all the more murky and complicated when the person, family isn't of the same faith" (p. 36, L.11-12).

Participant 1 discussed how the R/S message the school is teaching can be in conflict in a student's own R/S denominational teachings, leading a student to be quite confused. This quote illustrates the importance of knowing that the R/S background of students may be different from the denomination of the school:

Girls will come in here, especially if they've come from a different . . . background . . . maybe they are Baptist [and in a Catholic school]. And maybe a religion or a theology teacher they have taken wrong . . . they misinterpreted what the teacher is saying . . . [they say] she's basically saying, I don't have the right religion . . . (p.23, L. 16-18, 20-22, 24)

Certain topics such as beliefs about abortion, premarital sex, and homosexuality can be especially difficult for counselors to navigate in a R/S school setting and not undermine the school or parents. Participant 8 shared the following quotes that illustrate the counselor's awareness of the values and messages of the school and how working in a religious school impacts the counselor's decision of when to involve parents whose child is sexually active and how that might be different from other counseling settings:

The ones [topics] that have me considering the environment I work in more, and how that plays into the counseling relationship . . . if a student is talking about something like abortion or premarital sex those would be the big ones that get my wheels turning on where I work. . . I might be a little more inclined to bring

parents into a situation . . . I think we all when we sign on at a religious school,

[you're] aware that you're not working in a public school (p.22, L.11-13, 15)

there are certain values in the school, it's part of the educational process . . . I'm

aware I work at the school when I'm working with the student. We are not off

somewhere else, we are in a place [where] there are values of the school . . . and I

don't, I would never work against them. And to some extent parents and families

are our clients too. (p.16, L. 17-25; p.22, L.11-13, 15; p.23, L. 1-3)

Participant 5 agreed with Participant 8 about needing to let parents know when a student

is sexually active sooner than she would in other school settings and went on to share her

frustration with the limited ability to discuss birth control due to the R/S teachings of the

school:

You really can't make reference to that [birth control] because that is within the

whole Sacrament of Marriage, and I understand that. . . . I'm particularly leery of

situations like where there may be a girl who's sexually active . . . the parents

really need to know what is going on . . . I wish I could talk more freely about

that. (p.15, L. 2-3,6,8)

Participant 14 shared the concern that a student might use the counselors' view on

 the topic of homosexuality as a tool that would create a wedge between what the school

or parents believe:

I don't want them going back to their mom and saying, my school counselor told

me that I can be gay and I should be proud of it. I don't want them going to my

principal saying, my school counselor said, I can be out and open and wonderful.

(p.12, L.21-24)

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Participant 1 also discussed the topic of sexuality including homosexuality, and pointed out how confusing the differing messages between the home, school, church, and the culture at large can be for a student:

> If somebody's really questioning . . . if people have alternative lifestyles
>
> . . . or become pregnant . . . they can be really getting mixed signals with what
>
> school is telling them, and what home is telling them, and what their community
>
> is telling them . . . sometimes they make it even more confusing for a kid.
>
> (p.24, L.1, 3-8)

Participant 1 also discussed a situation in which the student and school were in agreement but the family was not: "There were conflicting feelings, the student and the school were in agreement. It was the parents who [had] conflicting opinions and so the outcome was not good . . . (p.27, L.9-11) religious beliefs definitely played into that [the student's decision]" (p.28, L.11-12).

In summary, the quotes above indicate that counselors do see ways in which the R/S school culture has an impact on the practice of school counseling. First, almost all counselors make some mention of the importance of establishing Carl Roger's core conditions that are necessary for establishing a counseling relationship. Almost half of the counselors specifically used the words "safe" or "nonjudgmental" when describing the relational atmosphere they immediately try to create when working with students.

Second, 14 counselors make reference to their awareness of the school's values and R/S beliefs they need to support even when, sometimes, they may not personally be in agreement with a specific belief such as use of birth control, abortion, or homosexuality. In addition, counselors discussed the decision about when to let parents

know certain information the student shared, such as when a student is sexually active, may be different in a R/S setting than in other school settings. Counselors were also aware that R/S messages that differ between the home, school, and church might create even more confusion for students making difficult decisions such as whether or not to continue a pregnancy.

To summarize, this category illustrates that the R/S culture creates a school environment that is important for the counselor to understand and can impact the school counselor in a variety of ways. First, it is important for the counselor to be aware that students in R/S schools come from a variety of R/S backgrounds that might be quite different from the school's belief system. Yet, all counselors report that their school has corporate or small group activities that reflect the belief system of the school's mission and denomination affiliation.

Second, counselors described their perceptions of the impact of a R/S culture on students. While counselors report that students tend to feel physically safe in a R/S environment and to generally care about each other, there is a subset of students who may seek out the counselor because of a R/S teaching or belief that was taught, or a topic that was discussed in corporate or small group worship that created emotional dissonance in the student. Emotional dissonance is defined as "a feeling of unease that occurs when someone evaluates an emotional experience as a threat to his or her identity" (Janz, 2002, p.79). Counselors discussed their need to create a counseling setting that was "safe" and "nonjudgmental." Counselors reported that students' relationships with teachers are also unique in a R/S school culture. Teachers often share personal information and help mentor students in their faith. Again, counselors discussed the importance of teachers

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being nonjudgmental while also providing spiritual guidance when a student shares their own doubts or mistakes.

Third, R/S the school culture has an impact on the counselors. Some counselors reported feeling that they've been "called" to their position, giving an existential quality to the purpose of their work. Counselors also have the choice to display R/S artifacts and to more freely integrate R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs into counseling sessions. Counselors varied in their opinion of whether or not R/S practices teachings, or beliefs should be integrated into a counseling session. Those who had concerns about doing so, stated ethical standards as one reason to avoid integrating R/S unless the student first mentioned the topic. The importance of providing a nonjudgmental atmosphere in counseling sessions was very important to counselors.

Fourth, the R/S culture has an impact on the practice of school counseling. Counselors discussed the importance of establishing a relationship with all students that is "safe" or "nonjudgmental." One reason counselors reported they chose to not integrate R/S practices into counseling sessions was the fear of damaging the counseling relationship while another reason was ethical concerns. Counselors working in a R/S setting are also impacted by the tension that can exist for a student when he or she receives different messages from the home, school, and church. Topics such as premarital sex, abortion, and homosexuality were mentioned as being topics that are especially difficult for counselors to navigate. Again, the importance of the counselor having a nonjudgmental mindset while managing the tension between various viewpoints including the counselors' personal viewpoints on topics was discussed.

The following section will discuss ER strategies that counselors perceive they use in counseling sessions.

Category 2: Emotion Regulation Strategies

Emotion regulation (ER) strategies emerged as the second category and is a major phenomenon of interest given that the primary research question is to better understand how counselors working in a R/S school setting integrate emotion regulation strategies with R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs. This section will consist of a brief review of ER, Gross and Thompson's (2007) process model of ER, and then an explanation of findings for each ER family, or group, of strategies.

According to James Gross (2014), ER has three core features. The first feature is the emotion regulation goal, or "what people are trying to accomplish" (p.8). The emotion regulation goal may be "activated by oneself or by someone else" (p.7). In other words, the emotion regulation goal may be either intrinsic or extrinsic. For example a student might regulate his or her own emotions, or a counselor or teacher may help regulate a student's emotions. Researchers have found that those who work with infants and children focus on extrinsic ER while those who work with adults focus on intrinsic ER.

Gross (2014) states the second core feature of ER is the emotion regulation strategy or "the particular processes that are engaged in order to achieve that goal" (p.8). In other words, "emotion regulation is the engagement of the processes that are responsible for altering the emotion trajectory" (Gross, p.6). The third feature is the outcome and refers to the "consequences of trying to achieve that particular ER goal using that particular ER strategy"

(p. 8).

Gross and Thompson (2007) identify the following five families, or groups, of regulatory processes at which different ER strategies can be utilized based on his model of emotional response: situation selection, situation modification, attentional deployment, cognitive change, and response modulation. The first four families of strategies are antecedent-focused in that they occur before an outward physiological or behavioral response can be observed (Gross & Thompson, 2007). The fifth family of strategies, response modulation is therefore, response focused (Gross & Thompson, 2007).

As mentioned earlier, situation selection was initially included in this category. However, the broader culture of a R/S school better encompassed the phenomenon and the complexities of a R/S school culture beyond that of emotion regulation. Thus, data analysis in this section will begin with the second family of ER strategies.

In order to identify the ER strategies that counselors use, Gross and Thompson's (2007) process model of emotion regulation was used to mine ER strategies from the data. This is a very top-down approach and is unusual for grounded theory, which relies on an inductive approach to data analysis. However, it was believed that if counselors were asked directly what ER strategies they use, they would be unable to answer as this is a very specific theory and one in which they may not be knowledgeable. Therefore, interview questions were designed to ask in a more general way how counselors help students understand and control their emotions. (See Appendix B for a specific list of interview questions). As anticipated, early in the data analysis process it was difficult to identify specific ER strategies. In order to provide a systematic way to identify ER strategies, the researcher went through each of the five families of ER strategies that

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Gross and Thompson (2007) identify in their model, reviewed the definition, and went through each interview to locate the ER strategies and to finally classify them in the appropriate ER family of strategies. This exercise was extremely helpful in identifying, sorting, and labeling the strategies counselors discussed. The following section will review each ER strategy family and provide quotes to illustrate practical ways counselors use ER strategies.

Ways counselors perceive they modify a situation's emotional impact on students. Gross (2008) defines situation modification as "efforts to modify the situation directly so as to alter emotional impact" (p. 501). Findings indicate counselors use the following strategies to help modify a situation with the intent of altering a student's emotional state: (a) identifying R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs as supports, (b) identifying family, peers, and other supports, (c) making referrals, (d) communicating with a student's parents, teachers, and/or administration, and (e) choice making. These properties along with their sub-properties will be discussed in the next section.

Identifying R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs. Eleven participants shared that they might ask a student if the student's faith, including practices such as prayer or sharing a scripture, might be a support that would be helpful in difficult times. Counselors used a variety of questions to uncover these supports. For example, Participant 2 stated, "Where does your faith play into that? . . . [when talking about difficult times a student has experienced] what helped? Did you use your faith?" (p. 2, L.31; p.15, L.4-7). Participant 10 also reported asking students, "What is your relationship in your life with God now?" (p.13, L.8-9). Participants 3 shared, "I ask my guys sometimes, 'Do you pray very often?" (p.26, L. 11).

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Findings indicate that some counselors will ask questions to see if R/S is a support for a student. As mentioned in the previous section, some counselors will discuss R/S only after a student brings up the topic. These counselors feel that they are not following the ethical code or guidelines if they initiate the topic.

Identifying family, peers, and other adults as a way to modify a situation. Two counselors mentioned the importance of the peer group to adolescents. Participant 1 shared that she will ask students, "Is there anybody here that . . . is also aware of this [problem]? . . . You're looking for support systems and they usually don't want it to be another adult" (p.10 L.,11,13,15). Similarly, Participant 2 stated that she will ask students, "Did you speak to your friends? Do your closest friends right now, do they know what's going on? (p.15, L.5; p.19, L.2-3). Other counselors mentioned reaching out to family or other adults. For example, Participant 3 stated, "[I'll see] if they want me to call their parents or talk to their parents, possibly another adult . . . someone else in the family" (L.11-12,14,16). Participant 6 went on to say she would check to see "what systems are in place that maybe aren't supportive? " (p.15, L.23-24). Participant 15 shared, "[I would] . . . seek out, you know, other adults that [are] supports in her life" (p.16, L.20,22). Participant 15 added an insightful comment explaining, " Sometimes the ones who are hurting the most are the ones who can't really identify many people" (p.18, L.23-24).

These findings suggest that some counselors attempt to identify people who might serve as a positive support for a student in distress. Peers, family members, and other adults are examples of the types of supports that might be identified. One counselor also went on to identify any systems that might not be a positive support for students.

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Making referrals to personnel in the school. Some counselors working in a R/S

setting have the option of referring to clergy if the student had questions or was

struggling with his/her faith. For example, Participants 5 and 8 respectively, talked about

referring students to clergy or priests: "I think referral to clergy on those matters of faith

[would be appropriate]" (p.15, L.14-15), and " . . .the priest and I would talk and there

would be at times . . . an in-house referral" (p.16, L.1-2). Other counselors mentioned

lack of time as a factor for referring to others in the school setting. Participant 12 shared

that she can see " . . . probably only about ten [students] because we have a full-time staff

mental health counselor" (p.8, L.22,24) in response to the question, "How many students

do you see for in-depth counseling?" Participant 15 shared, " . . . I'd seek out some

resources. . . . Maybe I need to refer them to our school social worker . . . he can see them

on a more regular basis" (p.19, L.5-6,8).

Making referrals to outside agencies, or professionals. Three counselors

discussed the need to sometimes refer to professionals outside the school setting. For

example Participants 11 and 15 respectively shared, " . . . usually I set them up with help

professionally . . . (p.20, L.5), and "I might involve pulling in people in the community if

someone is dealing with an eating disorder . . . or refer them for an evaluation (p.19**,**

L.24, 27). Participant 17 discussed the level of expertise needed to deal with some

students and the decision the school counselor must make: " Is this something as a school

counselor I'm capable of addressing, or is this something that needs to be referred out for

more of a clinical consult to deal with?" (p.8, L.7-9).

Counselors discussed a variety of resources they might rely on to help support a

student. Some schools have in house clergy who might serve as a referral source while

other schools have social workers or in-house mental health counselors. Counselors cited time as one factor for referring students to other in-house professionals. Counselors also referred to outside agencies for evaluations and/or counseling.

> ***Communication with parents, teachers, or other school personnel as a way to modify a situation.*** Almost half of the counselors also discussed the need to share information about a student's situation to help parents and/or teachers understand what the student is struggling with and how it might impact his or her performance in school. Participant 13 stated, "That was another part of my day, sending out an email to teachers [about a student who had been hospitalized]" (p.2, L.31-33). Similarly, Participant 15 shared, "[I] also do things like send communication to their [students'] teachers . . . to let them know what's going on in the student's life (p.19, L.17, 20). Participant 11 shared that sometimes there is a need to include the other professionals "I also involve the nurse" (p.19, L.25). Participant 17 pointed out one of the struggles she experiences when a student is emotionally distraught: "[What I] try to figure out is . . . is this person going to be okay to go back to class, or do they need to just hang out in here for a little while, or do they need to go home? To me, that's the hardest thing is trying to figure out what really needs to go on here" (p.5, L.14-17).

These findings suggest that school counselors are often responsible for communicating to other school personnel on a need-to-know basis when a student is struggling. For example, a counselor may notify a student's teachers when a student is hospitalized for emotional reasons; however the counselor would not notify all teachers in the building. Sometimes, counselors also need to decide if a student is emotionally upset enough to contact a parent and be sent home, or if the student can remain at school.

Choice making as a way to modify a situation. Three counselors identified choice making as a strategy they use to help a distressed student deal with emotions. Participant 2 stated, "What would you need today . . . to get something off your plate to make you feel better? . . . And if you come in and you can't do it and we just need to talk, then that's what we do (p. 21, L.6-7,14). Participant 6 also recognized that providing choices can help a student feel more in control: "So any choice that I can . . . I let them make. I feel like at this point they're feeling out of control and that's one way to help them to feel like I [the student] can get a little bit back . . ." (p.13, L.25). However, as Participant 14 shared, there are times when providing choices can be too overwhelming for a student:

> We've talked, and talked, and talked, and what we decided was that you're going
> to drop this class, add this class and that's it. There was almost a sense of relief
> [in the student] . . . Because it allowed her to say [counselor's name] said I have
> to do this, so it allowed her, it took it off her plate. (p.19, L. 18-19, 30-31)

These findings indicate choice making may range from allowing the student to make choices to help them feel more in control to the counselor making a choice for the student, which can also help the student feel more in control.

Findings in this category indicate that 16 of 18 counselors use various ways to modify a student's situation in order to alter a situation's emotional impact. Eleven counselors discussed using the strategy of identifying family, peers, or other adults as a way to modify a situation. Counselors had mixed opinions about identifying R/S supports as a way to modify a situation. Five counselors stated they don't or wouldn't do this (unless the student brings up R/S first) while five counselors shared they ask students

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directly if R/S is a support for them. About half of the counselors discussed making referrals either in-house or outside of the school setting, and about half discussed communicating with parents, teachers, and/or administrators to help modify a student's situation. Three counselors discussed the use of choice making as a way to help a student regulate emotion by modifying the emotional impact of a situation.

Ways counselors perceive they reframe a student's beliefs, thoughts, feelings, or behaviors. Cognitive change is the second subcategory of ER strategies and is defined as the ability to modify "how one appraises a situation so as to alter its significance" (Gross, 2014, p. 10). This subcategory has the following five properties: (a) problem solving, (b) counselors point to others' behaviors as role models, (c) challenging students' behaviors, (d) counselors intentionally model certain behaviors, and (e) self-monitoring. This section will discuss these properties in detail.

Counselors perceive the use of problem solving to help change a student's beliefs, thoughts, feelings, or behaviors. Problem solving was the most used cognitive-behavioral technique described, with ten counselors giving examples of this strategy. Counselors use a variety of approaches to help students problem solve. For example, when discussing how she helps students who are distressed about a disagreement with parents, such as chores, Participant 7 shared she coaches the student to explore,

> What's in it for me or how can I get this done? How can I get what I want?
>
> . . . are you compromising and if so, is it worth it to get what you want? . . .
>
> [I want them to] problem solve on their own." (p.2, L.6-7; L.12)

It is interesting to note that this counselor first approaches problem solving from a very egocentric approach. This counselor went on to state, " They just want to know what's in

it for me, or how can I get . . . what I want?" (p.4, L.5-7). Then the counselor will work

on helping the student "understand why their parents respond the way they do" (p.18, L.

19-20) . . . my mom is working really hard . . . she's trying to provide for us . . . that

really was pretty selfish of me to be too lazy to take the cup to the sink (p.19, L. 3-4,6,8-

9,13).

Participant 9's word choice in the following quote suggests that she is trying to

set-up an egalitarian relationship and goes on to help the student problem solve not just

the present situation, but to anticipate the outcome of the situation and how the student

might cope with it.

I want to first get a picture of what they're thinking and then see how

we can work together to help them come up with a solution. . . Also, what's

your plan from here? What are you going to do to cope with this?"

 (p.4, L.5-6; p.7. L-11-13)

One counselor discussed the use of scenarios to help students problem solve:

" We did scenarios, if you confront and choose this path of action what was the best thing

that would happen, what will be the worst thing that would happen?" (Participant 1, p.5,

L.20-23).

Problem solving was the most used cognitive-behavioral technique but counselors

seemed to have different intents in using this strategy. One counselor first focused on the

egotistical needs of the student before moving them to thinking about another person's

perspective. Another counselor helps students problem solve by anticipating how they

might cope with the outcome of a situation. In using this strategy, counselors were clear

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that they were not the expert with the answer. They worked hard with the student to create a relationship of equality, understanding, and respect.

Counselors perceive pointing to the behaviors of others as role models to help change a student's beliefs, thoughts, feelings, or behaviors. Eight counselors reported that they point to the behaviors of others during a counseling session to help a student reframe his or her thinking. Participant 2's comments illustrate the power of teachers modeling actions in a crisis situation with a group of students who felt enfranchised by the school:

> Your words never meant anything until we felt that you understood where we were coming from . . . it took a tragedy for them to see the actions [of the faculty attending a student's funeral]. So the words didn't mean anything all this time. But the actions meant everything. (p.9, L.30-32, 34-35)

Participants 10 discussed the importance of teachers modeling what their faith looks like: "We have a ton of teachers that are that way, willing to model what the gospel looks like in their lives" (p.7, L.26-27).

Counselors perceive pointing to the behaviors of well-known R/S leaders as role models to reframe a student's beliefs, thoughts, feelings, or behaviors. Five counselors discussed using the life and actions of R/S leaders as role models for students. For example in response to a journal prompt Participant 1 stated, "She [a student] verbalized struggling with forgiveness of people no longer or peripherally a part of her life. Ultimately, we talked about Mother Theresa and her life philosophy" (Question 3, L.1-3). Participant 6 talked about emails she periodically sends to encourage both teachers and students: " . . . and it was about, you know, putting Jesus as the focus and all other things

will fall in place no matter what you're dealing with" (p.21, L.13-15). Participant 10

shared that she talks to students about what she believes Jesus has done for us: " This is

my [self] disclosure [to students] . . . if I look for my approval from other people, it's

never going to be perfect, but God's love is in spite of my sin because of what Christ did"

(p.10, L. 1-7).

Participants were asked to answer questions from a vignette about a hypothetical

student, Elizabeth, who was distressed because she was drunk, and went too far with a

boy. She was questioning who she is, and what she believes. The second question to

which counselors responded was how they would begin to intervene with this student and

how they might help Elizabeth wrestle with her spiritual doubts. In response to this

vignette, Participant 15 shared, "I would . . . encourage her faith and help her understand

what Christ has done for us" (L.14-16). Participant 8 shared the following from the same

question of the vignette: "I would probably try to reassure her that we are all sinners, and

that God understands that, and that God forgives! (Actually, I would really try not to be

preachy/problem solvy on that)" (Question 2, L. 12-18).

Three counselors talked about the power of other adults as role models. Five

counselors described using R/S role models to help students see their situation from a

different perspective with the hope of reframing their thoughts. Counselors talked about

their concern about sounding too "preachy" or "problem-solvy" when using R/S role

models.

Counselors perceive the use of challenging a student's beliefs, thoughts,

feelings, or behaviors. Five counselors discussed ways they gently challenge a student's

thinking. Several participants shared how they might help a student reflect on what

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helped them in situations in the past, and would then ask how that strategy is working

now. For example Participant 1 shared, "So what have you done in the past? . . . and

how's that working for you? . . . what can you do different?" (p.14, L.2, 4, 9). Participant

2 followed up with a question that directly helps the student apply past successful

strategies to a new situation, "Let's talk about what did work . . . would that work in this

situation?" (p.15, L.9-11).   The underlying message in these questions, again, speaks to

counselors' respect for students. The counselor's assumption is that he or she is not the

expert with all the answers but can serve as a resource for the student to help apply

strategies that have worked in the past or to explore together new strategies that might be

used in the student's present situation.

> ***Counselors perceive intentionally modeling certain behaviors as a way to***
> ***reframe a student's beliefs, thoughts, feelings, or behaviors.*** Four counselors described

the impact of their own modeling of behaviors on students. For example Participant 2

stated,

> He [the student] is angry and I said, 'God can take it, it's okay,' it's not my
>
> job to convince him otherwise; it's my job to show him how it works for me . . .
>
> the goal is for them to want what I have. Because they do that far more with
>
> modeling and following I think than they do with words. (p.10, L.27-p.11 L.7)

Counselors also discussed the importance their attempts to model attributes of God

> I have conceptualized my role kind of like a good shepherd . . . modeling
>
> for them in my interactions with them. . . .I think about the beatitudes a lot
>
> you know, blessed are the peacemakers and I try to model those. . . . And
>
> caring for other people, being modest and not bragging, if you are fasting comb

your hair and look neat, don't appear to be hungry . . . those sorts of things are

kind of infused in my interactions with students . . . and I want to model for them.

(Participant 8, p.25, L. 1-2,6; p.25 L.10-14; p.26 L. 1-3,7-8,10)

Similarly, Participant 10 stated,

I've learned doing this job that a lot of our kids know the Christian truths . . .

but it's hard to just pull off the things that you know in your head. . . . Hopefully I

can show them and tell them about God's grace and mercy. (p.6, L.9-10,13)

***Counselors perceive the use of self-monitoring to help change students' beliefs,
thoughts, feelings, or behaviors***. Three counselors mentioned use of reflection or self-
monitoring. For example Participant 8 shared, "I often talk with students about reflecting
on one's own behavior" (p.7, L.1-3). Participant 9 shared,

We make a little stop sign to keep in their notebook and they have to

re-open it up to remind themselves just to stop and think and try to get a

handle on what is really going on and what did they really want from the

situation. (IV P.9, p.8. L.7-10)

Participant 14 recommended using a journal as a technique to help students reflect:
"We'll be talking about ideas and I'll say . . . 'Reflect on it. Journal on it.'" (p.10, L.18).

Counselors perceive several ways in which they attempt to reframe students'
beliefs, thoughts, feelings, or behaviors to lessen the emotional impact of a situation. Ten
counselors described the technique of problem solving; making this the most frequently
used cognitive behavioral technique. However, when using this strategy it is important to
note that counselors saw their role as a guide, not an expert. That is, they described their
role as helping the student discover the best solution as opposed to being the expert with

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the answers. The second most used strategy was pointing to the behavior of others as a
role model, which eight counselors described. Five of those eight pointed to the
behaviors of well-known R/S role models. Five counselors reported that, at times, they
gently challenge a student's perceptions. Four counselors reported that they attempt to
model certain attributes of God such as grace, mercy, or being a humble shepherd, with
the intention of changing a student's perceptions, while three counselors use some type of
self-monitoring.

   Ways counselors perceive they help students regulate emotional responses.
Response modulation is defined as any technique that directly influences "experiential,
behavioral, or physiological components of the emotional response" (Gross, 2014, p.10).
This is the only point of the process model of emotion regulation that is observable. Two
properties emerged from the data in this subcategory: (a) the use of physiological
techniques to directly help regulate a student's emotional response and (b) the use of
cognitive or behaviorally based techniques to help regulate a student's emotional
response.

   Physiological techniques to regulate emotional response. Ten counselors
explained how they use different physiological techniques to calm students who are
distressed. Five counselors mentioned helping students calm their breathing. Participant
6 shared when a student is upset she'll often coach them to "slow down your breathing a
little here, I'll breathe with you" (p.12, L.15-16). Participant 10 stated she will use
"relaxation techniques, deep breathing" (p.2, L.12-13) to help calm a student.

   Movement, the sensation of touch, and tactile activities were also techniques
utilized by counselors. Participant 7 noticed when students sat in a rocking chair in

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his/her office the movement helped to calm them. "So physically move them at a slower pace . . . and then they usually go to the rocking chair" (p.31, L.7, 21). Participant 7 went on to say, "I usually have candy, . . . something they can do . . . or we'll go into the café and get a drink of water" (p. 31 L. 11, 13,15-16). Participant 13, a female working in an all girls' school talked about the importance of touch, and stated, "I'll give them a hug . . . the girl was just completely in tears and upset . . . I gave her a hug" (p.6, L. 7, 11). Participant 9 thought part of the calming nature of a finger maze in which a student uses his or her finger to trace a maze might be explained "because it's tactile"(p.16, L.10). Participant 15 shared that she explains the importance of "getting out and exercising" (p.23, L.7).

These findings suggest that more than half of the counselors use some type of physiological response to help calm distressed students. Helping a student control his/her breathing was mentioned as a way to help a student regulate his or her emotions. Some counselors mentioned using relaxation techniques along with deep breathing. Movement and/or touch were techniques that counselors used to physiologically help calm a student in distress.

Cognitive and/or behaviorally based techniques to regulate emotional response. Two counselors shared the use of cognitive/behavioral techniques to help students regulate their emotions. Participant 1 stated she encourages a student to write down everything she is thinking, rate how distressing each item is, and then deal only with the most distressing item as a way to help calm a student who is upset to "empty their minds for a minute" (p.9, L.16) . . . "write down everything that's running through your head . .

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. what's [the] worst . . . let's not make this anymore overwhelming than it has to be. Let's just deal with this [one] thing" (p.13, L.20, 24-p.14, L.1-3).

Participant 9 discussed teaching students certain skills such as how to manage stress, make decisions, and identify unhealthy thoughts. Participant 9 stated, "we do skill development on stress management and decision-making and irrational thinking patterns and . . . mindfulness" (p.3, L.28-30).

The researcher originally placed these quotes in the subcategory labeled "use of cognitive behavioral techniques as a way to reframe a student's beliefs, thoughts, feelings, or behaviors". However, under closer examination it was decided that the counselors' use of these techniques was intended help the student experientially or behaviorally regulate his or her emotional response to a situation in that moment. While in essence, these quotes are a reframe of a student's thoughts, feelings, or behaviors the counselor's intent in using this strategy was to experientially alter the student's response by focusing first on the emotional release, rather than focusing on thoughts or behaviors.

Ten school counselors discussed ways in which they use techniques to alter the physiological, experiential, or behavioral components of a student's emotional response. The techniques used most often were physiological techniques such as helping students slow down their breathing and muscle relaxation exercises.

Ways counselors perceive they focus or distract students from their emotions. The fourth subcategory is attention deployment, which Gross (2014) defines as "directing attention within a given situation in order to influence one's emotions" (p. 10) and "is one of the first emotion regulatory processes to appear in an infant's development" (p.10). Two properties emerged from the data in this subcategory: (a)

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counselors perceive they focus a student on his or her emotions and (b) counselors perceive they distract a student from his/her emotions.

Counselors perceive they focus a student on his or her emotions. Four counselors discussed ways they help focus students on emotions by helping them identify what they are feeling. Participant 1 shared, "They know anger. They know sadness . . . you know, keep on probing with them a little bit to find out what it is they're [feeling] . . . they don't know if it's anger or fear or what. Confusion" (p.11, L.17-20). Participant 2 stated, "First thing would be to be able to identify what those emotions are, because they can be angry . . . sarcastic . . . dismissive . . . (p.18, L.15-18). Participant 2 also shared,

So I always tell them . . . give me something besides angry. And they'll say, 'Well, I'm frustrated.' I'm like, 'You know what, if there was a wedding, angry and frustrated would be invited, they're related.' If I really get [them] past anger, it's either I'm hurt, I'm sad, or disappointed . . . (p.18, L.17-20, L.23-24)

Participant 6 discussed linking the way a student feels with where they feel it in their body. For example, "I ask them to put words to it [their emotions] and then to describe it in anyway they can . . ." and went on to state, " . . . tell me what it feels like in your body . . . in your head, just getting them to verbalize whatever it is . . ." (p.18 L.5, L.10-11).

Other counselors stated that they didn't help students identify what they were feeling or they only did so with certain students. Participant 7, a female working in an all male school stated, "I would have to say I probably don't . . . I don't know that they care about that too much" (p.3, L.23; p.4, L.3). Participant 10 stated, "For some kids it's

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probably necessary, for others they might know exactly what they're feeling" (p.4, L.1-2).

Counselors perceive they distract students from his/her emotions. Only three counselors discussed using distraction to change the emotional impact of a situation. Participant 7 stated, "That's when you have to calm them, talk about [baseball] to distract" (p.31, L.2-5). This counselor went on to say, "I usually have candy . . . something they can do . . . or we'll go into the café and get a drink of water" (p.31, L.11, 13, 15-16). Participant 12 also talked about the benefit of walking with a student, "I give them space, a change of venue . . . sometimes we go on walks" (p.4, L.14-15). Participant 9 shared, "[talking about using a finger maze] . . . they can focus and go through the finger maze when their mind is racing, and they can't calm down" p.16, L.2-3).

Findings indicate a total of eight counselors perceive use of focusing or distracting a student on what he or she is feeling as a strategy to help students regulate their emotions. One counselor did not perceive students were interested in better understanding their emotions and one believed that some students already are able to identify what they are feeling. Three counselors talked about using strategies to help distract students from their emotions such as taking walks, providing candy, use of a finger maze, or talking about baseball. Three discussed helping students focus on the student's emotion to better identify what he/she is feeling.

In summary, findings indicate that counselors do use ER strategies that can be categorized using the five families, or groups, of strategies in Gross and Thompson's (2007) emotion regulation process model. In fact, all eighteen participants discussed

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using some type of emotion regulation strategy. Situation selection, the first family of strategies in this model, is not discussed in this section but is discussed under the broader context of R/S school culture. Aspects of the R/S culture that can be interpreted as ER strategies will be discussed in the Implications section Chapter 5.

Seventeen of eighteen counselors perceived using some type of ER strategy for the purpose of modifying a situation's emotional impact on a student. Four specific strategies were described: (a) choice making, (b) identifying support systems, (c) making outside referrals, and (d) communication with parents, teachers, and/or administration.

Fourteen counselors described using cognitive change as a way to help a student reframe his or her beliefs, thoughts, feelings, or behaviors. Five specific strategies were described: (a) problem solving, (b) pointing to the behaviors of well-known R/S role models, (c) challenging students' perceptions (d) counselors intentionally modeling certain behaviors (e) helping students self-monitor. When using problem solving, counselors were clear that they did not view their role as an expert with the answer, but rather as a guide helping the student discover the best solution. Counselors noted that when challenging a student, they needed to do so gently.

Nine counselors described use of physiological, behavioral, or experiential ways of reducing a student's emotional response to a situation. Five counselors used either helping students calm their breathing, or using relaxation exercises. Four counselors mentioned use of movement, or exercise.

Eight counselors perceived use of attentional deployment, which is helping a student focus on or be distracted from his or her emotions; six described ways they help

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student focus on an emotion, while two described ways they help distract a student from his or her emotions.

Category 3: Integrating R/S Practices, Teachings, or Beliefs Into Counseling Sessions as Perceived by Counselors

This category is critical because it allows the researcher to examine which R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs counselors use in sessions. For the purpose of this study R/S practices are defined as the customs, or traditions of a religion such as attending mass, prayer, meditation, and confession of sins. Teachings are the moral instructions of how to live a godly life and to manage relationships with self and others. In the Christian religion, Bible verses are often used as a reference for these teachings. Beliefs are defined as the doctrinal underpinnings of religion, such as God's view of humans being created in His image and, therefore, worthy of great value. These doctrinal beliefs often drive R/S teachings and practices. The properties that emerged from this category include (a) counselors' choices, (b) ways to integrate R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs, (c) the pitfalls of integrating R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs, and (d) the effectiveness of integrating R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs.

Counselors' choices. Category one labeled, R/S culture and its impact, has a subcategory that discusses the impact of the culture on counselors' choices. One of those choices was whether or not to integrate R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs into counseling sessions. To review that subcategory, 17 of the 18 counselors discussed which students they choose to integrate R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs with during counseling sessions. Six counselors shared that they integrate R/S into every session with all students; six choose to integrate sometimes, and with some students; five feel it is

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inappropriate to integrate R/S into sessions. This section will focus on (a) how

counselors discern which students to choose, and (b) the frequency with which they

integrate R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs.

How counselors discern with which students to integrate R/S practices,

teachings, or beliefs. Six counselors discussed how they know with whom to integrate

R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs in counseling sessions. As discussed earlier in this

chapter, counselors will often directly ask a student if they are comfortable with prayer or

some type of R/S teaching. However, it is interesting to note that three counselors did not

ask but instead, relied on more of an intuitive feeling, or the feeling of being led. For

example Participant 12 shared, "I don't know how to describe that. . . .I just know" (p.18,

L.1-3). Similarly, Participant 16 stated, "The Spirit just leads you." (p.14, L.21).

The frequency of integrating R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs. Six counselors

discussed how often they integrate R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs in counseling

sessions, ranging from never to weekly. For example, Participant 9 stated, "I was trying

to think if it had ever really come up in a counseling session where a student wanted to

pray and it really hasn't ever. It just hasn't happened" (p.9, L.18-19). On the other hand,

Participant 11 stated, " [I use] prayer almost all the time" (p. 14, L.23). Participant 8

shared, " . . . certainly every week, but not everyday necessarily" (p.8, L.19-21). These

findings suggest that counselors use of integrating R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs

range from almost all the time to never.

Ways counselors integrate R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs into counseling

sessions as perceived by the counselor. This subcategory was divided into the

following sub-properties: (a) ways counselors integrate R/S teachings, (b) ways

counselors integrate R/S practices, and (c) ways counselors integrate R/S beliefs.

Counselors' comments explain the purpose of using R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs is

to seek wisdom, provide a source of comfort or peace, and as a means of staying close to

God. Twelve of the eighteen counselors described using some sort of R/S practice,

teaching, or belief. Fourteen counselors reported using some kind of R/S teaching such

as teachings on forgiveness or referring to a specific scripture that applies to a specific

circumstance. Ten counselors reported using R/S practices such as prayer/meditation or

confession of sins. Nine counselors perceived using some type of R/S belief such as

focusing on the student's identity as seen by God or focusing on God's character or

actions.

  Ways counselors integrate R/S teachings. Ten counselors discussed how they use

teachings on forgiveness of others in counseling sessions. This makes sense since middle

or high school counselors are frequently helping adolescents navigate peer relationships,

which are so important at this stage of development. In addition, students may not yet

have the skills or much experience in how to approach someone and ask for or give

forgiveness. Participant 4 discussed the teaching that Christians are to not only forgive

their enemies but to pray for them:

> I worked with a student [who was] really struggling with another
>
> student . . . [we] talked about . . . just praying for our enemies . . . Christ calling
>
> us to pray for those people. And it's really changed their hearts, the student's
>
> hearts too, to have a broader perspective of a student instead of defining them as
>
> their so-called enemy. (p.20, L. 14-22)

Forgiveness of self is another aspect of teaching that counselors relied upon.

They often reframed students' thoughts by reminding them that since God forgives their sins, they could forgive themselves. Participant 2 shared:

The only one that's going to know what I really did that day is me and God. And I'm gong to live with that. I have to live with that. . . . However, Jesus' best friends were really big sinners. So I'm in good company and I know he'll forgive me. (p.28, L.12-17)

Participant 5 talked about forgiveness as being a central teaching of the Christian faith, " . . . the whole understanding of what forgiveness is, and how powerful that is as part of our faith because none of us would really be able to do anything if we didn't live in forgiveness" (p.14, L.8-9).

Five counselors discussed using scripture with students as a source of guidance and comfort. Participant 2 shared, " . . . let's find a Psalm that might help" (p.27, L.2). Participants 12 and 13 discussed using Bible verses that are fairly familiar to those brought up in the Christian faith. For example, Participant 12 shared, " . . . sometimes I use Bible passages – Philippians 4:6, don't be anxious . . . (p.18, L.21), and Participant 13 discussed using the following verse "Jeremiah 29:11, God has a plan for your life (p.17, L.12) when discussing college and career options for students.

Ways counselors integrate R/S practices. Ten counselors reported using R/S practices in a counseling session for the purpose of helping a student seek wisdom, comfort or peace, or as a means of staying close to God. For the purpose of this study, R/S practices include prayer, meditation, and confession. In a journal entry, Participant 4 described encouraging a student to meditate on Christian worship music to help her

reduce anxiety symptoms, "We utilized prayer to help with the anxiety and meditation on Christian worship songs" (Question 3, L. 1-2). Participant 12 stated, "I'll pray with them particularly at the end of a session" (p.15, L.7) and Participant 5 shared, "We use a lot of prayer" (p.14, L.21). Counselors also encourage students to pray outside of the counseling session. For example Participant 14 shared, "We'll be talking about ideas and I'll say, 'Pray on it….'" (p.10, L.18).

One counselor mentioned the practice of confession. In response to a journal entry, Participant 5 wrote, "I encouraged the student to participate in the sacrament of confession . . ." (Question 3, L.6-7).

In a journal entry, Participant 7 shared she hasn't really used R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs explicitly but that she models moral behaviors that align with those teachings. She stated, "I'm not sure that I have used any R/S practice, teachings, or beliefs specifically. I believe that I have just modeled composure, persistence, goal setting, and affirmation. In an interview, Participant 7 went on to say, "I try to talk about being responsible, being honest, being kind . . . and understanding the difference there. I try to model those things . . . I try to just teach them, I use the Golden Rule pretty regularly (p.7, L.21-p.8, L.4).

Ways counselors integrate R/S beliefs. Six counselors discussed the use of integrating God's character and/or actions in various ways. Participant 2 discussed how she reflects God's presence in current situations to challenge students to find the presence of God in their own lives. For example when describing her work with a grief group Participant 2 shared, "And that's what I tell them. And this is God, all of us sitting in this

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room crying together, eating together . . . praying together and crying together and being angry together, that is God right here" (p.11, L.19-20, 22-23).

In a journal entry, Participant 8 shared how she uses the belief that God is loving, and forgiving:

I felt the need to challenge him [a student who felt superior to his peers], gentle confrontation, with my own version of a loving God – one who forgives and encourages us to love our neighbors and who tells us to leave the judging to him. This was in an effort to encourage the student to reflect and consider another point of view. (Question 3, L.3-7)

Participant 6 used neuroscience as a means of pointing out God's creativity: "I usually say, 'We have this wonderful brain and God created it. It's so intricate and so amazing I can't even begin to think of how he put it all together'" (p.14, L.18-23). In the context of this quote, the counselor was sharing how she explains brain functioning to help students understand the source of their anxiety, depression, or attention difficulties.

The following quote from Participant 2 illustrates how the counselor points out the doctrine of God's sovereignty, the belief that God is in control of all things, to students:

I spent a lot of time just kind of . . . not talking about my personal experiences but saying where I see God. Cause somebody will come in and they'll say, 'Oh, that was a coincidence.' And I'll say, 'Coincidence? I don't think so. That was my God in here.'" (p.16, L.19-22)

Participant 6 shared a poster that was hanging in her office that implicitly expresses the belief of God's sovereignty, "This is what was on my door last year [points to a piece of

paper displayed in her office that reads] 'This is God. I'll be handling all your problems today'" (p.20, L.27).

Five counselors discussed focusing on a student's identity by pointing out how God views the student and/or how the counselor sees God working in the actions of that student. For example Participant 4 shared:

I try to be wise in terms of sharing a Biblical worldview . . . to challenge

a kid to think through not what would Jesus do necessarily . . . but I ask them, 'If

Jesus were sitting next to you what would he say to you?' They may say, 'He's

Frustrated with me' . . . I would say, 'No, I think he loves you, he cares for you.'

It's somewhat of a transference to say this is what Jesus would say. (p. 9, L.5-12)

In response to questions about a vignette in which a student had gotten drunk and gone too far with a boy Participant 8 wrote, " I would just encourage her to share how she thinks God is looking at this . . ." (Question 2, L.14). Participant 2 shared how she points out seeing God's actions in the actions of the student: "What I will say to them is, 'I saw God in you today. When I see them picking up somebody else's books . . . or taking care of a younger student.'" (p.27, L.9-10).

In summary, counselors do integrate R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs into counseling session. R/S teachings are used to help focus and teach students about the concept of forgiving themselves and/or others. Counselors also used R/S beliefs to broaden students' perspectives and reminding them of God's sovereignty over them, and his love for them. Chapter 5 will discuss how counselors, through a better understanding of the ER family of strategies, can integrate R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs

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intentionally to help a student better understand his or her emotions and reactions with the hope of equipping students with a better understanding of self and others.

Counselors' perceptions of the pitfalls of integrating R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs in counseling sessions. Seventeen of eighteen counselors identified pitfalls, or negative consequences that need to be considered when choosing to integrate R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs in counseling sessions. Participant 12 was the only counselor who stated, "I don't really see any negative [outcomes] . . ." (p.23, L.18). Counselors' concerns about integrating R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs range from the danger of pushing students away from R/S, to concerns that the student will feel judged, which would have significant negative implications on the counseling relationship. It is important that counselors understand the R/S school culture as discussed in Category 1, specifically the R/S backgrounds of students so as not to assume that all students are of the same faith, or are interested in R/S. As Participant 16 stated, "Not all students that walk our halls are Christians . . . that [integrating R/S into a counseling session] could be a turn off" (p.17, L.3, 5). Participant 17 shared that some students might feel that the counselor's attempt to integrate R/S might be seen as inauthentic by the student, "Sometimes they feel that it [R/S] is too forced" (p.15, L.31). Participant 1 stated, " . . . I do think that in some kids it could lead to total rejection [of faith]" (p.22, L.21).

Counselors are also mindful of not coming across as preachy or as giving advice, but rather are mindful of establishing a counseling relationship that is egalitarian. For example, Participant 7 shared, "I think they might feel they are being preached to . . . one more time" (p.25, L.3-5). Participant 6 shared, "I can sense when someone might think I'm being preachy, so I back off . . . (p.31, L.27). Participant 8 was very insightful about

a power imbalance by pointing out a student's perceived concern that sharing certain information could result in serious consequences. For example, " . . . the student might think I can't share that here . . . because I could get expelled" (p.35, L.23-25).

Counselors were also very concerned about being perceived as judgmental by some students if they integrated R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs into counseling sessions. In response to a question from a vignette, Participant 8 wrote, "I would be very careful not to come across as 'judgey' or any sort of what-were-you-thinking attitude/approach" (Question 2, L.4-5). Participant 2 shared, " . . . if you preach, if you judge, those are huge dangers" (p.30, L.9-10). Participant 7's comments also speak to the danger of a counselor being perceived as judgmental: "I think they may think I would be judgmental of them . . . that's the last thing a counselor wants to be, is judgmental" (p.25, L.3-4, 15).

Counselors' perceptions of the effectiveness of integrating R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs in counseling sessions. All eighteen counselors discussed the effectiveness of using R/S teachings, practices, or beliefs in counseling sessions, with responses ranging from counselors not immediately knowing the effectiveness, to receiving immediate feedback. Participant 2 shared she sees the effectiveness of using R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs when students decide to continue their faith in college. For example, " When kids come back from . . . when they're in college . . . and say I've joined a small faith group at my college . . ." (p.27, L.18-20). Participant 6 shared she often sends emails to students and faculty with short encouraging R/S messages. Participant 6 stated, "I will forward those [daily inspirational emails] and it's amazing the feedback . . . sometimes I get no feedback. But more than half the time it's a student

[giving feedback saying] I really needed this today, this really touched me" (p.21, L.5-8), and went on to share, "A lot of students will say thank you . . . I never had anyone say that to me before" (p.22, L8,10).

Other counselors talked about knowing integration of R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs into counseling sessions was effective, by students expressing a feeling of safety, a means of coping, or a hope for the future. For example Participant 9, who does not use R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs in counseling sessions, did acknowledge that "usually, they talk about feeling at peace with their decision . . . there is that sense of safety sometimes that I've heard" (p.9, L.33-34 -p.10, L. 2). Participant 12 stated:

> There's a structure you can run back to and the hope . . . the hope always helps.
> Even just a glimpse of what hope can look like . . . and that believing Jesus
> can help just a little bit to . . . give you that reason to live.
> (p.20, L.18-21, p.21, L.5, 7-8)

Participant 17 discussed the benefits of prayer that students have shared:

> I think to me one of the biggest positive outcomes is just the stories of
> comfort I hear in knowing that something like prayer doesn't have to be
> scripted . . . it can be any place, anytime. It just becomes part of their everyday
> life . . . it can bring peace, a peace of mind. (p.15, L.6-9,12, 15-16).

To summarize, findings suggest that two thirds of the participants integrate R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs into counseling sessions. This category began with counselors' descriptions of how they discern with which student to integrate R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs and for those twelve counselors who do integrate R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs how frequently they do so. Counselors reported that

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sometimes they ask students if they can pray or refer to a scripture, but sometimes they just intuitively know when to, and when not to do so. Counselors integrate R/S practices, teachings or beliefs in a variety of ways including use of prayer or meditation, use of scripture, or focusing on attributes of God's character. Counselors vary in how often they integrate R/S into counseling sessions; this variance ranges from integrating R/S into every counseling session, to doing so only once a week.

Possible pitfalls of integrating R/S into counseling sessions include the possibility of pushing a student away from R/S, coming across as 'preachy' rather than establishing a more egalitarian relationship, and coming across as judgmental, which would damage the counseling relationship. Counselors also discussed that a student's reactions to the use of R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs in a counseling session were not always readily discernable.

Counselors also stated that when used effectively, integrating R/S into counseling sessions can help students tap into a resource that helps them cope with difficult situations, and provide feelings of comfort, and peace. Sometimes counselors shared that they receive immediate feedback that the strategy was helpful, but sometimes they may not ever know.

Category 4: Counselors' Beliefs and Experiences That Impact Their Use Of Strategies and Techniques

Counselors discussed their own beliefs about students that permeate their work in counseling sessions. Adolescent development, including spiritual development, was often discussed. Counselors' perception of gender also impacts the strategies and

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techniques that counselors implement. Counselors also discussed their own style of processing emotions, and how that impacts their choice of strategies and techniques.

Counselors' beliefs about adolescent development that impact their use of strategies and techniques. All eighteen counselors discussed the impact of adolescent development, including spiritual development on their work with students. Eight counselors view adolescence as a period of searching for one's identity; seven discussed the unevenness in maturity they observe as adolescents develop, and; three discussed adolescence as being a time of rebellion and exploration. Each of these properties ranges from impacting the counselors perceptions to having no impact.

Counselors discussed their views that the process of developing one's identity has several normal implications in the lives of adolescents.   First, it has an impact on students' egocentric focus as expressed. Participant 6 shared an insightful comment pointing out an adolescent's egocentric tendencies while also acknowledging the power of peers: " At this stage of adolescent development . . . they're focused on themselves, but they're looking outside themselves to measure themselves" (p.34, L.23-24**).** Second, some counselors discussed that adolescence can be a time of overall identity confusion. For example Participant 11 pointed out the need to be, "sensitive to the confusion [of figuring out who you are] . . . while at the same time trying to form one's own identity. And that can be so confusing in the midst of trying to find out who they are" (p.12, L.17-20).   Third, the process of a child separating from parents can also cause confusion for an adolescent who is establishing one's identity. Participant 18 stated that adolescents feel, "I'm separating from my parents and this is what I believe. I want to be my own person" (p.14 L.12-13).

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Counselors also discussed the uneven rate of maturity they observe in their work with adolescents. For example, Participant 6 stated, " . . . there could be a very immature sophomore and then a very mature freshman" (p.19, L.10-11). Participant 13 discussed in broader strokes, the changes in maturity that occur during high school and stated, "You see the freshmen come in. They're just wide-eyed and somewhat immature and giddy and [there's] drama. . . . Junior year they start to . . . they get a little more focused on college and career" (p.17, L.1-2, 8). Participant 15 shared the holistic impact of development on a student: "And I think like intellectually and academically where are they . . . and then socially where are they . . . how mature are they?" (p.31, L.6-9).

Counselors also view adolescence as a time of rebellion and exploration. As Participant 1 stated, " . . . a part of adolescence is rebellion" (p.22, L.22). Similarly, Participant 9 stated, " . . . teenagers are going to question, are going to rebel" (p.10, L.28). Participant 7 shared that adolescents often explore different behaviors, thoughts, or beliefs and stated, " . . . that's not uncommon in this age, or that time of exploration in those high school and early college years" (p.22, L.12-13).

Twelve counselors specifically talked about spiritual development, or the development of one's faith. Counselors' perceive adolescence as having an impact on spiritual development in a variety of ways. Several counselors used the analogy of "planting seeds" in their work with students. This analogy links how counselors view helping a student develop or deepen his or her R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs, with the understanding that developmentally adolescence is a time that students might have many questions about their faith. In other words, their faith is in the early stages of growth, not yet mature. For example, Participant 2 stated, " . . . you've got to plant the

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seeds . . . " (p.16, L.15) and went on to state, "I think this is an age of struggling . . . an age of questions about faith" (p.27, L26-27). Participant 3 shared, " . . . one thing we're trying to do here is plant a seed, to let them know the importance of their faith" (p.18, L.17-18). Participant 6 shared how "planting a seed" can nurture students who are stronger in their faith, and encourage those who are questioning their faith to consider it as an option to help them cope, " . . . that doesn't mean I don't plant a seed (p.25, L.8) . . . I think it helps girls who have those seeds already planted to help them to be further nurtured . . . and the ones that don't have it, they consider it" (p.27, L.11-13). The following quote from Participant 17 illustrates one counselor's view of the richness of conversation that can occur when talking to a student who is questioning his faith:

> They don't know where they are in their faith or they don't know how to
> incorporate it into their day. To me, those are the most rich conversations that
> I can have with students who are, it's like they're reaching . . . (p.10, L.25-29)

Participant 17 went on to say, "One of the things we have to be ultra-sensitive to is that they have a lot of questions [about their faith] and they're unsure about a lot of things (p. 16, L.20-22).

These findings suggest that counselors' view of adolescence impacts their belief system, and is a lens through which they consider the student's behaviors and struggles. Understanding adolescence also helps counselors better understand the students with whom they work. Spiritual development is also a lens through which counselors view students as they attempt to understand the struggles they bring into counseling sessions. Counselors discussed the importance of "planting seeds" of faith or nurturing "seeds" that might take root and/or grow deeper later in a student's life. Counselors also

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acknowledged the importance of understanding that adolescence is a time of questioning one's faith and making it their own.

Counselors' beliefs about gender and emotion and its impact on counseling strategies and techniques. Fourteen of eighteen counselors discussed their perceptions of how gender impacts one's interest in, and depth of processing and expressing one's emotions. The question of gender was not directly asked in the other four interviews as counselors were engaged in other questions and time did not allow exploration of this question.

Counselors often pointed out that girls tend to be more in touch with their emotions and more verbal than boys. For example Participant 2 stated, " . . . girls will tell you stuff for days and days and days. And boys, 'How's your day?' 'Fine.' So it's different with boys"
(p.10, L.7-8, 10). Participant 7 perceives that boys have difficulty managing emotions and that it tends to come out behaviorally:

> They [boys] don't know how to manage themselves. They try to keep things in
>
> more, and then, then it kind of boils and they don't know what to do so they,
>
> that's kinda where the pacing starts and . . . almost the hyperventilating . . .
>
> the heavy breathing or they just . . . the door slamming or they want to punch
>
> something. . . . They get more aggressive. They don't know how to
>
> calm themselves or how to even explain what's happening to them. . . .
>
> So they are either so angry they don't know what to do, or they are so
>
> overwhelmed they can't even get the words out" (p.28, L.4-8, L.10, 12-14; p.30,
>
> L.12-14).

Participant 15 pointed out that females are more likely to seek out the counselor than males. This participant stated, "I see girls who are way more willing to come here and talk to us. Guys aren't as willing to share. In fact, they'd be hurting a little bit more before they're gonna come in here" (p.31, L.18, p.32, L.2-5).

The following quote from Participant 16 points out his perceptions that females are more likely to be tearful than males:

> . . . girls tend to be a little more open to sharing their feelings than guys are . . . most guys are kinda still are thinking tough guy, macho image. . . . I find girls probably might find it a little bit easier to express their emotions than guys. I would say I've seen more tears from girls. (p.9, L.8-9, 10, 15-16)

In contrast, Participant 8 who works in an all male school shared he has male students come into the counseling office who are in tears on a somewhat frequent basis:

> Its not uncommon to have a student come in who is flustered and . . . seeming to want to cry . . . And I always say things like, 'Hey its okay man. You can cry in here. Unless you tell anybody about it, nobody needs to know.' I always take my box of tissues, which is always nearby and I put it near them, so they know hey, it is okay to cry, go for it . . . a fair amount of crying happens in my office weekly (p.8, L.14,16, 18-23, p.9, L.19-20).

Participant 15 shared the perception that when a male is crying it suggests that he knows who he is, and is willing to be vulnerable. Yet, this participant stated she was surprised to see males who do this, "I've seen guys tear up and that's a good thing . . . because they are in touch with who they are and they're willing to let go of themselves to be vulnerable . . . but that surprised me" (p.5, L.5-6, 8-10).

These findings suggest that counselors' beliefs about gender generally tend to fall along stereotypical lines. Counselors' comments suggest that some have the perception that females tend to talk more, cry more, and are better able to express their emotions than males. However, there are also counselors who find that boys are willing to be vulnerable, and express their emotions and cry.

Counselors' style of processing their own emotions and its impact on counseling strategies and techniques. Almost half of the participants reflected on the way they process their own emotions and how that might influence the strategies and techniques they choose in counseling sessions. For example, Participant 2 views herself as an upbeat person who focuses on being grateful and when working with students this attitude comes across in her work. She stated, " . . . I'm a very upbeat, positive person. I choose to not dwell on negative things . . . I always tell kids I have an attitude of gratitude . . . Cause in all the hub of ugliness, there's something I have to be grateful for" (p.7, L.15-20). Several counselors discussed their need to write in a journal, or verbally process what they are feeling. For example, Participant 16 shared, " . . . I'm more verbal and I'm like that with the kids" (p.8, L.23). Participant 10 stated, " . . . I'm a verbal processor and I need to speak what I'm feeling. Talking it through is the best way to get through that [an emotionally difficult situation] . . . and then having someone remind me of the gospel. That's what I try to do." (p.11, L.1-5). When asked how she processes her own emotions, Participant 12 stated, " I love, love, love journaling" (p.7, L.13), and this participant nodded in affirmation that this is a technique she frequently uses with students (p.7, L.14). In addition to verbally processing information, counselors mentioned using prayer as a R/S practice that helps them cope with difficult emotional

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situations. For example, Participant 18 stated, " . . . through accountability of friends, talking to other people, and a big thing for me is through prayer. You know I think there probably would be some parallel" [to helping students process emotions] (p.17, L.17-18, 25-26).

The data in this section suggest that counselors' beliefs and experiences can influence the strategy and techniques used in counseling sessions in three ways. First, counselors shared beliefs that adolescence is a time of forming one's identity, uneven maturity levels, and a time of rebellion and exploration. Some counselors discussed their belief that spiritual development is impacted by adolescence. Counselors reported that adolescence is often a time of questioning and struggling with one's faith as the student either rejects faith or makes it one's own. Counselors shared they often view their work with students as "planting a seed" when they attempt to integrate R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs. These counselors link spiritual development with adolescent development in that an adolescent's faith is not yet fully formed, much as the adolescents' cognitive, and social-emotional growth is not yet fully matured. Second, counselors expressed either their skepticism, or acceptance of differences in the way gender impacts expressing and processing emotion. Some counselors have a stereotypical view of a male's manner of emotional processing and expression. That is, they view males as not being as verbally expressive or in touch with their emotions and much less likely to be vulnerable than females. However, other counselors did not share that view of males. They reported that males do cry in their office, and can be emotionally vulnerable. Third, the counselors own style of processing emotions impact the strategies and techniques counselors use in sessions with students. For example,

counselors' comments suggest that those with an attitude of optimism and gratitude tend to encourage that attitude in students in counseling sessions. Also, counselors who process what they are feeling verbally will do the same with students while those who prefer writing in a journal will be more likely to use that technique.

Summary

The main research question of this study is to understand how counselors working in a R/S school setting integrate R/S practice, teachings, or beliefs with emotion regulation strategies. The following four categories emerged from eighteen participants, who agreed to a 45-60 minute interview, completed questions based on a vignette, and completed a journal prompt: (a) Religious/spiritual School Culture and Its Impacts, (b) Emotion Regulation Strategies, (c) Integrating R/S Practices, Teachings, or Beliefs into Counseling Sessions as Perceived by Counselors, and (d) Counselor's Beliefs and Experiences that Impact the Counselors' use of Strategies and Techniques.

Initially, R/S School Culture and Its Impacts was coded as a subcategory named R/S school setting under the category situation selection, the first family of ER strategies in Gross and Thomas's (2007) process model of ER. According to Gross, (2014, p.7) situation selection is "taking action to make it more or less likely one will be in a situation that gives rise to an emotion." However, as the data analysis process continued, it became clear that R/S setting was too narrow of a label and that R/S culture better captured the multifaceted dynamics of this category. Therefore, R/S School Culture and Its Impacts became its own category. The implications of the R/S school culture, as a type of situation selection will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Understanding the context of the R/S culture as described by the counselors is important because it is unique to a R/S school setting. For example, time is allotted in the school day for R/S corporate worship (a gathering of all students, faculty, and staff), and/or small group worship or prayer in all 15 schools represented in this study. The frequency and specific R/S activities vary across school settings.

In addition, the R/S culture has an impact on the overall feel of the school, students, and student relationships. Half of the participants commented on the overall feel of the school. Seven counselors described the school as being authoritative while one counselor described the school culture as compassionate. One counselor reported students could perceive the culture both ways.

Counselors perceive that students generally experience the school culture as safe and one in which very few physical fights occur. Nonetheless, the R/S practice, teachings, or beliefs promoted by the school can cause enough emotional dissonance in some students that the help of a counselor is sought, at times. Emotional dissonance is defined as "the feeling of unease that occurs when someone evaluates an emotional experience as a threat to his or her identity" (Jansz & Timmers, 2002).   It seems that for a subset of students, the R/S messages a student receives can cause them to experience a dissonance between the emotions they genuinely experience, and the emotions they perceive they are expected to experience. For example when a student or teacher talks about how faith helped them recover from depression during a time of corporate worship, other a student struggling with depression may feel that if his or her faith was stronger, they too would recover from depression.

Counselors described student-to-student relationships as generally caring and non-judgmental, and sometimes reported that student relationships seemed to reflect the school's overall mission. However, there are counselors who also see that R/S can be another lens through which adolescents can measure and judge one another. Student-to-teacher relationships are described as close in that counselors report that teachers sometimes spiritually mentor a student struggling with his or her faith and may, at times, disclose personal information. Teachers are also described as having a nonjudgmental attitude as they engage with students, and mentor them emotionally and spiritually.

Throughout this research, counselors spoke often of their relationship with teachers. Teachers are often the first adult distressed students will reach out to in a school setting. One counselor discussed just observing, while a teacher shared a personal and difficult time of her life with a student who was walking through a similar experience. The counselor was touched emotionally, and highly impressed with the guidance, support, and encouragement the teacher provided. Counselors also discussed that it is often a teacher who will alert the counselor to a student in distress. A counselor's impact on students is hindered without the combination of the close and caring eyes of teachers on students, with a strong working relationship between teachers and the counselor.

The R/S culture also has an impact on the school counselor's attitude toward his or her job. Six counselors used the term being "called" to their job. Counselors' choices are also impacted by the R/S culture. Two-thirds of the counselors reported integrating R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs into counseling sessions with all or some students.

Five counselors reported ethical reasons, or concerns about damaging the counseling relationship as reasons for not integrating R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs.

The counseling relationship is also impacted by the R/S school culture. Two-thirds of the counselors explained that their first goal in working with a student is establishing a safe counseling environment, and they discussed the importance of being nonjudgmental. The R/S culture and the teachings it promotes can create a tension between the home, church, and school setting for the student and the counselor. Counselors mentioned topics such as premarital sex, abortion, and same sex attraction as being especially difficult to navigate. Since the R/S background of students is varied, counselors reported that they are careful not to express their own opinions on these topics, and that they are aware of the tension between providing a safe, nonjudgmental counseling relationship, while at the same time gently guiding students emotionally and spiritually given the home, school, church dynamic.

It was anticipated that if counselors were asked directly what ER strategies they use, they would not know how to answer this question, as the study of ER is somewhat specialized. The researcher used Gross and Thompson's (2007) process model of ER as a framework with which to examine the data to uncover the ER strategies that counselors use. While this is an unusual approach to use in a grounded theory study, it was necessary to use a model as a framework so that ER could be identified. The researcher also looked for other ER strategies, but because Gross and Thompson's model is so comprehensive none were found. The process model of emotion regulation represents points where a family, or group, of ER strategies might occur based on the process of emotion generation. The five points are situation selection, situation modification,

attention deployment, cognitive change, and response modulation. Situation selection is discussed in the previous section.

Counselors most frequently use situation modification, which is defined as "directly modifying a situation so as to alter its emotional impact on a student" (Gross, 2014, p.9). Counselors modify a situation by helping students make choices, identify support systems, by making referrals, and communicating information to teachers, parents, or other school personnel on a need to know basis.

Cognitive change, or reframing a student's beliefs, thoughts, feelings, or behaviors is the second ER strategy counselors report using most frequently. Counselors use modeling of their own behaviors, and/or point to the behaviors of others including R/S role models to help students reframe their thinking. They also report using cognitive-behavioral techniques such as challenging a student's thought patterns, problem solving, and self-monitoring. It is important to note that counselors do not see themselves as experts but rather as guides, as they help students problem solve to reframe the emotional impact of a situation.

Half of the counselors discussed use of some type of physiological technique to help a student regulate one's emotional response; this is referred to as response modulation. Counselors frequently help students regulate their breathing, or did relaxation exercises to help students regulate their response to a stressful situation. More than one-third of the counselors reported ways in which they help focus or distract a student from his/her emotions. Gross and Thompson (2007) label this as attentional deployment.

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The third category that emerged from this data is integrating R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs into counseling sessions. More than one-third of the counselors discussed how they discern with which students to integrate R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs, and six counselors shared how frequently they do so. Four counselors shared that they ask students before integrating a R/S practice, teaching, or belief and three shared that they just intuitively know when, and when not to do so. Some counselors never integrate R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs while some do so daily.

Counselors who do integrate R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs reported using R/S teachings most often in counseling sessions, specifically the teaching of forgiveness of self and others. The most commonly used R/S practice is prayer or meditation, while emphasizing aspects of God's character is the most common belief that counselors use.

Counselors described the pitfalls and benefits of integrating R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs into counseling sessions, and how they know if the choice to integrate is effective. Counselors stated that sometimes they don't know until much later, when a student returns to visit and shares that they are continuing to seek out organizations in college to support their faith that the strategy was effective. Other times, students immediately provide feedback to the counselor such as a thank-you to indicate that integrating a R/S practice, teaching, or belief was helpful. Counselors identified being perceived as judgmental by the student and damaging the counseling relationship as a pitfall for choosing to integrate R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs. Counselors also reported concerns that choosing to integrate R/S might actually push a student away from his or her faith.

The fourth category that emerged from the data is labeled Counselors' Beliefs and Experiences that Impact their Work with Students. All eighteen participants discussed the impact of adolescent development, including spiritual development on their work with students. Counselors most frequently referred to adolescence as a time of identity formation. Spiritually, they view adolescence as a time of questioning. Counselors described their view of integrating R/S into counseling sessions as an opportunity to "plant seeds [of faith]" during this period of questioning.

Counselors' view of the ways in which males and females differ in processing and expressing emotions also impact their work with students. Some counselors shared that they feel that males are less expressive and tend to be less aware of what they are feeling than females. Others shared that males do in fact become emotional in counseling sessions, and are willing to be emotionally vulnerable. The judgments regarding gender and emotion which counselors make, impact their use of ER strategies.

Finally, counselors' own style of processing emotions impacts their work with students. For example, counselors who need to process feelings verbally will do so with students while counselors who tend to use journal writings will encourage use of this same strategy with students.

Core Category: Balancing and Attuning

The final category to be discussed is the core category, balancing and attuning. Merriam (2009) defines a core category as "the main conceptual element through which all other categories and properties are connected" (p.31). Strauss and Corbin (1988) explain that sometimes the researcher finds that each category tells part of the story, but sometimes, as is the case in this study, a more abstract term is needed "under which all

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other categories can be subsumed" (p.146). In this study the core category was determined by re-analyzing the four categories (R/S school culture and its impact, ER strategies, Integrating R/S practice, teachings, or beliefs, and Counselors' Beliefs and experiences) and asking, "How do counselors integrate ER strategies with R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs? What is it that they are doing?"   The answer to that question is "Balancing and Attuning."

Counselors discussed the importance of establishing a safe, nonjudgmental relationship with students. While relationships in a R/S school can be caring and supportive, counselors also described R/S as another lens through which judgment can occur. Counselors described teachers that students confide in, and who often mentor students emotionally and spiritually as having a nonjudgmental manner. Counselors also discussed their concerns of being perceived as judgmental by students. However, they are doing more than establishing a non-judgmental relationship; they are balancing that non-judgmental manner with emotional and/or R/S guidance.

Counselors in this study discussed how the R/S culture impacts students. They reported that students are generally kind to each other; however, at least a subset of students can feel an element of judgment from the R/S teachings, messages given during the school day. For example, Participant 8 stated, "And at our school there is kind of an emphasis on brotherhood and being brotherly to each other" (p.26, L.12-13) and Participant 4 stated " . . . they can be very judging of their peers . . . (p.23, L.27-28).

The school counselor must keep in mind that the student may not have the same R/S background as that of the school's and balance the student's concern with the school's expectation to support its mission. Participant 8's quote illustrates this point:

"We have a couple of Jewish students . . . we have a couple of Muslim students" (p.15, L. 4,6). The differences in religious beliefs between the student's R/S background and the R/S beliefs promoted by the school can lead some students to feel judgment. For example when describing a situation with a student whose religion was different from the school's Participant 1 shared,

> Girls come in here, especially if they've come from a different background where they will be upset because . . . maybe a religion or theology teacher . . . they have misinterpreted what the teacher is saying I guess and they will say, "She's basically saying that I don't have the right religion" (p.23, L.16-24).

In addition, counselors are concerned that a student's preconceived notion might be that he/she will be judged if certain information is shared which can damage the counseling relationship. Participant 6 sums up this point with the following quote, "I try to create a non-judgmental atmosphere in here because that's what the girls tell me they want" (p.26, L.15). Participant 8 stated, " . . . the student might think, I can't share that here . . . at this school because I could get expelled" (p.35, L.22-25).

Counselors must also balance the multiple and sometimes conflicting beliefs that students receive from home, church, and or the R/S school. Many counselors mentioned this tension but Participant 1 summarized it succinctly when discussing a difficult situation with a student, " . . . the student and the school were in agreement, it was the parents who were conflicting and so the outcome was not good . . ." (p.28, L.11-12). This participant went on to say, "If somebody's really questioning . . . if people have alternative lifestyles . . . they can be really getting mixed signals with what school . . . and home . . . is telling them" (p.24, L.3-6,7-8). Participant 10 discussed how this tension

creates a dilemma for the counselor: "I don't want them going back to their mom saying, my school counselor told me I can be gay and I should be proud of it. I don't want them going to my principal and saying, my school counselor said I can be out and open and wonderful" (p.12, L.21-24).

Counselors also need to be aware of and balance their own beliefs and experiences with emotional and R/S guidance. The power of stereotypic thinking regarding differences in how males and females process and express emotion can influence which ER strategies a counselor uses. For example, Participant 7 a female in an all male school, shared she thinks boys have difficulty expressing their emotions and that instead of verbally doing so, the emotions come out physically in pacing or slamming a locker shut. When asked if she helps them understand the emotion that led to the behavior she stated, " . . . I would have to say I probably don't" (p.3, L. 23). This counselor also stated that she sometimes will "talk to them about baseball to distract them . . . help them calm down" (p.31, L. 4-5). This may be an appropriate strategy to use with some students, the point is counselors need to be aware of their own beliefs about how males process emotions so that males who want to cry do not feel judged if they do.

The term "attuned" is defined as the counselor's awareness of all the possible concerns that may contribute to a student's fear of judgment while finding the safe space to provide the needed emotional or spiritual guidance. If a counselor is leaning too heavily on being non-judgmental, the student may feel heard and accepted but still not have any emotional or R/S strategies to help him/her deal with the distressing situation. If a counselor leans too heavily on emotional and R/S guidance the counselor risks the possibility of pushing a student away from his/her faith because of further feelings of

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judgment or emotionally leading a student to explore emotions he/she is not yet wanting or willing to explore.

The following chapter will provide an explanation of the theory based on this core concept and how that theory plays out in the practice of a school counselor employed in a R/S school setting. The limitations of this study and the implications of these findings to the practice of school counseling will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The goal of this research study was to use grounded theory methodology to understand how counselors working in a religious/spiritual (R/S) school setting integrate emotion regulation (ER) strategies with R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs. This chapter begins with a review of why this study was conducted. Findings to each research questions will be presented, along with limitations of the study, and implications for the practice of school counseling in a R/S school setting, as well as implications for training school counselors. Finally, recommendations for future research will be given.

While ER and R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs may appear to be two unrelated concepts, there is reason to examine them together (McCullough & Willoughby, 2009). One reason is the body of research that suggests that R/S is positively correlated with overall psychological well-being (King & Benson, 2006; Urry & Poey, 2008; Yonker et al., 2012). There is also some research that indicates there is a positive correlation between higher academic achievement and R/S (Erickson & Phillips, 2012; Jeynes, 2003; Regnerus, 2000).

It is important to note that there are criticisms of the research that suggests a positive correlation between R/S and overall psychological well-being (Berry, 2005). For example, Miller and Thoresen (2003) found that the construct of R/S is often not consistently, clearly, and conceptually defined. R/S is often defined by outward behaviors such as church attendance, and misses the complexity of the "behavioral, affective, cognitive, and volitional dimensions" (Berry, p. 635). In spite of these criticisms Berry stated that there does appear to be a positive, albeit weak, correlation between R/S and overall psychological well-being (PWB).

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However, it is not completely understood why this correlation exists (McCullough & Willoughby, 2009). It is estimated that the variables studied thus far such as, religious messages that promote healthy behaviors, the social support a religious community provides, the reinforcement children receive in conforming to social norms, and the belief that one's religious beliefs can be a source of coping, account for only an estimated 35-50 percent of the relationship; therefore, other variables that contribute to this relationship exist (George, Koening, & McCullough, 2000). McCullough and Willoughby (2009) suggest that self-regulation, which includes the concept of emotion regulation, may be one factor that has yet to be studied that contributes to the positive correlation between R/S and overall PWB, as well as higher academic performance.

Given that R/S may be a variable that contributes to self regulation (McCullough & Willoughby, 2009), school counselors working in a R/S school setting are in a unique position to integrate ER strategies with R/S practices, teachings or beliefs. Almost four million students are enrolled in a private, religious school, and there are approximately 25,000 religious schools in the United States (www.capenet.org). If each of these schools employs a school counselor, 25,000 counselors would benefit from studies that examine what best practice might look like when trying to incorporate a relational, developmental, and spiritual approach to their work, as Goodell & Robinson (2008) recommend. Moreover, counselors working in a public school setting have been increasingly encouraged to incorporate spirituality into school counseling programs (Davis et al., 20011; Sink, 2004), and would benefit from this discourse.

Yet, there is very little research in the school counseling literature that informs counselors about how to apply ER strategies in counseling sessions. In addition, this

researcher could find no articles that explored how counselors working in a religious school setting might integrate R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs into counseling sessions. This study is especially important to school counselors who work in a R/S school setting because it can begin discourse on what best practice might look like in this setting as counselors work with students emotional and spiritual well-being.

Eighteen school counselors, fourteen females and four males, each completed a journal prompt, answered questions from a vignette about a hypothetical situation with an adolescent in emotional distress, and participated in a 45-60 minute audio taped interview. Fifteen schools located in the Midwest were included in this study. A grounded theory approach was used, and data were analyzed using the constant comparative in which incidents in the data "were compared against other incidents for similarities and differences" as the researcher proceeded through open, axial, and selective coding (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p.9).

Findings Related to Research Questions

The following section will list and answer each research question based on the findings of this study. Research discussed in Chapter 2, the literature review, will be integrated with the findings. This section will also explain the importance and relevance of this study and its findings.

Research question #1. What specific emotion regulation strategies do school counselors use when working with adolescents grades seven through twelve in religious school settings?

Situation selection. According to Gross and Thompson (2007), there are five families, or groups, of ER strategies: situation selection, situation modification, attention

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deployment, cognitive change, and response modulation. This study found all of these. James Gross (2014, p.9) defines situation selection as "taking actions that make it more (or less) likely that one will give rise to desirable (or undesirable) emotions." A religious school setting is one that parents have chosen for their child for many reasons. Each mission statement of the R/S schools represented in this study includes a R/S component that is incorporated into the overall education of the students. Since parents have made the choice to enroll their child in a R/S school setting, it is logical to assume that at least a subset of parents, and the school administrators responsible for striving to fulfill the school's mission, would have the expectation that the school will provide an environment that makes it more likely for a student to feel drawn toward, and embrace the R/S beliefs on which the school is founded. Thus, the culture in a R/S school is a type of situation selection.

The R/S school culture creates situations that intentionally provide opportunities for students to have desirable behaviors modeled by teachers and students that make positive emotions toward God more likely. For example, the data indicates that R/S schools take time out of the school for corporate worship. Depending on the school, the frequency of corporate worship ranges in occurrence from a daily to a monthly basis. There are also times of prayer, or some type of small group devotions that take place on a regular basis. Relationships that students develop with teachers are close, and in a R/S school culture teachers often mentor students in their spiritual lives. Counselors report that peers are generally supportive and caring of each other, and physical fights between students are rare.

All of the schools that participated in this study displayed R/S symbols in the halls and classrooms. There is research that suggests viewing R/S stimuli has a positive, albeit subtle, correlation with implicit self-regulation (Koole, McCullough, Kuhl & Roelofsma, 2010). These symbols, as well as additional R/S artifacts were displayed in the counselors' offices. Given the mission statements of the schools represented in this study, it is clear that the desire of the school is not just to provide an excellent academic education, but to also spiritually engage students so that they have a life-long relationship with God. While the researcher could find no examples of the use of situation selection in counseling sessions, the R/S school culture itself is an example of situation selection.

School counselors need to be aware of the impact the situation, the R/S culture, has on some students. For example, not all students R/S background is the same as the practices, teachings, and beliefs promoted by the school, and may trigger feelings of confusion and sometimes anger in these students. The R/S message may also cause emotional dissonance for some students who are struggling emotionally. In addition, data indicates that while student-to-student relationships can be very caring and supportive, students can also feel a great deal of judgment from each other as spirituality becomes another lens through which adolescents measure each other. As one participant stated, there can be cliques that are formed around who is really involved in spirituality and those who aren't as committed, who are doubting, or who do not believe in God at all. Participants discussed the concern that students have the preconceived notion that the counselor might also be judgmental. Moreover, the messages that students receive from home, church, and school can be quite different and cause confusion for the student. It can be difficult for the counselor to navigate these different messages while trying to

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support the student and, at the same time not undermine the home, church, or school. While it is important for all school counselors to be non-judgmental and to establish a safe, accepting relationship with students, the data suggest that it is even more critical for a counselor working in a R/S school setting to do so for the reasons mentioned above.

Situation modification. Situation modification emerged as the ER strategy that is used most often by school counselors. Gross (2014) defines situation modification as modifying "a situation so as to alter its emotional impact" (p. 9). Seventeen of 18 participants discussed using these strategies. Counselors do this by providing the student with choices, or they assume the responsibility for making a choice for the student. They also identify support systems, make referrals, and communicate information to other school personnel on a need to know basis.

Cognitive change. Fourteen of eighteen counselors use the ER strategy, cognitive change. Cognitive change is defined as the ability to modify "how one appraises a situation so as to alter its significance" (Gross, 2014, p.10). Working in a R/S school setting allows counselors to model behaviors that would not be possible in another setting, and is one way counselors perceive helping students reframe their beliefs, thoughts, feelings, or behaviors. For example, counselors discussed their own behaviors or the behaviors of others in times of corporate worship as a way of modeling R/S behaviors. Counselors also reported using the lives and stories of well-known spiritual leaders such as Mother Theresa, or Jesus. Counselors' use of cognitive behavioral techniques, such as challenging a student's beliefs, thoughts, feelings, or behaviors, problem solving, and self-monitoring was also discussed.

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Response modulation. Half of the counselors perceive using response modulation or strategies that "directly influence experiential, behavioral, or physiological components of the emotional response" (Gross, 2014, p.10). Counselors frequently reported use of physiological techniques such as slow breathing, and muscle relaxation exercises.

Attentional deployment. The least used ER family of strategies is attentional deployment, which Gross (2014) defines as "directing attention to influence one's emotions" (p.10). Counselors did report using distraction, which is one way to utilize attentional deployment. For example, counselors reported talking students for a walk, or talking to them about sports. Focusing a student on his/her emotion was less commonly used.

Findings support the fact that counselors do use ER strategies although they may not be aware of Gross and Thompson's (2007) modal model of ER families, or that the strategy they were using would be labeled as an ER strategy. However, counselors may be better equipped to serve students if they better understood the process of emotion regulation and the families, or groups of ER strategies. For example, Watts (2007) pointed out that negative emotions can have a constructive role, but they may also impede progress to one's goals. Berking et al. (2008) compared participants that took part in a six-week CBT program with participants that took part in the CBT program modified to include ER strategies and found that participants in the program with ER strategies reported higher use of skill application than the CBT only group.

It is important to note that while examples of all ER strategies were found, situation modification and cognitive change were most frequently used. School

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counselors often have limited time, and are not in a setting in which doing long-term therapy is appropriate. However, school counselors can help students better understand their emotional response to a situation, even if the counselor eventually needs to refer the student to an outside professional for more intense intervention. This will be discussed further in the Implications section of this chapter.

      Research question #2. What are the R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs that school counselors in religious school settings perceive to be most important when working with adolescents?

      Counselors most commonly used religious teachings with adolescents in the R/S school setting. Not surprisingly, the teachings on the topic of forgiveness were used most often. This may be due to the fact that many times school counselors are attempting to help students manage social relationships in which forgiveness may be needed. Counselors also use teachings on the topic of anxiety. This too, is not surprising given that in 2009 a survey conducted by the American Psychological Association found that 45 percent of teens reported being stressed by the academic pressures of school (http://www.npr.org/section/health-shots/2013).

      Nine counselors reported using the practice of meditation or prayer to help students seek wisdom, comfort, or peace, and one counselor shared she encouraged a student to participate in the practice of confession. According to Walker (2012), there are two ways counselors can integrate R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs into counseling sessions. One option is to create R/S psychotherapeutic goals, while the second option is to use other models of treatment, and integrate R/S content. The counselors interviewed for this study tend to use the second option of integrating R/S into the content of a

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counseling session while using counseling models/theories, such as solution focused therapy or cognitive behavior therapy.

Some counselors choose not to integrate R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs into counseling sessions because they feel it is unethical to do so. The American Association of School Counselors (ASCA) has published ethical guidelines for school counselors that discuss the importance of a counselor not imposing his or her beliefs on a student. However, Goodell and Robinson (2009) point out that it might be expected for school counselors working in a religious school setting to incorporate the beliefs and practices of the religion on which the school is founded into counseling session. School counselors working in a R/S school setting must balance the expectation of the school and possibly parents to incorporate R/S into their work with students, while still providing a nonjudgmental counseling relationship, and not coercing the student.

Some school counselors balance when to integrate R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs into a counseling session with the expectations of the school, and the counselor's ethical guidelines in two ways. First, participants in this study shared that they often ask a student about R/S when identifying support systems. Second, counselors ask students if they are comfortable with R/S practices, such as prayer before they initiate praying for the student.

Jankowski (2004) cautions counselors to take a "not-knowing stance" which is non-judgmental when helping a client explore R/S. Wolf (2004) points out the importance of a counselor maintaining a neutral stance, which requires self-awareness of how R/S affects his or her personal and professional life. There is research that suggests that providing a safe environment for an adolescent to discuss his or her own R/S

exploration and development can help that adolescent to view R/S as a source of strength (Magaldi-Dopman & Park-Taylor, 2010; Wolf, 2004).

One-third of the participants discussed ways they integrate R/S beliefs into counseling sessions and findings indicate that counselors use R/S beliefs in a variety of ways. Participant 2 described using the experience of a powerful moment in a grief group to point out God's presence, as members of the group cried and prayed together. Another counselor discussed using beliefs about God's loving and forgiving character to gently confront a student's own attitudes. Several counselors also reminded students how God views them in a given situation and, that even when they make mistakes God still loves and cares for them.

Developmental psychologists consider adolescent development to be the most sensitive period of spiritual exploration and development (Good & Willoughby, 2008). This research is important as school counselors working in a R/S setting are in a unique position to help students explore R/S in a safe, non-judgmental setting; and, if the student is interested, to help them apply their faith in very practical ways to cope with the stress of academics, and other life circumstances.

Research question #3. How do school counselors working with adolescents, grades seven through twelve, in religious school settings describe ways in which they work with students to integrate emotion regulation strategies with the student's religious/spiritual practices, teachings, and beliefs in counseling sessions?

This question is at the heart of this research study. As discussed in Chapter 4, it is through the balanced attunement of establishing a counseling relationship that is non-

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judgmental, while still being able to provide emotional and R/S guidance that effective integration occurs.

Gross and Thompson's (2007) process model of ER was used to identify which strategies counselors used, as counselors were not expected to easily identify them. As discussed in Chapter Four, being non-judgmental and providing a non-judgmental counseling environment was extremely important to participants. It is important to note that the integration of ER strategies with R/S practices, teachings or beliefs can only occur when the counselor establishes a non-judgmental relationship with the student in which he or she feels safe. Following are quotes that illustrate ways counselors balance this non-judgmental manner with emotional and R/S guidance:

> I just throw in little things, I do not put it down their throats. . .because I think when someone's faith is a relationship with God or other higher power whatever they want to choose it to be. That's personal . . . I cannot begin to tell somebody how to have a relationship with their mother, or their father, or their God . . . I can only speak about my relationship. (Participant 2, p.15, L.20-21, 26-27,29)

In this quote, the counselor reported that she models her own relationship with God, while still respecting the student's right to accept or reject such a relationship. In this example the counselor is integrating the ER strategy, cognitive change, by modeling her own behaviors with the R/S belief that faith in God involves being in relationship with Him.

Participant 11 shared how she helps a student understand the difference between guilt and shame. In response to a question from a vignette in which a female student shared with the counselor that she drank too much and went to far with a boy, this

participant shared, "I would talk about some of the guilt (you made a mistake) and shame (you are a mistake) that she might be struggling with. I would talk about her identity in Christ" (Question 2, L.3-5,8). This counselor is using the ER strategy, cognitive change, to reframe the feeling of shame that is sending the message "you are a mistake," to the more manageable feeling of guilt defined in this case as "you made a mistake." More specifically, the counselor is using the cognitive behavioral technique of, challenging, to help the student think differently about herself. The counselor follows this cognitive reframe by using a R/S belief that refocuses the student on her identity in Christ, which the counselor explains as "even in my most sinful moments, God delights in me" (p.9, L.20). Thus, the counselor provides a very non-judgmental reframe of the student's situation, and anchors the student in the R/S belief of who he or she is in Christ, even when he or she fails to meet perceived or real R/S standards.

> Participant 8 responded to a question in a journal entry in the following way:
>
> I felt the need to challenge him (gentle confrontation) with my own version of a loving God - one who forgives, and encourages us to love our neighbors, and who tells us to leave the judging to him. This was an effort to encourage the student to reflect and consider another point of view.

This counselor is combining the CBT technique, challenging a student's beliefs, thoughts, feelings, or behaviors with self-monitoring. The counselor is integrating self-monitoring with R/S beliefs about the loving, forgiving nature of God. The counselor clearly stated his goal was to gently challenge the student to reflect on his own beliefs, thoughts, feelings, or behaviors by reframing them with another view of God.

As discussed in Chapter 4, attentional deployment is the ER strategy least frequently used by participants. Attentional deployment according to Gross (2014) is, "directing attention within a given situation to influence one's emotions" (p.10). In the following quote Participant 4 demonstrates a creative way to integrate attentional deployment with R/S beliefs about the attributes of God: " If a student isn't comfortable talking about their emotions, [I] talk about Christ and talk about God and anger and justice . . .We're all human and we all feel these emotions" (p.5. L.27-29). In this quote the student is resistant to focusing on his or her emotions so the counselor skillfully makes it a bit less personal, and possibly less threatening, by integrating a R/S teaching about God's emotions. Again, it is important to note the non-judgmental relationship the counselor created so that the student could move from resistance, to being introspective, without fear or shame about his or her emotions.

Counselors working in a R/S setting must also decide with whom to integrate R/S practices, teachings or beliefs, which R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs to choose, and how often to use them. Findings indicate that counselors who choose to integrate R/S either ask students directly if they find R/S to be a support, or report relying on intuitive, gut feelings. One counselor reports that the topic of R/S has never come up in a counseling session, others report that it comes up a couple of times a week, certainly not every day.

Research question #4. What student characteristics do school counselors working with adolescents, grades seven through twelve, in religious school settings perceive to be the most important to consider when integrating emotion regulation strategies with religious/spiritual practices, and teachings?

Almost all counselors talked about the impact of adolescent development as a characteristic they consider when working with students and, many discussed how this time of development impacts a student's R/S development. Counselors such as Participant 1 shared the view that, "They may be a little more questioning [of R/S] in their senior year" (p.17, L.26). Many counselors made reference to the metaphor, planting seeds, as they described how they view their role in helping students grow spiritually. This metaphor clearly references their belief that a student's spiritual growth is developmental.

Counselors' perceptions of the differences between the way males and females process emotions had an impact on the counselor's use of ER strategies. There is some research to support that women are perceived to experience emotions, such as happiness, sadness, disgust, and fear more intensely than men (Fabes & Martin, 1991; Shield, 2003). Participant 7, a female working in an all male school shared, "They're not interested in that [emotions]" (p.16, L.14-15). Interestingly, the ER strategy this counselor reported using is attentional deployment, in which she distracts the student from his emotions.

It is important to note that not all research supports this stereotypic belief. Wager et al. (2003) found that physiological, neurological studies supporting that differences exist in how males and females processes emotion are unclear. Participant 8 a male employed in an all male school, are in stark contrast to Participant 7's view that males aren't interested in their emotions:

It's not uncommon to have a student come in who is flustered. And you

know seeming to want to cry. And I always say things like, 'Hey, it's okay

man. You can cry in here.' I always take my box of tissues, which is always

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nearby and I put it near them, so they know, hey, it is okay to cry, go for it;

a fair amount of crying happens in my office weekly. (p.8, L.14 - p.9, L.19-20)
Participant 12's quote, a female working in a co-educational school, shows her
acceptance of males who cry or are emotionally vulnerable, although observing this was a
surprise to her, " I've see guys tear up, and I think that's a good thing. . . . because they
are in touch with who they are, and they're willing to let go of themselves to be
vulnerable, but that surprised me." (p.5, L.5-6, 8-10)

There is also research to support the stereotypical belief that women
are generally more emotionally expressive than men (McRae et al., 2008). Many
counselors expressed that they observed this stereotype in their work. Participant 10, a
female working in a co-educational school summed it up in the following quote: " [girls]
love to talk about their emotions, guys maybe not so much." (p.8, L26-p.9, L.1)

As part of the research design, participants from all female, all male, and all co-
educational schools were sought for the purpose of determining if data from counselors
working in each type of school led to certain patterns. If so, that would drive theoretical
sampling in that the researcher would attempt to see if the phenomenon occurred in just
one setting or in other settings also. Interestingly, what these findings suggest is that it is
the counselor's view of the role of gender and emotional processing, not the school
setting that influenced which ER strategy counselors would use, if any.

These findings indicate that three student characteristics impact a counselor's
integration of ER strategies with R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs. The first
characteristic is the student's own intrinsic interests. For example, if the student
identifies R/S as a support system, counselors are much more likely to integrate R/S into

a counseling session. Adolescent development also plays a role in how counselors conceptualize the spiritual development of students. The metaphor, planting a seed, is one counselors used to describe how they view their work with adolescents when they are incorporating R/S into a counseling session. Finally, the characteristic of gender emerged as having an impact on which ER strategies a counselor might choose. Many counselors reported that they observe that males are less likely to emotionally express their feelings, and tend to be less emotionally vulnerable than females. This impacted the ER strategies counselors used. The ER strategy of distraction, which is in the family of attentional deployment, was used when a counselor's belief is that males aren't interested in understanding one's emotions. One counselor stated that he reminded students who were resistant to focusing on emotions, that God feels emotion. By integrating this R/S belief about an attribute of God, the counselor then attempted to help a student feel more comfortable about reflecting on his or her own emotions. Again, the non-judgmental manner of the counselor is critical so that students, specifically male students, are encouraged to express and explore their emotions.

Research question #5. How do school counselors perceive the positive outcomes of integrating and utilizing emotion regulation strategies and religious/spiritual practices, teachings, or beliefs?

Counselors discussed several positive outcomes of integrating R/S and ER strategies into counseling session ways that were helpful to a student. One counselor shared that R/S can be a coping technique that is ubiquitous, and can help a student manage his or her emotions. For example Participant 1 stated, " It's another resource . . . a support . . . always accessible (p.16, L. 4,6,8). Participant 7 shared that a R/S practice,

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teaching or belief can help a student reframe his or her situation, "[It gives them] a bigger perspective, and not to be as, uh, self-centered . . ." (p.17, L.3). Participant 13's quote illustrates the hope that R/S beliefs can provide, as well as how that hope can modulate one's emotional response, which is an ER strategy: "Even just a glimpse of what hope can look like . . . and that believing Jesus can help just a little bit to . . . to give you that reason to live" (p.21, L.5, 7-8).

Counselors also discussed the effectiveness of using R/S practices, such as prayer in counseling sessions and how that practice served to modulate the student's emotional response. Participant 15 shared:

Sometimes we can see it. . . a student will come in worked up and tense and we talk or we pray and you just can kinda see that burden's been lifted. Because they've shared it, we've prayed, we can visibly see they're in a better place. (p.29, 13-16).

Participant 15 went on to state a viewpoint shared by other counselors, "Well, you don't always know . . . if you continue to meet that student and they say that really helped . . . but sometimes we don't know" (p.29, L.7-8, 12).

Counselors described ways in which incorporating R/S provides a means help students better modulate their emotional response to a situation. Sometimes, counselors reported the effectiveness of integrating R/S with ER strategies is immediately seen, while sometimes one might not ever know the effectiveness.

Research question #6. How do school counselors perceive the negative outcomes of integrating and utilizing emotion regulation strategies and religious/spiritual practices, beliefs, and teachings?

As discussed in Chapter Four, counselors were mindful of some dangers of integrating R/S with emotion regulation. For example, Participant 8 shared that integrating R/S in a counseling session could have a negative outcome " . . . if it is an inhibitor for students expressing their emotions or thoughts" (p.35, L.1-2) and went on to state, "discomfort with the counseling environment because of perceived potential judgmentalness from me" (p.35, L.6-7).

Counselors shared other possible negative outcomes, such as rejecting one's faith, being perceived as hypocritical, and getting in the way of the student's personal spiritual development. For example, Participant 1 shared the following concern of many counselors, "I do think that in some kids it could lead to total rejection [of faith]" (p.22, L.21). Participant 2 expressed the need to have her actions be consistent with her words in counseling sessions, "If that's all I'm talking about, all words, no action, that's a danger. Because. . . kids stop listening to words after the first sentence. . . they have to see it" (p.29, L.6-8). Participant 11 shared concerns about getting in the way of a student's spiritual growth in the following quote: " If you just do this. Just recite this Bible verse or just pray this many times a day or just . . . not allowing them to develop that relationship. That would be hazardous" (p.26, L.8-12).

To summarize, counselors described concerns about integrating ER strategies with R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs that could lead to negative outcomes. The most important concern voiced by many counselors was damaging the counseling relationship by creating an environment that the student perceives as judgmental. Some counselors were also concerned about being perceived as a hypocrite by the student, and impeding the student's spiritual growth were also concerns.

Balanced Attunement. *Balanced Attunement* is a substantive theory of how counselors integrate ER strategies with R/S practice, teachings, or beliefs. According to Merriam (1998) substantive theory has as its "referent specific everyday world situations . . . and hence usefulness to practice often lacking in theories that cover more global concerns" (p. 17). This theory, illustrated in Figure 4.1, provides counselors working in a R/S school setting a framework from which to conceptualize their work.

Non-judgmental Manner	Emotional and R/S Guidance
Understanding R/S school culture	Use of ER strategies
and its impacts	Use of R/S practices,
Awareness of counselor's own beliefs	teachings, or beliefs
and experiences	

Effective Integration of ER Strategies with R/S Practices, Teachings, or Beliefs
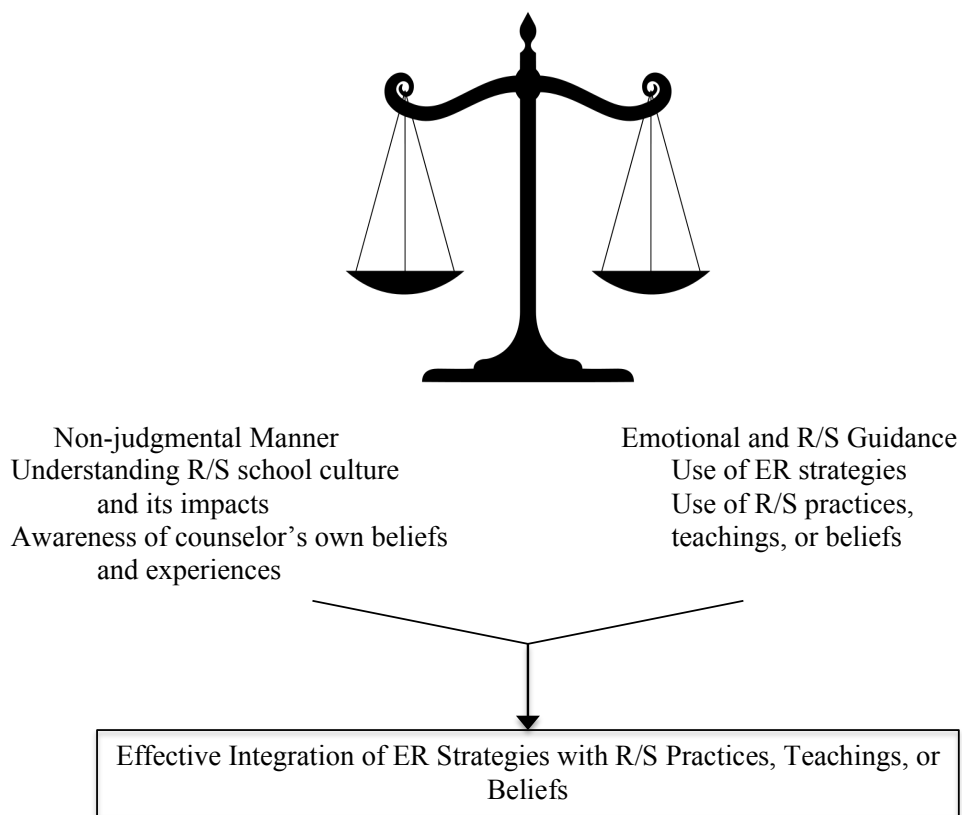
Figure 4.1 Balanced Attunement: A Theory of Integrating ER Strategies with R/S Practices, Teachings, or Beliefs

The overarching hypothesis of this theory is that for effective integration of ER to occur, the counselor must continually balance two things: (a) the need to be attuned to the

possibility of being perceived as judgmental by the student, with (b) the need to provide attuned emotional and R/S guidance. In this theory, it is hypothesized that if the counselor over emphasizes providing emotional and R/S guidance without continually attuning to where the student is emotionally and spiritually, the result is that integration will either not occur, or will not be effective. Moreover the hypothesis is, the student may leave feeling judged, and the possibility of maintaining a counseling relationship with that student is severely jeopardized.

On the other hand, this theory hypothesizes that if the counselor over emphasizes a non-judgmental manner the student may feel affirmed and heard, but not receive the emotional and R/S guidance he or she is seeking, making integration of these constructs impossible. In this case, the counselor risks having the student leave the office with the feeling the counselor agrees with, and affirms choices that are incongruent with the religious school's belief system. This theory is not suggesting that counselors should strive to integrate ER strategies with R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs in every session with every student, but when it is appropriate and if it is to occur, a continual balance and attunement of maintaining a non-judgmental manner while giving emotional and R/S guidance is essential.

This theory also hypothesizes that the R/S school culture has a significant enough impact on some students that it can affect the counselors use of ER strategies and/or R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs. Data from this study suggest that the R/S school culture may create emotional dissonance for some students who are struggling emotionally. For example, counselors talked about messages given in corporate times of worship about sexual purity that might trigger emotional dissonance. That is, the student perceives the

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R/S message as a threat to his or her identity (Jansz & Timmers, 2002). This theory explains how and why the counselor may use R/S teachings or beliefs, such as God's forgiveness of our sins, or God's love for us to lessen feelings of guilt or shame. In so doing, the counselor uses a R/S teaching to demonstrate a non-judgmental manner with the goal of creating a non-judgmental relationship. According to this theory, once the counselor senses the student feels some emotional relief the next step would be to integrate ER strategies with R/S practices, teachings to guide the student to make choices in the future that create less emotional distress. It is important to note the counselor is carefully, slowly, and gently taking small steps to provide emotional or R/S guidance, so as not to get too far ahead of the student's ability to hear and process the guidance, and risk being perceived as judgmental. If the counselor gets too far ahead of the student, this theory explains why the attempt to integrate ER strategies with R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs was not effective.

A third hypothesis of this theory is that counselors own beliefs and experiences impact their ability to be non-judgmental. Awareness of these beliefs and experiences is the first step in challenging the counselors' own belief system and demonstrating a more non-judgmental manner. For example, it is a powerful assumption when a counselor believes males don't want to express or explore their emotions. When a counselor acts on this assumption, this theory predicts the counselor will use distraction, an ER strategy in the attentional deployment family. While the strategy may be effective in relieving the student's distress, the counselor inadvertently communicates that males shouldn't explore, identify, or allow themselves to freely express their emotions. In this case, young men may not feel the freedom to cry, and may feel judged if they do so.

Moreover, the counselor has further reinforced this stereotypic belief. This theory would suggest that while the possibility of integrating ER strategies and R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs may still exist, it is likely to be less than effective because of the counselor's stereotypic judgment which would cause the student to not fully express his emotions.

Conversely, this theory also accounts for the fact that a counselor's beliefs and experiences can cause a counselor to be too non-judgmental, and thus not achieve a balance and attunement with the student that creates optimal conditions for effective integration of ER strategies and R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs to occur. For example, the belief that adolescence is a time of rebellion may cause a counselor to be too accepting of a student's behavior and therefore, not provide the emotional and R/S guidance needed.

Finally, this theory explains why some counselors are effective incorporating ER strategies with R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs as well as why some counselors never choose to do so. Counselors who do not choose to integrate these constructs feel that doing so would risk being perceived by the student as judgmental, and negatively impact the counseling relationship. Some counselors also believe that ethically it is inappropriate to initiate a conversation about R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs. In these cases, the theory suggests that the fear of being perceived as having a judgmental manner causes an imbalance with the provision of emotional or R/S guidance; therefore, integration of ER strategies and R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs obviously does not occur.

On the other hand, the data indicate that counselors who incorporate emotional and R/S guidance in sessions with all students do so with a gentle, non-judgmental manner. For example when counselors pair an ER strategy with R/S guidance, such as how prayer cognitively provides a different perspective on a situation (cognitive change) in their own lives, but follow-up with a non-judgmental comment such as, "This may, or may not be for you" effective integration occurs. This theory posits that the counseling relationship would not be jeopardized even with a student who was not interested in exploring R/S because of the balance of the non-judgmental manner used by the counselor.

Limitations

The current study is significant because it theoretically conceptualizes how counselors working in a R/S school setting effectively integrate ER strategies with R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs. This researcher was unable to find any articles in the school counseling literature exploring best practice when integrating R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs in counseling sessions. In addition, when searching the school counseling literature only five articles were found on self-regulation, none on emotion regulation. However, there are limitations to this study that should be considered when examining the findings.

First, since counselors were not expected to be able to identify which ER strategies they use, the researcher relied on the five families, or groups, of ER strategies from Gross and Thomas's (2007) process model of emotion regulation to identify strategies counselors use. Gross and Thomas's (2007) model is based on the assumption that emotions are mental representations that occur inside one's minds and that "emotion

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regulation is guided by explicit, linguistically verbalizable goals" (Koole & Veenstra, 2015, p.61). Koole and Veenstra (2015) propose that emotion and emotion regulation are also impacted by factors such as personality functions and by the dynamics of one's interactions within the environment, and are guided by more than just verbalizable goals.

It is important to note that the goal-oriented view of emotion regulation has been highly influential in shaping the understanding of emotion regulation and has been confirmed by neuroimaging studies (Koole, Van Dillen & Sheppes, 2011). For example, Botvinik, Braver, Barch, Carter, and Cohen (2001) found increased activation in the pre-frontal cortex (PFC) of the brain when one is reinterpreting the meaning of an emotional stimulus. This area of the brain is also thought to be important for other types of cognitive control. Furthermore, Ochsner and Gross (2008) found that activation of the PFC changes activity in parts of the brain associated with assessing the emotional significance of a stimulus. Findings such as these support the current thinking that ER and cognitive control processes are inextricably linked. Nonetheless, there is some evidence to support that other models of ER exist that don't require mental representation of an event (Koole, Van Dillen, & Sheppes, 2011). Although every effort was made to identify any type of ER strategy, there is the possibility that if a different model of ER had been chosen different ER strategies may have emerged from the data.

Another limitation of this study is that data collected through interviews, a vignette, and a journal prompt were all counselors' self perceptions. The researcher did not observe the counselor's practice nor were interviews conducted with students to obtain their perspective about the effectiveness of a counseling session.

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Since one goal of data collection was to conduct face-to-face interviews, all participants were drawn only from a Midwest metropolitan area. It is possible that counselors working in a rural or urban area may find differences in their role as a school counselor; thus the generalizability of this theory to a religious school in rural or urban settings is limited.

The transferability of findings of this study to non-Christian religious schools is limited as only Christian schools were represented. Ten participating schools were Catholic, and eight were Protestant – two Lutheran, and six were non-denominational Christian schools. Finally, all participants of this study are Caucasian except one who identified as Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and the majority of the schools' population is Caucasian.

Implications for Future Research

Findings from this study are the first to provide a research-based framework to explain how counselors working in a R/S school setting effectively integrate ER strategies with R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs. The theory of *Balanced Attunement* can now be studied to determine if it in fact explains how counselors integrate ER strategies with emotional and R/S guidance. Following are suggestions for future research.

First as mentioned earlier, this study is based on Gross and Thompson's (2007) process model of emotion regulation. This researcher found criticisms of this model but no systematic, comprehensive alternative models from which to identify emotion regulation strategies were found. As models emerge, it is recommended that future

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research incorporate models that specifically consider the impact of one's interaction with the environment on emotion and emotion regulation.

Second, observing actual videos of counseling sessions to analyze and classify counselors' comments as non-judgmental, or as providing emotional or R/S guidance would be a significant addition to the literature, and would further examine the validity of this theory. In addition, a self-report that provided student input would be helpful.

Third, researchers may consider interviewing school counselors who work in urban and/or rural settings to see if this theory holds true, as this study only included participants from a Midwest metropolitan area. Also, this study only included counselors working in a Christian school setting. Expanding this study to include other religious schools such as Jewish and Islamic schools is highly recommended.

Finally, since counselors working in a non-religious school setting are also encouraged to use R/S in counseling session when the topic is initiated by the student (Sink, 2004), a study similar to this research project with participants from non-religious schools would add a broader perspective to this research.

Implications for Training and Practice

The study of ER is a relatively new field that has grown exponentially in the past two decades (Gross, 2014). Counselors were not expected to know which ER strategies they use because the field is relatively new and specialized; yet findings from this study indicate that counselors are using ER strategies. It seems logical that since counselors are using these strategies that they have at least minimal training in a model that can provide a framework for these interventions. For example, findings from this study suggest that situation modification is the most frequently implemented ER strategy, followed by

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cognitive change. Attentional deployment was the least frequently strategy implemented. If counselors become more aware of Gross and Thomas's (2004) process model of emotion and the families of ER strategies, they may utilize a broader range of ER strategies more intentionally and confidently.

Second, the data from this study indicate some counselors believe that it is unethical to bring up the topic of religion, even when employed in a religious school setting. In a study by Kahle and Robbins (2004) only 42 percent of the 151 therapists in clinical practice surveyed were willing to initiate a conversation about God. Eck (2002) reported that silence in this area might be due to discomfort from both the therapists and clients. Comments from participants in this study indicate that their counselor training program emphasized the importance of remaining neutral in counseling sessions. Also, some counselors seemed to assume that bringing up the topic of R/S was the same as pushing the topic on the student. While it certainly is unethical to push one's religion on a student, perhaps counselor training would be improved by helping future counselors move beyond this thinking. Specifically, further training in how to remain neutral when discussing R/S and how to ask probing questions to elicit all possible support systems is recommended.

Finally, the power of stereotypical beliefs about how males differ from females when processing emotions, and the impact of those beliefs on possibly constricting emotional responses in males was suggested in the data. Multi-cultural classes might include recent neuroimaging research that suggests there may be differences, but that these differences are not clearly understood.

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Concluding Remarks

The scope of this study is specific to a relatively small group of counselors. Nonetheless, the importance of being aware of one's emotion – what it is, how it intersects with motivation, goal-setting, decision making, and most importantly, life-long relationships with others is powerful information. The awareness of one's emotions leads to choices about regulating those emotions, so a person can choose strategies that serve to help connect, rather than alienate those around him. R/S can then be used as one source of helping a person regulate his or her emotion by providing a larger perspective of how to give meaning to difficult situations which allows one to cope, forgive, and have a sense of inner peace. Thus, R/S becomes an inner resource to help reconcile one's relationship to God, self, others, and difficult situations, rather than an external source used to control behavior.

It seems particularly important for adolescents to understand the process of emotions and emotion regulation since we highly suspect their prefrontal cortex, important in decision-making, is not yet matured. A better understanding of the connection between emotions and goal-setting, and emotions and pleasure might help them with decision making, and/or help them process what happened when a poor decision is made. The poor decision doesn't become part of their identity – I'm a whore because I slept with my boyfriend. Instead, the adolescent can get a new understanding of how emotions serve two purposes. That is, adolescents can become aware of how subjective feelings of pleasure can sometimes be in conflict with emotions that drive high levels of autonomy, and personal growth. Understanding that the basic human desire to be loved and connected with others is hard-wired into humans can provide a framework

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for an adolescent to understand what is driving his or her behavior. They can come to understand that if they make a mistake, that mistake doesn't become who they are. This thinking ties in with Christian R/S teachings about identity and forgiveness and can be used to help adolescents experience R/S, not just learn about it.

Finally, parents need to better understand their role in helping children develop emotion regulation skills, particularly in the adolescent years when the development of these skills moves to an internal rather than external processing of emotions. There has been much attention on "helicopter parents" who tend to be over-protective. These parents tend to intervene in their child's life in ways that keep them from experiencing negative consequences, and the emotions that accompany those consequences. Some professionals believe this overly attached parenting style leads to young adults lacking resilience. There seems to be a new wave of books to help parents detach from their children. Helping parents identify where their own emotional needs for attachment to their child get in the way of healthy and age appropriate detachment would be a huge step in equipping a family system to prepare their adolescent to manage negative emotions, and learn to manage the stressors of life.

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Appendix A

Consent Form

Department of Counseling and Family Therapy

One University Blvd.
St. Louis, Missouri 63121-4499
Telephone: 314-516-5782
Fax: 314-516-5784
Email: kkarigan@wcastl.org

Informed Consent for Participation in Research Activities
School Counselors' Perceptions of Using Emotion Regulation Strategies and
Religiosity/Spirituality in Counseling Sessions

Participant_____   HSC Approval Number _____

Principal Investigator: Kathleen Karigan   PI's Phone Number 314-378-5411_____

Dear Research Participant,

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Kathleen
Karigan, M.Ed. under the supervision of Brian Hutchison, Ph.D. at the
University of Missouri-St. Louis in the department of Counseling and Family
Therapy. The purpose of this research is to learn how school counselors use
religiosity/spirituality to help adolescents identify, understand, and manage
their emotions.

Your participation will involve answering questions about a hypothetical
vignette, and responding to a journal prompt about a case describing how you
helped a student use religiosity/spirituality to manage his/her emotions.
Additionally, you will be asked to participate in one (1) 45-60 minute interview
in which your experience working with adolescents to help manage their
emotions and to incorporate religiosity/spirituality in the counseling process
will be discussed. This interview will be audio recorded. The amount of time
involved in your participation will be approximately two hours, which includes
the time spent completing questions about the vignette, the journal prompt, and
participating in an interview. I hope to collect data from a minimum of 18 and a
maximum of 30 school counselors working in the Midwest with adolescents,
grades 7-12, in religious settings.

There may be certain low-level emotional discomfort associated with this

research. This discomfort might be due to uncomfortable feelings that come from answering questions related to your religious beliefs and possible struggles with them. You might also experience uncomfortable feelings as you reflect on difficult situations with students with whom you have worked. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study. However, your participation will contribute to the knowledge about ways in which school counselors working with adolescents in religious settings integrate emotion regulation and religiosity/spirituality in counseling sessions.

Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this research study or to withdraw your consent at any time. You may choose not to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. You will NOT be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or to withdraw.

By agreeing to participate, you understand and agree that your data may be shared with other researchers and educators in the form of presentations and/or publications. In all cases, your identity, the identity of your school, as well as the identity of your students will not be revealed. If you discuss a particular student, you will be asked to use a pseudo-name so you are the only one aware of the student's identity. In rare instances, a researcher's study must undergo an audit or program evaluation by an oversight agency (such as the Office for Human Research Protection). That agency would be required to maintain the confidentiality of your data. In addition, all data will be stored on a password-protected computer and/or in a locked office. When the study is completed, all written and electronic information will be destroyed.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may email Kathleen Karigan, M.Ed at kkarigan@wcastl.org. You may also ask questions or state concerns regarding your rights as a research participant to the Office of Research Administration, at 314-516-5897.

I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I will also be given a copy of this consent form for my records. I consent to my participation in the research described above.

Participant's Signature	Date	Participant's Printed Name

Signature of Investigator or Designee	Date	Investigator/Designee Printed Name

Department of Counseling and Family Therapy

One University Blvd.
St. Louis, Missouri 63121-4499
Telephone: 314-516-5782
Fax: 314-516-5784
Email: kkarigan@wcastl.org

Dear Administrator,

The counselor(s) in your school has been invited to participate in a research study conducted by Kathleen Karigan, M.Ed. under the supervision of Brian Hutchison, Ph.D. at the University of Missouri-St. Louis in the department of Counseling and Family Therapy. The purpose of this research is to learn how school counselors use religiosity/spirituality to help adolescents identify, understand, and manage their emotions.

The counselor(s) will spend approximately two hours participating in this research which includes a written response to questions about a vignette, a journal reflection of a student with whom they have worked with, and participating in a 45-60 minute audio taped interview. I hope to collect data from a minimum of 18 and a maximum of 30 school counselors working in the Midwest with adolescents, grades 7-12, in religious settings.

The counselor's participation is voluntary and (s)/he may choose not to participate in this research study or to withdraw consent at any time. Your counselor may choose not to answer any questions that (s)/he is not comfortable responding to. Your counselor will NOT be penalized in any way should (s)/he choose not to participate or to withdraw.

Data collected from the counselor(s) may be shared with other researchers and educators in the form of presentations and/or publications. In all cases, the counselor's identity, the identity of your school, as well as the identity of your students will not be revealed. The counselor has been asked to use a pseudo-name if any particular student is discussed. In rare instances, a researcher's study must undergo an audit or program evaluation by an oversight agency (such as the Office for Human Research Protection). That agency would be required to maintain the confidentiality of your data. In addition, all data will be stored on a password-protected computer and/or in a locked office. When the study is completed, all written and electronic information will be destroyed.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may email Kathleen Karigan, M.Ed. at kkarigan@wcastl.org.

I have read this approval form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I will also be given a copy of this approval form for my records. I give my approval for the counselor(s) in my school to participate in the research described above.

Principal's Signature	Date	Principal's Printed Name

Signature of Investigator or Designee	Date	Investigator/Designee Printed Name

Interview Questions

1. Describe a typical day when working with students.

2. What counseling techniques do you use when a student comes in your office and is clearly distressed (i.e., anxious, crying, angry)?

3. How do you help students understand and control their emotions?
   3B Follow up: Is that similar to how the techniques you use to understand and process your own emotions?

4. How do you combine or integrate religious/spiritual practices, teachings, and beliefs with other counseling techniques?

5. What is your perception of how school wide prayer, mass, etc. impacts what you do in a counseling session?

6. When you use R/S practices, teachings, beliefs with a student, what do you think the impact of that intervention might be?

7. How do you determine, (pray, etc) what do you specifically observe, that lets you know that intervention is helpful/not helpful?   How often do you use that intervention?

8. What do you think are the positive outcomes of integrating R/S into your counseling sessions?

9. What do you think could be the negative outcomes of integrating R/S into your counseling sessions?

Journal Prompt

Think of a student you are working with or have worked with in the past. Using a

pseudo-name, please reflect on that student and answer the following questions:

1. Briefly describe why the student was referred to you or came to seek your
    help.

2. What did you perceive the problematic emotion(s) to be with which the student
    was struggling?

3. Describe any religious/spiritual practices, teachings, or beliefs that you
    utilized, if any.

4. Describe ways in which you connected the emotion(s) the student was
    experiencing with and religious/spiritual practices, teachings or beliefs.

VIGNETTE

Elizabeth is a senior in your school with whom you have worked in the past about typical high school struggles such as managing time and workload and the anxiety that creates. Because of your prior work with Elizabeth, you know she identifies herself as a Christian. She comes into your office in tears, crying so hard it takes several minutes for her to gain enough composure to speak. Finally, she shares that over the weekend she got drunk and went too far sexually with a boy she didn't know very well. Other students know about the incident and are calling her derogatory names. She shares she doesn't know who she is anymore or what she believes.

Please answer the following questions:

1. What are some perceived hypothesis that you believe might contribute to Elizabeth's underlying problem?

2. Explain your plan for how you would begin to intervene with this student. Please include how you would work with the student to understand and manage her emotions and how you might help Elizabeth spiritually wrestle with her problem.

CATEGORY 1	SUBCATEGORY	PROPERTY	SUBPROPERTY	DIMENSIONS	EXAMPLES
Religious/Spiritual School Culture and Its Impacts	1. Religious/spiritual school culture as described by school counselors	R/S Background of students beliefs		Same religion as the school / Different	IV 1 p.8 L. 13-14 ". . .just because we are in a Christian school, doesn't necessarily mean that everyone is a believer the way your school [believes]." IV 1 p. 23 L. 16-18 "[some girls] are Baptist." IV 5 p.14 L. 14 "Most of them are Catholic. . ." IV 6 p.28 L. 16 "We have a Muslim student here." IV 8 p.15 L. 4 & 6 "We have a couple of Jewish students . . . we have a couple of Muslim students."
		Frequency of corporate worship		Daily / monthly	IV 9 p. 8 L. 32 "There's also mass on First Fridays and other special events.

					We don't have mass everyday."
					IV10 p. 15 L.14-15 ". . .every Wednesday is chapel where students will . . .have a time of worship and a sermon."
		Frequency of corporate or small group devotions or prayer		Every class period / daily	IV 2 p.5 L. 6-10, 27-28, 29-32-p.6 L.1-2 ". . . we do . . .what we call, "The Examen" . . . which is the examination of conscious. How has my morning been? . . . How have I responded as God would want me to? What could I have done better?" p.5 L. 27-28 "The Examine is really a scripted way of going through your day. We tweak it to make it adolescent friendly. L.29-32 So its basically where have I seen God today? . . .

					What could I have done better?. . .usually people do the Examen in the evening to reflect on their whole day. We started doing it in the middle of the day so kids can process how the morning was and what was their goal?. . .What do I want to do different for the afternoon? "
					IV 9 p.8 L. 30-31 "We have their prayer every morning and every afternoon over the PA. classes pray before each class."
	2. Impact of R/S school culture as perceived by the counselor	Overall Feel of the School		Authoritarian / Authoritative	IV 5 p.20 L.2 "There is a very, traditional, kind of rigid [feel]."
					Iv 11 p.15 L. 23, 28-29 "Christian schools are wonderful and awful at the same time because they

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					think they have to act in a certain way. L. 28-29 Can I still be a Christian and make that mistake?"
					IV 14 p.18 L.10, 13 "I think there is a lot of compassion here. We're really here to care about the whole child."
		Impact of the R/S culture on student-to-student relationships		Caring, nonjudgmental / Not caring, judgmental	IV 3 p.23 L. 1 [Talking about a student whose mother died] He had over 90 fellow freshman students send him text messages."
					IV 4 p.23 L. 27-28 " . .they can be very judging of their peers. . ."
					IV 8 p.26 L. 12-13 "And uh, at our school there is kind of an emphasis on brotherhood and being brotherly to

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					each other.
		Impact of R/S culture on student-teacher relationships		Relationships are close, supportive, non-judgmental / Distant and/or judgmental	IV 5 p.11 L. 16, 10,24 ". . .one of our teachers is very close to this girl. . .This teacher disclosed incredible stuff about her early life. L. 24 It was fabulous." IV 18 p.17 L. 2-5, L.10- [Talking about a new student to the school] . . . he was making it pretty clear that he wasn't wanting to cooperate or be there or have anything to do with God while he was there . . . he has slowly softened, he has sought out his teacher. He has slowly asked questions and began to let the walls down . . . (L.10- 14) "There's a great change in the way he

					approaches things. There's a great change in the way he wants to succeed and learn . . . I can't say exactly where he is with God or where he is with his feelings on Christians as a whole but being in a faith environment for two years, I've seen softening . . . (L.16)I attribute it to some long suffering teachers . . . (L.21, 23-25) . . . they were amazing . . . they really just put down some boundaries and everytime he pushed the line, they held it, and the met him with love . . . (L29-30) . . .he got relationships out of it . . . he didn't really want it, but that's what they were going to give him."
		Students' feelings		Safe / Not safe	IV 14 p. 11 L. 24-25

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		of safety			". . . most of our students I think feel this is-this is a safe place to come. IV 12 p.26 L.16 ". . .there are no fist fights here."
		Emotional Dissonance in a subset of students		Triggers visits to the counseling office / doesn't	IV 10 p.15 L. 21-22 ". . .something going on in Bible class, or something that's been talked about in chapel can stir up things and students come in and want to talk." IV 14 p. 8 L. 25 "Not really." [Do you see students coming to your office because of a message heard in Mass, Theology?"] IV 16 p.14 L. 6-9 " I certainly don't think it's coincidental but one of the very things that they come in to talk about was something that was

					either presented or talked about in chapel that very day."
		Counselors' perceptions of over-protection within the student body		Sheltered / Exposed to the real world	IV 1 p. 17 L. 21-22, 24 "They're still kind of, um, pro, protected and in a bubble in a way where they just like, you know, love their teachers and. . . (L.24) you know, listen to everything they say and kind of are still soaking it in." IV 5 p. 6 L. 23-24 "So, you have some kids who come in . . .lacking in experience around making decisions for themselves."
	Impact of the R/S culture on counselors	Counselors' chooses to integrate religious spiritual practice, teachings or beliefs into counseling		Strongly agree / Strongly disagree	IV 1 p.6 L. 13-18 "I try to go by more of the strict counseling code. . ." IV 2 p.15 L. 12-14 ".

		sessions			. .well, let me tell you what worked. . .why God works for me. And I would just say 'You know what, it might not be for you. . .'"
					IV 2 p.15 L. 20-21 "I just throw in little things, I do not put it down their throats. .
					IV4 p.19 L. 10-11,12,14 ". . .we definitely want to create a culture that is supportive and encouraging and is a faith-oriented culture that points to God in everything we do [in the counseling office]."
					IV 4 p. 30 L. 7-10,12,14,15 ". . .I think that's what we [counselors] try to do in a religious setting. . .going back to we're made in the image of God. . .I

					have attributes of God's relationship towards people. . .His compassion, but I'm broken. .. it's really identifying the harm and how that's harming more."
		Choice to display religious artifacts in their offices		Displays artifacts / doesn't	IV 3 p.26 L.5-8 ". . .I have a statue of Mary there. I have a crucifix. I think they notice those things. I don't think they really bring it out, but I think they notice." IV 6. P.20 L. 19,21,23 I have pictures of things of prayer cards. . .I have St. Pope John Paul, Saint Francis. . .mother Theresa. . .different quotes." IV 11 p.5 L.2-3 Yes, I have my favorite scripture over there [points to a frame on bookcase] and a

					Bible on my table.
		Attitude toward job		A calling / a career	IV 2 p.3L.19,21 ". . .it's not a job to me, it has to be a vocation. And it's a calling." IV 6 p.8 L.15-16". . .and so I was called to this position, actually."
	4. Impact of the R/S culture on the practice of school counseling	Establishing the counseling relationship		Safe, non-judgmental / Not safe, judgmental	IV 1 p. 7 L. 7, 15-16 "I try to tread lightly. . . First and foremost I want to have a connection with the student..." IV 1 p. 9 L. 9-10 "So I think just to let them know that they can come in here and that, you know, it's safe . . ." IV 3, p15, L. 4 "They feel safe, they know they can come see me anytime they want. . ." IV 6 p. 26 L. 15 "I try

					to create a nonjudgmental atmosphere in here… because that's what the girls say they want." IV 8 p.7 L. 20-22 ". . .I go for comfort and non-judgmentalness, very important to me because it it's such a challenge to have teenagers trust." IV 8 p. 35 L. 23,25 "You know the student might think I can't share that here . . . with the school because I could get expelled."
		Counselors sense a tension between R/S messages the student receives from the home, school, church		Counselors sense this tension / don't	IV 1 p.27 L. 9-11 "There were conflicting feelings on, the student and the school were in agreement, it was the parents who were the

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| | | | | | conflicting and so, the outcome was not good." P.28 L. 11-12 ". . . religious beliefs definitely played into [the student's decision]

IV 6 p. 22 L. 24-27 "...she struggled with spirituality because of some of the things she was dealing with in her family. . . and how they[her family] were not supporting what their [R/S] values were in her mind."

IV 10 p.18 L. 5-8 ". . .and that's very tricky because I don't want to put my opinions on any of the students. And then they go home and say [name] said this, or that. . .and then we've got a problem on our |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| | | | | | hands. L.15-17, 19. I would say 'Okay tell me what your church says. . or what your parents say about that. . .'' |
| | | | | | |

CATEGORY 2	SUBCATEGORY	PROPERTY	SUB-PROPERTY	DIMENSIONS	EXAMPLES
Emotion Regulation Strategies	1. Ways counselors perceive modifying a situation's emotional impact on students	Identifying R/S practices, teachings or beliefs as a support system for students		Counselors perceive use of identifying R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs as a way to modify a situation's emotional impact on students / don't	IV 3 p.26 L.11- 17 "I ask my guys sometimes, 'Do you pray very often?'…even? IV 6 p.25 L. 21-22 "And sometimes

					it's when I'm seeking out their support systems . . . L. 23 So I'll say, okay. . . p. 26 L. 2 Tell me what your spiritual life is like." IV 7. p. 5 L. 5 [In response to do you use R/S or seek out if the student uses it in counseling sessions?] "I really don't."
		Counselors perceive identification of family, peers, or other adults		Perceive use of identifying family, peers, or other adults as a support system / don't	IV 1 p.10 L. 11,15 "Is there anybody here that . . .is also aware of this? ". . .you're looking for support systems and they usually don't want it to be another adult." Interview 6 p.15 L. 23-24 "What systems are

					in place that maybe aren't supportive . .
		Counselors perceive making referrals to other support personnel in the school		Perceive making referrals to other support personnel in the school / don't	IV 5 p.16 L. 14-15 "I thing referral to clergy on those matters of crisis of faith." IV 8 p.16 L.1-2 ". . . and the priest and I would talk and there would be at times. . .an in-house referral." IV 12 p.8 L. 22,24 [In response to how many students do you see for in-depth counseling] . . . probably only about ten because we have a full-time staff mental health counselor."
		Counselors perceive making referrals outside the school		Perceive making referrals to outside agencies for	IV 6 p.14 L. 5-8 ". . .is it something that they have an

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| | | as a way to modify a situation's emotional impact on a student | | student's support / don't | outside counselor or do we need to connect with that person and that tends to be a lot quicker than they've never seen a counselor [outside of school] before and we have to get that ball rolling."

IV 11 p.20 L. 5 ". . .usually I set them up with help professionally. . ."

IV 17 p.8 L. 7-9 ". . .is this something as a school counselor I'm capable of addressing or is this something that needs to be referred out for more of a clinical consult to deal with?" |

		Counselors perceive communication with a student's parents, teachers and/or administration, nurse as a way to modify a situation's emotional impact on students		Perceive communicating with a student's parents, teachers and/or administration, nurse as a way to modify a situation's emotional impact on students / don't	IV 11 p. 19 L. 25 ". . .I also involve the nurse." IV 13 p.2 L. 31-33 "That was another part of my day, sending out an email to teachers [about a student that had been hospitalized]. . ."
		Counselors perceive choice making as a way to modify a situation's emotional impact on a student		Perceive use of choice making / don't	IV 2 p. 21 L. 6-7 "What would you need today to . . . get something off your plate to make you feel better?" L. 14 " And if you come in and you can't do it and we just need to talk, then that's what we do." IV 6 p.13 L. 25 "So any choice that I can . . . I let them make. I feel like at

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					this point they're feeling out of control and that's one way to help them to feel like I [the student] can get a little bit back. . ."
					IV 14 p.19 L.18-19 "We've talked and talked and talked and what we decided was that you're going to drop this class, add this class and that's it. There was almost a sense of relief [in the student." p.19 L. 30-31 "Because it allowed her to say Mrs. [name] said I have to do this, so it allowed her, it took it off her plate."
	2. Counselors' perceptions of ways they reframe a students beliefs, thoughts, feelings, or behaviors	Counselors perceive the use of problem-solving as a way to change a students beliefs, thoughts, feelings, or		Counselors perceive the use of problem-solving /don't	IV 1 p.13 L. 11-12,16 ". . .they seem to like to journal L.!6 and write it down in black and white. .

		behaviors			.L.20 write down everything that's running through your head. . .L.24. . . what's worst. p.14L 1-3. . .let's not make this anymore overwhelming than it has to be. Let's just deal with this thing."
					IV 2 p. 21 L.26-29 "I'm not on a fishing expedition to get somebody to break down and to fall apart, I want them to be able to figure it out. . . how I deal with when I'm hurt is different than how I deal with when I'm frustrated or sad."
		Counselors perceive the use of modeling of others' behaviors		Perceive use of modeling others' behaviors / don't	IV 2 p.9 L. 30-32 ". . .your words never meant anything until we [a group of students who felt

| | | | | | disenfranchised]. . .felt that you understood where we were coming from. . .L.34-35 It took a tragedy for them to see the actions [of the faculty attending a student's funeral]. So the words didn't mean anything all this time. But the actions meant everything

IV 10 p.7 L 26 ". . .we have a ton of teachers that are that way [willing to model what the gospel looks like in their lives.]" |
| | | | Counselors perceive modeling of well known R/S people's behaviors | Counselors perceive modeling well known R/S behaviors / don't | Participant 1 JP Q. 3 L. 1-3 "She verbalized struggling with forgiveness of people no longer or peripherally a part of her life. |

					Ultimately, we talked about Mother Theresa and her life philosophy." IV 6 p.21 L. 13-15 Talking about an email sent to teachers & students "…and it was about, you know, putting Jesus as the focus and all other things will fall in place no matter what you're dealing with."
		Counselors perceive the use of challenging a student as a way to reframe a student's beliefs, thoughts, feelings, or behavior		Counselor's perceive use of challenging / don't	IV 1 p. 14 L. 2,4,9, "So what have you done in the past? (L.4) . . . and how's that working for you? . . . (L.9) what can you do different?" IV 2 p.19 L. 30-31 "[some of the students] "were saying to me we have a false sense

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					of pride in our culture. I said, 'Okay, . . .do I have permission to call you on that if I'm seeing it?"
					IV 12 p.6 L. 12 ". . .how's that working for you?"
		Counselors perceive use of their own modeling of behaviors as a way to reframe a student's beliefs, thoughts, feelings, or behaviors			IV 8 p.28 L. 10-11 "I really try to be gentle.. .gentleness is probably number one." IV 8 p. 28 L. 12 "And I also laugh a lot with students." IV 8 p.25 L. 1-2,6 "I have conceptualized my role kind of like a good shepherd.. . .modeling for them in my interactions with them. . ." IV 8 p. 25 L. 10-14 "I think about the beatitudes a lot. . .you know, blessed

					are the peacemakers. . . and I try to model those.
		Counselors perceive the use of self-monitoring/ reflecting as a way to change a student's beliefs, thoughts, feelings, or behaviors		Counselors perceive use of self-monitoring/reflecting / don't	IV 9 p.8 L. 7 - 10 ". . . we make a little stop sign to keep in their notebook and they have to re-open it up to remind themselves just to stop and think and try to get a handle on what is really going on and what did they really want from the situation." IV 14 p.10 L.18 "We'll be talking about ideas and I'll say, **. . .**'Reflect on it. Journal on it."
	3. Counselors' perception of ways they perceive directly helping a student regulate emotional response	Counselors perceive use of physiological techniques to directly help students		Counselors perceive using physiological techniques / don't	IV 1 p. 9 L. 13-14, 15, 17 ". . . with calming things, like let's just do some deep breaths. . . (L. 15)"empty your mind for a minute

| | | | | | and just you know, physically . . . (L. 17) calm down.

IV 7 p.31 L. 7 "So physically move them at a slower pace."
IV 7 p.31 . . . and then they usually go to the rocking chair."
IV 7 p. 31 L. 11, 13,15-16 "I usually have candy, . . . something they can do . . . or we'll go into the café and get a drink of water."

IV 9 p. 16 L. 15 "You have to go slowly with it" [the finger maze] |
| | | Counselors' perceptions of use of cognitive or | | Counselors perceive using cognitive or behaviorally based | IV 1 p.9, L.16 " . . . empty their minds for a minute |

		behaviorally based techniques		techniques / don't	p.13, L.20,24 p. "what's the worst . . .let's not make this any more overwhelming than it has to be IV 9 p. 16 L. 2-3 [talk about using a finger maze] ". . .they can focus and go through the finger maze when their mind is racing and they can't calm down."
	4. Counselors' perceptions of ways to help focus or distract students from emotions	Counselors perceive they focus a student on his/her emotions		Counselors focus students on emotions / Don't	IV 2 p.18 L.17-20, L. 23-24, L. 28-30 "So I always tell them,. . . give me something besides angry. And they'll say, 'Well, I'm frustrated.' I'm like, 'You know what, if there was a wedding angry and frustrated would be invited, they're related. If I really get past

					anger, it's either I'm hurt, I'm sad by it, or disappointed. . ." L.28-30"Well, yeah I'm hurt, I show it through anger but I'm hurt . . . so let's get anger off the table and tell me what's behind that.
					IV 6 p.18 L. 10-11 ". . .tell me what it feels like in your body . . . in your head, just getting them to verbalize whatever it is . . ."
					IV 7 p. 3 L 23. "I would have to say I probably don't."p.4 L.3 . . .I don't know that they care about that too much
		Counselors perceive they distract a student from his/her emotions		Counselors perceive they distract a student from his or her emotions/don't	IV 7 p.31 L. 2-5 "That's when you have to calm them, talk about [baseball] . . .to

					distract." p. 31 L. 11, 13,15-16 "I usually have candy, . . . something they can do . . . or we'll go into the café and get a drink of water." IV 12 p.4 L. 14-15 "I give them space, a change of venue. . .sometimes we go on walks."

CATEGORY 3	SUBCATEGORY	PROPERTY	SUBPROPERTY	DIMENSIONS	EXAMPLES
Integrating religious/spiritual practices, teachings, or beliefs into counseling sessions	1. Choices counselors perceive making	How counselors discern which students to integrate R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs		Ask / intuitive or spiritual feeling	Participant 9 JP Q 3 L.4-5 "If during counseling sessions this student would mention her own

as perceived by counselors		with			spiritual/religious beliefs, I would try to help her explore how to utilize them as coping strategies." IV 10 p.7 L. 16 ". . .I think it's sort of a gut thing. . .[knowing when to pursue a conversation of R/S]"
		Frequency of integrating R/S practices, teachings, or beliefs		Daily / Never	IV 8 p.37 L.11-12 ". . .in my day-to-day interactions with students, very often religion doesn't come up at all." IV 8 p.38 L. 19-21 ". . . certainly every week. But not every day necessarily." IV 9 p.9 L.18-19 . "I was trying to think if it had ever really come up in a counseling session where a student

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					wanted to pray and it really hasn't ever. It just hasn't happened." IV 10 p.21 L. 20 ". . .probably a couple times a week maybe. [in response to about how often does R/S come up in a counseling session." IV 11 p.14 L.23 ". . .prayer almost all the time [in response to what R/S practices, teachings or beliefs do you use?]
	2. Ways counselors integrate R/S practices, teachings or beliefs	Ways counselors integrate teachings		A source of guidance / comfort	IV 2 p.27 L.2 ". . .let's find a Psalm that might help." IV 4 p.20 L. 15 ". . .we talk about Matthew 5…" IV 5 p.14 L. 8-9 ". . .the whole understanding of

| | | | | | what forgiveness is and how powerful that is as part of our faith because none of us would really be able to do anything if we didn't live in forgiveness. "

IV 12 p.18 L. 21 "Or sometimes I use Bible passages – Philippians 4:6 . . .don't be anxious. . ."
IV 16 p.15 L. 7,9 "I would say to big ones [biblical principles] would be the idea of forgiveness. . ." L.9 "and grace." |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Ways counselors integrate practices | | As a means of seeking wisdom, guidance, comfort / As a means of staying close with God | IV 2 p. 2 L. 17-20 "We start with a prayer, we pray for people, kind of do petitions so to speak, at the end and close that way."[talking about |

					a grief group] IV 4 p.20 L. 11-12 "Definitely prayer, especially when we're talking about something that students are struggling with." IV 4 p.21 L. 23-24 ". . .I encourage students to meditate, too." JP Q 3 Participant 5 "We utilized. . . meditation on Christian worship music [to help with anxiety]." Participant 5 JP Q. 3. "The sacrament of confession. . .
		Ways counselors integrate beliefs			IV 2 p.11 L. 19-20 "And that's what I tell them. And this is God, all of us sitting in this room crying together, eating together. . .L. 22-23 praying

					together, and crying together and being angry together, that is God right here."
					IV 4 p.11 L. 13, 15 ". . .help them explore what does it mean to be a Christian. . .trying to ask, 'How is Christ impacting your life?
					IV4 p.9 L. 5-12 "I try to be wise in terms of . . . having a Biblical worldview. . .to challenge a kid to think through not what would Jesus do necessarily . . .but I would ask them 'If Jesus were sitting next to you, what would he say to you?' They may say, 'He's frustrated with me. . .I would say, 'No, I think he would say he loves

					you, he cares for you. It's somewhat of a transference to say this is what Jesus would say. . ." IV 4 p.20 L. 20-23 "Christ is calling us to pray for those people [enemies], to have a broader perspective of a student instead of defining their so-called enemy by one action."
					Participant 8 Journal Prompt #3 L. 3-7 [Talking about a student who felt superior to his peers] "I felt the need to challenge him (gentle confrontational) with my own version of a loving God – one who forgives and encourages us to love our neighbors

					and who tells us judging to leave the judging to him. . . This was an effort to encourage the student to reflect and consider another point of view."
					IV 10 p.11 L. 18 "Guilt is I am a mistake; shame is I did something wrong . . . (L. 22,24) Shame is unhelpful . . .and not from God. . ."L. . . .I think that could really be freeing for a lot of our students and I talk to them about that." Participant 10 JP Q3 L. 1-2 "God's love, our identity being in Christ,
	Counselors' perceptions of the pitfalls of integrating R/S			Pushes students away from faith / feels judged	IV 2 p. 28 L. 24-25 "I think a danger would be if I was trying to push my

	practices, teachings, or beliefs				faith or my beliefs on a kid." IV 2 p.30 L. 9-10 ". . . if you preach, if you judge, those are huge dangers." IV 7 p.23 L. 14-17 "I always have tried to feel in this role as a counselor, I've always wanted to be very neutral. . .just accepting and nonthreatening." IV 7 p.25 L. 3-4 "I think they may think that I would be judgmental of them.. .L.15 . . .that's the last thing a counselor wants to be is judgmental." IV 7 . p. 25 L. 2-3, 5 I think they might feel that they're being preached to . . .one more time."

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CATEGORY 4	SUBCATEGORY	PROPERTY	SUBPROPERTY	DIMENSIONS	EXAMPLES
Counselors' Beliefs and Experiences that Impact Their Use of Strategies and Techniques	Beliefs about adolescent development	Identity formation		Impacts counselors perceptions / doesn't	IV 4 p.12,L.1-2 "especially with 13-14 year olds, they . . . they're always on stage all the time . . . L.9-10 If they're popular or not popular they have the perspective of "they [everyone else] have it better than me . . . some of it's just being egocentric. . .

IV 6 p. 34 L. 23-24 ". . . at this stage of adolescent development, the look, they're |

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					focused on themselves but they're looking outside themselves to, um measure themselves."
					IV 7 p.7 L. 6-12 . . .that's all tied to the basic kind of developmental stuff where you have . . . that early adolescence, by the time they're juniors. . .it's different . . .so the way you talk to kids change . . .
		Uneven Development		Impacts counselors perceptions / doesn't	IV 6 P. 19 L. 10-11 ". . .there could be a very immature sophomore and then a very mature freshman."
					IV 12 P.8 L.9, 11 "They're kind of naïve . . .sometimes they just don't think ahead.
		Rebellion /		Impacts counselors	IV 1 p. 22 L. 22 ". .

		Exploration		perceptions / doesn't	.a part of adolescence is rebellion" IV 9 p.10 L. 28-30 ". . . teenagers are going to question, are going to *rebe*l. . . It doesn't matter where they are. They're going to do that. It goes with the territory." IV 7 p.22 L. 12-13 ". . . that's not uncommon in this age, or or that, that time of *exploration* in those high school and college years."
		Spiritual development		Impacts counselors perceptions / doesn't	IV 2 p. 16 L. 15 ". . . you've got to plant the seeds." p. 27 L. 26-27 "I think this is an age of struggling. . . an age of questions about faith."

					Iv 6 p. 25 L. 8 ". . .that doesn't mean I don't plant a seed." p.27 L. 11-13 ". . .I think it, helps girls who have those seeds already planted to help them to be further nurtured . . . and the ones that don't have it, they consider it."
	Gender and emotion	Counselor perceives differences in genders emotional expression.		Perceive differences / don't	IV 2 p. 10 L. 7-8 ". . . girls will tell you stuff for days and days and days. And boys, "How's your day? Fine." L. 10 "So it's different with boys." IV 7 p. 28 L 4-8 "They [boys] don't know how to manage themselves. They try to keep things in more, and then, then it kind of

					boils and then they don't know what to do so they, that's kind of where the pacing starts and kind of the almost the um hyperventilating kind of the heavy breathing or the um they just the, the door slamming if there is any, or they want to punch something. p. 28 L. 10, "They get more aggressive." p.28 L. 12-14 "They don't quite know how to calm themselves or how to even explain what's happening to them. p. 30 L. 12-14 ". . . so they are either so angry they don't know what to do or they are so overwhelmed they

| | | | | | can't even get the words out." (F)

IV 8 p.8 L. 14, 16,18-19, 21-23 Talking about what it looks like when a male comes in upset…
". . .it's not uncommon to have a student come in who is flustered. (L16) And you know seeming to want to cry. . .(L18) And I always say things like, "Hey, it's okay man. You can cry in here. Unless you tell anybody about it, nobody needs to know."(L21) I always take my box of tissues, which is always nearby and I put it near them, so they know, hey, it is okay to cry, go for it." |

					p.9 L. 19-20 ". . .a fair amount of crying happens in my office weekly." IV 18 p.6 L. 18-19 ". . .especially with the girls, I have a lot of drama building especially in the spring time.
	Counselor's style is similar to techniques used in counseling sessions.			Similar / Not similar	IV 2 p.7. L. 15-18 " . . . I'm a very upbeat positive person. I choose to not dwell on negative things. . . I always tell kids I have an attitude of gratitude. L. 19-20 Cause in all the hub of ugliness, there's something I have to be grateful for." IV 10 p.11 L. 1-3 ". . . I'm a verbal processor, I need to speak what I'm feeling, I have a supportive family

					and friends, I . . . for me . . . talking it through (L. 5) is the best way to . . . get through that and then having someone remind me of the gospel." IV 12 p. 7. L. 14 Affirms she uses journaling to process her emotions. IV 13 p.7 L. 25-26 ". . .Talking to other people and just getting things out. Some of it's in prayer."