

**Harnessing Relational Intimacy to Reduce Pornography Use Among Christian Singles: A  
Practitioners Guide**

Brandon Waggoner

Liberty University

### Abstract

This paper will explore my personal philosophy of leadership. Similar to a philosophy of counseling and teaching, leadership must also have a well thought out philosophy to craft and enact. The underlying foundation is Biblical and draws from Jesus' example of servant leadership. By being able to craft a vision for current and future leadership, an evaluative method can begin to know the impact that my leadership has now and will have in the future. Finally, I will craft a three step action plan to work through in order to ensure that I am consistently and intentionally being a leader and advocate for counselor education.

## **Harnessing Relational Intimacy to Reduce Pornography Use Among Christian Singles: A Practitioners Guide**

For the last several years there has been an increase in the use of internet pornography within the United States. It is reported that nearly one in three Americans view internet pornography (IP) at least once a month (Barna Group, 2016). The growth itself would not be a concern for society at large without the many negative personal and social impacts to functioning that IP has been shown to cause (Grubbs, Stauner, Exline, Pargament, & Lindberg, 2015). Specifically, within the population of Christian singles, the use of internet pornography is of particular concern. These individuals are prone to show high levels of moral incongruence they possess (Grubbs & Perry, 2017). Their spiritual beliefs speak directly against the use of these sexually explicit images and acts, yet they are drawn to them in a perceived addiction. In addition, a single individual (not married or romantically involved), their potential for isolation and loneliness can be increased through pornography use (White & Kimball, 2009).

Practicing Christians make up a large portion of the population in the United States. One in four individuals consider themselves a practicing Christian (Barna Group, 2016). These are individuals who call themselves Christian, hold their faith as a major part of their lives, and attend church at least once a month. Thus, with the prevalence of internet pornography use and the large number of individuals identifying as Christian, the need is great to understand this population and the specific issues that they face. The competencies outlined by the Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling (ASERVIC) give some guidance into working with people of faith to integrate their spirituality into the counseling session. Utilizing the principle of developing intimate relationships from the Christian faith, a counselor can both

integrate a Christian's beliefs and potentially see the reduction in internet pornography use that is desired by the client. The following will detail the problem as found in the literature, detail the needs of this population, lay out a specific treatment plan to meet those needs, and provide specific examples through a case study.

### **A Review of the Literature**

While there is a good amount of research on problematic internet pornography use among individuals in the United States (Braun-Courville & Rojas, 2009; Owens, Behun, Manning, & Reid, 2012), there is little research on specifically addressing the reduction in use by Christian singles. These individuals are often overlooked in their needs perhaps due to lack of understanding of the moral incongruence they face considering their perceived addiction. Moral incongruence is the term used to describe the dilemma a person faces when their behaviors do not align with their closely held spiritual beliefs. They want to stop but continue to use. Adding to the confusion is the mixed messages there are within the literature as well. Some still argue for positive use of internet pornography (Watson & Smith, 2012). These mixed messages and lack of spiritual integration highlights the need for counselors to understand specific ways to help single Christians who are seeking help to stop a behavior they believe is counter to their faith.

An evaluation of this population will begin with the unique challenges of a single individual. For the sake of this discussion, a single individual will include any person not married or currently in a romantic relationship. Albright (2008) found that those who reported being married were 20% less likely to consume pornography than singles. However, there is confounding research to suggest that pornography use does not significantly relate to participants' relational stage (Emmers-Sommer, Hertlein, & Kennedy, 2013; Peter &

Valkenburg, 2011). Still, the truth remains that these individuals are more prone to isolation and loneliness due to their lack of strong attachments in healthy relationships (Gilliland et al., 2015). Thus, it can be argued that increasing intimacy among singles may reduce the unwanted use of internet pornography.

The single population that identifies as Christian must also be evaluated in light of their spiritual beliefs. Christians will often turn to their church for answers with issues of functioning before seeking professional help (Bornsheuer et al., 2012). However, the messages they often get from the church can often be condemning, shameful, and even misuse professional terms such as “addiction” (Thomas, 2013; Grubbs et al., 2015). Utilizing these clinical terms can lead to labeling and causing the client to apply a clinical diagnosis without the correct criteria. The shame and condemnation that can come with the messages from the church can even perpetuate the pornography use (Grubbs & Hook, 2016). The Christian who struggles with pornography use is then left with the option of turning to professional counseling. It is within this realm that the need is great for spiritual integration in an ethical manner.

Integration of spiritual beliefs for the single Christian can be a great asset for the counselor working to reduce internet pornography use. One of the important tenets of Christianity is the need for close social ties and strong relational supports (John 13:34; Hebrews 10:25). These aspects of the Christian belief also echo much of the research on loneliness. Yoder et al. (2005) is the seminal and only study that attempts to link pornography use as enabling loneliness. From the other perspective, Butler et al. (2017) concluded that there is a causal link between loneliness and pornography use. They argue that the pleasure and soothing cycle of pornography use can be a coping skill to alleviate the negative thoughts and emotions stemming

from the lack of attachment found in lonely individuals. Thus, having a close, secure relationship to turn to in times of distress is important and could be of great benefit for eliminating the behavioral cycle of pornography use. In order to begin to develop an intervention plan for Christian singles, the specific needs of this population must be addressed.

### **Needs of Christian Singles**

As previously discussed, the Christian single who regularly uses pornography carries with them a large amount of moral incongruence. Their faith is clear that this type of behavior is wrong, yet they continue to use. The perpetuation of this behavior leaves the individual with a feeling of perceived addiction to internet pornography. Since there are no DSM-V diagnostic criteria for this unwanted behavior, it can be difficult to diagnose and treat these individuals. Perceived addiction has become a popular method of describing and quantifying the desire to eliminate the use of pornography (Grubbs & Perry, 2017). However, simply looking at this perceived addiction as a clinical and diagnostic issue is to ignore several important aspects of this problem. It is argued that the clinician must be able address each need that a Christian single client has in dealing with internet pornography use. These needs include (a) the creation of a safe environment from which to discuss a difficult and potentially shame inducing subject, (b) the integration of their spiritual beliefs into counseling to bring peace from the moral incongruence, (c) and the understanding of the lack of intimate relationships and a process of increasing these social ties.

#### **A Safe Environment**

The admission of regular internet pornography use for Christian singles can be difficult due to the contradiction it places on their faith. The first step of seeking help is often one of

hesitation and anxiety for being “found out” in their perceived sin (Bornsheuer et al., 2012). Thus, the counseling office should be one of acceptance and non-judgment in order to calm the anxiety that many Christian clients feel in dealing with this issue. The ASERVIC competencies (Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling, 2009) provide some guidelines for the counselor that will be discussed more in depth later. Still, these competencies have an emphasis on being able to discuss spirituality without the counselor imposing their beliefs onto the client, which is a skill that can be difficult to enact. The isolation and loneliness that this population often carries prevents them from possibly having close relationships from which to find healing from their struggles (Mesch, 2009). The safe environment can enable the client to not simply see the counseling office as another accountability partnership, but as a safe haven from the turmoil pornography use is creating in their lives. Meeting this need for the Christian single is the foundation for any work that comes later.

### **Spiritual Integration**

Perhaps the greatest need for increased competency in counseling Christian singles dealing with pornography use is the need for spiritual integration. It is here that the benefits of the ASERVIC competencies are of major benefit. These competencies include (a) culture and worldview, (b) counselor self-awareness, (c) human and spiritual development, (d) communication, (e) assessment, and (f) diagnosis and treatment (ASERVIC, 2009). Each of these competencies will aid the counselor in not only creating a safe environment for the Christian single struggling with pornography use, but also allow the counselor to harness some of the tenets of Christianity that can help reduce loneliness and thus pornography use. Understanding the client’s worldview and culture allows the counselor to understand that the

spiritual beliefs of the individual are of high importance to many individuals. There are many variations of beliefs even within Christianity. However, it is the job of the counselor to work to understand the role that faith plays in the life of the client and the ability to define the terminology the client uses.

Counselor self-awareness is another competency that is of high importance. It is here in which the counselor will bracket their beliefs in order to fully understand the client's perspective. Each individual can have very differing perspectives on faith and even Christianity. At times religion can be used as a weapon to control others or merely as a way to ground an individual in difficult times. Avoiding either extreme is necessary for the counselor to come to the client with neutral assumptions. This can only begin as the counselor knows themselves and their own beliefs and is able to set them aside for the sake of the client.

Finally, the other competencies are used to explore the beliefs of the client. This is done through communication that is accepting and sensitive, assessments that are comprehensive in understanding spirituality, and even setting goals that do not contradict their own values and spiritual beliefs. Each of these areas provides a way to address the spiritual needs of Christian singles. Their belief system is important to them and must be addressed. Still, the final need assessment focuses on the aspect of being single.

### **Intimate Relationships**

Close social ties have long been an important outcome to foster within the counseling process (Li & Persaud, 2018). The same message is echoed within the Christian faith to reach out to others for help and support (Galatians 6:2). However, single individuals from adolescents to early adulthood experience an increased amount of loneliness and difficulty in making



connections with others (Bucher et al., 2019). These individuals are often seen as strange from the society at large, especially the longer they remain single into their adulthood. The focus continues to remain on romantic relationships as the primary method for overcoming loneliness and finding relational support. This is a transition from attachment to parents to a spouse. However, there has been little focus on non-romantic relationships as another healthy way to combat the loneliness that singles experience and that could create an environment that increases pornography use.

The concept of intimate relationships can be a difficult one to grasp outside of romance. The term intimacy has been hijacked by culture to mean sex and sexuality. Terms such as “intimates” can refer to underwear and “being intimate” contains the connotation of physicality. However, considering intimacy from an emotional perspective allows the idea of a close friendship to also be emotionally intimate. Thus, for the sake of this article, intimate relationship will describe a close emotional relationship that is not romantic. The need for singles to know and be able to develop these types of relationships is strong. Especially considering those in early adulthood who are transitioning their attachments from parents to others, there is the large potential for loneliness without direction.

Gender can also play a role in the needs for developing intimate relationship as well. Men generally have a harder time developing intimate non-romantic relationships with others more than women (Robinson et al., 2018). While women also struggle to connect at times, close intimate female relationships are generally seen as culturally acceptable. The outcome leaves men with little to no connectedness and acceptance after leaving the attachments of home. Several factors can play into this lack of connectedness including social and cultural structure,

fear of being labeled a homosexual, and lack of understanding how to become emotionally close with someone else. Robinson et al. (2018) lays out several aspects of what they call a “bromance.” They argue that moving this term from the comedic undertones it has traditionally found in culture can benefit men in connecting intimately with other men. In order to develop this type of close relationship several characteristics were found. First, there was much emphasis placed on shared interests by all parties involved in the relationship. Next, emotional intimacy was highlighted as another important factor. This emotional intimacy contained the idea that each person should be vulnerable and be able to disclose information readily to each other. Trust and love were important factors necessary to develop this vulnerability. Finally, there were elements of physical intimacy found within these relationships. These displays of intimacy took the form of hugs and even casual nudity. The characteristics of these “bromances” for men boiled down to relationships that were free of judgement.

It is therefore reasonable to posit that there is need for the counselor working with Christian singles struggling with pornography use to address each of these needs within the individual. The counselor must work to create a safe environment that can be a safe haven free of judgement. There must be an understanding of the moral incongruence that the client is experiencing and be able to integrate their faith into the behavior change solution. Finally, the counselor must work to help guide the client in learning and developing close intimate relationships which can be crucial in lowering the loneliness and isolation that is a cause of pornography use. The following outline will detail a specific treatment plan in working with a Christian single male struggling with pornography use. This plan will be followed by a brief case

study in showing some of the practical applications of this guide for counselors working with this population.

### **Treatment and Assessment**

For the sake of this discussion, the focus will be addressing some guidelines for counselors working with this specific population. Much could be said about the difficulty to diagnose unwanted pornography use. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-V) gives little options to counselors wanting to give a diagnosis for this unwanted behavior. Still, there are specific steps and ways in which to build a treatment plan that will be of benefit to Christian singles. The importance of a treatment plan being empirically based and functional for the client is a foundation laid out by the American Counseling Association's (ACA) code of ethics (American Counseling Association, 2014). However, the selection of the specific interventions and the tailoring of the treatment plan should be specific to the client. Based on the needs assessed in the previous section, the treatment plan for the Christian single has several unique qualities. Several aspects of the treatment plan should be enacted and fostered throughout the counseling process. Each session should contain elements addressing each need of the client. As seen above, the Christian client faces some unique needs which should all be addressed.

The example treatment plan is developed out of a cognitive-behavioral and developmental theoretical framework. This cognitive-behavioral approach has shown success in limiting pornography use (Minarcik, 2017). Throughout the counseling process, work will be done to change the thinking patterns that have been ingrained due to the pornography use. Additionally, from a developmental framework, focus will be on the growth and development of

intimate relationships in whatever stage of life the client finds themselves. Within this theoretical framework, each presenting need of the Christian single must be addressed.

Beginning with establishing a safe environment, the counselor must ensure a non-judgmental tone from the very first session. The ability to successfully enact this step begins with the counselor's ability to bracket off their own beliefs regarding pornography use. This bracketing can be accomplished through a self-exploration of the counselor's beliefs. The counselor should evaluate their own moral stance and seek to set it aside for the sake of the client. The bracketing will allow the client to truly begin to understand the client's perspective in an inviting way. The Christian client is perhaps facing many prior messages to his pornography use that may add to the confusion and moral dissonance. The counselor should begin by investigating the ways in which the unwanted pornography use has been framed in the past. Evaluation should also be made on how much shame or guilt the client is carrying with this unwanted behavior. The tone and rapport that is built between the counselor and client should be an ongoing process in order to create a safe environment for clients to disclose their struggle with such a topic.

Assessment of the perceived addiction to internet pornography can be utilized to help to understand and integrate the client's spiritual beliefs. As someone who identifies as being Christian, some assumptions can be made. However, these assumptions, such as the client's view of pornography use as being wrong should be checked with the client. By utilizing the term "perceived addiction" the counselor avoids the specific diagnosis of addiction while also trying to describe the dilemma the client is facing. The Cyber Pornography Use Inventory – 9 (CPUI-9;

Grubbs, Volk, Exline, & Pargament, 2015) is a simple scale that can be used to assess the perceived addiction within the client.

The CPUI-9 was developed as a nine-item measure which delineated the addictive patterns subscale into two categories: compulsivity and access efforts. The advantage to utilizing this assessment is in its length (being only nine items long) and in allowing the client to describe the struggle to quit pornography use in their own way. Additionally, the assessment focuses the client on the impacts that the use has on functioning, which is a common criteria for diagnosis of other disorders. The effects on functioning helps bring the moral struggle that a Christian faces with pornography use into the clinical setting. Without a specific diagnosis and criteria for an often suggested “hypersexual disorder” a counselor may struggle to know how to quantify or reduce the moral incongruence that a Christian client faces. Thus, utilizing a simple scale of compulsivity and efforts to stop, the counselor can begin to quantify the goals of the client in stopping pornography use. Here begins the integration of spirituality into the clinical setting. The client is empowered to state they perceive they are addicted without failing to meet clinical diagnosis. The counselor, in turn, can also meet the client where they are spiritually without lessening the struggle they are experiencing.

Ultimately, each of the above described items within the treatment plan are carried out within the counseling setting. They are important to begin to meet the needs of the Christian client. However, it is argued that the final need is the most critical in sustaining the goal of reducing and eliminating pornography use. Building and maintaining intimate relationships must be included and emphasized within the treatment plan for this client. However, assessing this need for the client can be difficult.

There are several assessments that can be utilized to determine the social support for a client including the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) (Zimet et al., 1988). Yet, this scale among others fails to grasp the true intimacy and non-judgement that is needed for many clients and individuals. Social support focuses more on having people who would be there for you if needed for a physical or emotional need. After describing the need for intimate relationships for the Christian single, there is a sense of the deeper level of relationship that is needed. Until such a scale is developed and empirically evaluated, counselors have been left to assess and address this need for the client on their own. However, once this need is realized, a plan can begin even from the first session to foster growth in this area for the client. Specific interventions and practical applications to address the need for intimate relationships for Christian clients struggling with pornography use will be given in more detail within the following case study.

### **Case Study**

A case study provides a way to practically apply the information learned above into a clinical setting. Now, that the population of Christian singles has been identified and the needs of that population have been evaluated, the following case study can provide a template to follow for clinical application. The following study is one that is modeled from past clinical experience working with this population from a Christian counseling private practice.

#### **The Client**

The presenting client is a 23 year old Caucasian male. He has attended a Christian college locally for 3 years where he is studying to be a pastor. Pornography has been a struggle for him for many years beginning when he was 15. Stating that he has been a Christian since he was ten,

he believes that viewing the pornography is wrong but has struggled to stop. His use is viewing pornographic images and videos on his phone about every other day. There have been times in which he has tried to quit, but it has never lasted more than a month of sobriety. In his desire to quit, he first reached out to his youth pastor in his senior year of high school. His pastor was understanding but told him he had to “work hard” to quit and to get rid of this “sin.” An accountability partner was quickly found for him from within the youth group and he was told to meet with this partner weekly. No more follow up was provided from the youth pastor and the meetings fizzled out after about 3 months. Not knowing where to turn, his parents recommended counseling once he revealed his struggle to them. He met with a counselor who at times worked with the client to not view the pornography use as a problem saying that masturbation was good for someone at his age. Another high school friend he confided in stated that there was nothing wrong with him as “everyone does it.”

The client presented as being shy and somewhat reserved. He seemed hesitant to share his struggle with pornography use in the first session. He seemed to be uncertain of the reaction he would get. His appearance was well kept, he held eye contact, and could hold a conversation well. Nothing unusual was of note in his psycho-social-spiritual assessment. There was no past abuse, no past or current drug use, and no history of mental illness in the family. His medical examination did not reveal any abnormalities as well.

Currently, he is not in a dating relationship and his last relationship was his high school girlfriend he broke up with when he entered college. He reports having a good relationship with his parents, and is loving but not close with his older brother and younger sister. The friendships he does have are little to none. There is no one he hangs out with after school and feels very

lonely since his brother graduated from the same college. He previously would only hang out with his brother and his friends. His brother knows about his pornography use struggle but he has no other friends who know about it. When asked about hobbies or things he enjoys, he struggles to think of anything to say, reporting that he is “just not interesting.”

### **The Process**

While there are many variables to this client as well as many theoretical positions which to take, the process laid out will focus on meeting the specific needs of this client. These needs can be incorporated within the case conceptualization for the client that can be written out in a report. The counselor must work with the client to identify the needs as well as lay out the treatment plan for reaching the desired goals.

From the beginning, the client has stated a desire to reduce and eliminate his pornography use. Beyond that struggle, there is no other identified problem based on the client’s perspective. One could argue there is some isolation issues that the client has not seen as impairing his functioning. However, some psychoeducation would be needed from the beginning to show the link between isolation and loneliness and their impact on pornography use. This psychoeducation and goal setting for the client cannot be accomplished without meeting the first need for this client in the counseling setting: creating a safe environment.

As seen in the literature, there are many mixed messages that a single Christian receives regarding pornography use. From their church or religious organization they are a part of, the message can be particularly negative and condemning toward the persistent use. There often times is a message of “just try harder” or even disgust about the use. These messages can cause the Christian single to shy away from disclosing the struggle and carrying much shame for using



pornography when it is seen as a very shameful act. Thus, the counselor can do much to foster an environment that is non-judgmental. The body language and how to phrase the conversation around the pornography use are both important in creating a safe environment. Not looking shocked or sad when the client discloses the pornography use can help to reduce the amount of shame felt. Additionally, there can be a focus on the needs being met in the use rather than focusing on frequency and accountability. The counselor can join the client in the process of change by avoiding the trap of focusing on behavior and instead look at some of the underlying causes.

For this client, the counselor can work to reflect and paraphrase often in order to avoid any judgement toward the behavior. The initial sessions will work to understand the struggle at its essence. Questions can be asked such as: “How did you react to your pastor’s suggestions?” and “What emotions did you experience when your friend proposed the use as normal?” These types of focused questions allow the client to begin to open up and focus on the needs getting met through the behavior and not the behavior itself.

Once the safe environment is established and fostered throughout the counseling process, the understanding and integration of spiritual beliefs can begin. Knowing that there is much moral incongruence with this client, the counselor must understand the underlying beliefs and utilize them instead of challenging them. The counselor can ask the client to “tell me about your spiritual beliefs and what they say about your struggle with pornography use.” This statement is different than the question “tell me why you think the use is wrong.” Even in this latter question, there still contains some element of assumption of the morality of the behavior. The prior question allows the client more freedom to express their own perceptions and even allow them to

agree or disagree with the teachings of their faith. Additionally, it is within the client's Christian beliefs that there can begin to be harnessed the importance of intimate relationships. The counselor can highlight the benefits of connection with others that is a strong pillar of the Christian faith. Once the spiritual beliefs are understood, the integration can be utilized to begin to grow the client's social connections which are severely lacking for this client.

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### Appendix A: Grading Rubric for Practical Article Submission I and II

	<u>CAREFULLY FOLLOW THE GENRE AND STYLE YOU FIND IN THE ARTICLES YOU DOWNLOAD FROM THE JOURNAL YOU SELECT</u>	<u>Comments</u>
1	Proper APA (6 <sup>th</sup> Edition) Style: Title page through references and <u>everything</u> in between.	
2	Paper Organization: Includes a clear, succinct abstract, introduction and conclusion that summarizes paper's contents, and clearly articulated transitions between the primary sections of the paper.	
3	Professional, Scholarly, Publishable Quality: Correct grammar, spelling, syntax, use of verbiage, tense, etc.	.
4	<b>ALL</b> points and facts presented in the paper are supported by proper use of citations and references to current empirical and theoretical literature.	
5	<p><b>Content, General Guidelines</b></p> <p><b>Title</b> —It is specific and has a clear focus. It appropriately sets the readers' expectations for what they will learn.</p> <p><b>Abstract</b> —It is a concise summary of the entire piece and not just a paragraph lifted from the manuscript. The abstract does the article justice and piques interest in reading the entire work without being cryptic.</p> <p><b>Introduction</b> —The introduction builds interest and strides confidently into the topic and focus.</p>	



	<p><b>Pronouncement paragraph</b> —The manuscript includes a pronouncement paragraph and what is previewed there matches the main headings of the article.</p> <p><b>Main headings</b> —The headings are specific to the focus of the article and are consistent in format (e.g., all stated as questions, each begins with a verb; they effectively guide the reader through major shifts in the argument).</p> <p><b>Body of the manuscript</b> —There no more than 3–5 main headings that are evenly balanced in terms of length.</p> <p><b>Literature review</b> —The evidence base is current and authoritative with just a few classic sources. It uses original sources rather than textbooks. The review of the literature is thorough, current, persuasive, and synthesized.</p> <p><b>Transitions</b> —reading through the article, the transitions are smooth.</p> <p><b>Examples</b> —The examples provided resonate with the experience of counseling professionals. There are not too few or too many and they were not too long.</p> <p><b>Visual material</b>—Figures, tables, charts, graphs, and/or other visual material are helpful and worthy of publication. They are original and focused very specifically on the topic of the article.</p> <p><b>Length and clarity</b> —The manuscript is not too wordy in places (i.e., in need of condensing) nor are there places where the material requires further development (i.e., where not enough explanation is given).</p> <p><b>Conclusion</b> —The conclusion: (1) briefly “recaps” the main ideas (2) moves from specific to more general ideas (3) revisits the main thesis that was explained in the introduction (4) gives a genuine sense of wrapping everything up and sending readers on their way</p>	
6	Reference page is in proper APA style and citations throughout are ample and are primary (not secondary) sources.	
7	Assignment is double spaced, 12 point, Times New Roman	
8	Follow the author guidelines or what you see in the articles you download from the journal regarding use of first person. Either way (first or third person) it must be appropriately professional and scholarly.	

9	Assignment is of proper length (18-22 pages) [not including title page, abstract, references and required appendices]) DO NOT EXCEED PAGE LIMIT.	
10	Few, if any, quotations that are brief and are in proper APA format.	
11	Include a copy of the author guidelines for the article as an appendix item. Include a copy of the grading rubric filled out as a self-assessment as an appendix item (submission one only)	
	Total Points (Points will vary based on quality of each section)- Submission I: 190 Submission II: 250	

### **Appendix B: ASERVIC Submission Guidelines**

Guidelines for Authors Counseling and Values: Spirituality, Ethics, and Religion in Counseling (CVJ) is a professional journal of theory, research, and practice on the intersection of religion, spirituality, and ethics in the counseling process, with a particular emphasis on the competent and ethical integration of religion and spirituality into counseling. Its mission is to promote free intellectual inquiry across these domains. Its vision is to attract a diverse readership reflective of a growing diversity in the membership of the Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling and to effect change leading to the continuing growth and development of a more genuinely civil society. Sections within the journal include the following:

- Research and Theory. Manuscripts that provide empirical data related to ethical, religious, or spiritual issues in counseling will be featured. CVJ is open to myriad designs related to counseling research (e.g., quantitative, qualitative, mixed method, single case).
- Issues and Insights. Manuscripts that offer philosophical, theoretical, and practical applications of ethical,

religious, or spiritual issues in counseling will be featured. Manuscripts must be clearly referenced and represent an author's attempt to offer fresh information. • Techniques for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Counseling (TSERC). Manuscripts that focus on practical issues related to (a) development or adaptation of existing techniques for working with spiritual, ethical, and/or religious values in counseling and/or (b) experience related to the effectiveness of techniques in work with clients and client systems will be featured. For authors interested in submitting manuscripts for peer review and possible publication in the TSERC section of CVJ, follow the additional formatting instructions listed below (in addition to the remaining guidelines that follow):

1. Begin the TSERC manuscript with an introduction to the technique/procedure that includes a theoretical rationale. In addition, include any available direct or derivative research supporting the use of the technique/procedure.
2. Provide a detailed description of the technique/procedure. Be specific and clear enough that readers will understand how to implement the technique/procedure with clients.
3. Following the description of the technique/procedure, provide a brief case study demonstrating the use of the technique/procedure.
4. Provide a short conclusion.

Submission of Manuscripts Manuscripts are to be submitted electronically (in one attachment) in Microsoft Word format (.doc) to <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/cvj>. Full instructions and support are available on the site and a user ID and password can be obtained on the first visit. Support can be contacted by phone (888-503-1050), or via the red Get Help Now link in the upper right-hand corner of the log-in screen. For additional inquiries, contact the journal field editor: Abigail H. Conley, CVJ Editor, Department of Counseling and Special Education, Virginia Commonwealth University, 1015 West Main Street, Box 842020, Richmond, VA 23284-2020; phone: 804-828-3738; email:

ahconley@vcu.edu. Manuscripts are reviewed by at least two editorial board members and typically undergo revision before final acceptance. Two or 3 months may elapse between acknowledgment of receipt of a manuscript and notification of its disposition. The Editor makes final decisions regarding publication. All submissions are blind peer reviewed. Therefore, authors must submit a manuscript that contains no clues to the authors' identity. Citations that may reveal the authors' identities (e.g., "in an extension of our previous work [citation of work with authors' names]") should be masked (e.g., ["Authors, 2011"]). The authors' names, positions or titles, places of employment, and mailing addresses should appear on one cover title page only, not in an author footnote. Other subsequent pages should include only the manuscript title in the header. Authors submitting manuscripts to the journal should not simultaneously submit them to another journal, nor should manuscripts have been published elsewhere in substantially similar form or with substantially similar content.

**Preparation of Manuscripts** Authors should carefully prepare their manuscripts in accordance with the following instructions. All manuscripts should be prepared according to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.; American Psychological Association [APA], 2010). Manuscripts should be as concise as possible, yet sufficiently detailed to permit adequate communication and critical review. Consult the APA Publication Manual for specific guidelines regarding the format of the manuscript, abstract, citations and references, tables and figures, and other matters of editorial style. Tables and figures should be used only when essential.

**Selected Sections for Manuscript Submissions**

**Title Page:** The first page of the manuscript should be masked and contain only the title of the manuscript. \* \*Note. Prepare a separate, supplemental file labeled "Title Page" and upload at the above website in addition to the blinded manuscript. This title page document should contain the

article title, the names and affiliations of all coauthors, author notes or acknowledgments, and complete contact information of the corresponding author who will review page proofs (including complete mailing address and email) in the following format: (Continued on next page)

CVJ Guidelines for Authors (Continued) Author(s) Name only (i.e., no degrees or position titles listed), Department Name, University Name, at City (if applicable). Author Name is now at Department Name, University Name, at City (if changed from above listing). Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Author Name, full mailing (including street or PO Box) address, City, State (using postal abbreviation), zip code (email: name@name.edu). Abstract: The abstract should express the central idea of the manuscript in nontechnical language. It should be on page 2 and is limited to 100 words. Keywords: Keywords should follow the abstract on page 2 and should include 5 words. Tables and Figures: No more than 3 tables and 2 figures with each manuscript will be accepted. Please be sure to indicate the table or figure callouts within the manuscripts. However, do not embed tables or figures within the body of the manuscript. Each table or figure should be placed on a separate page following the reference list. Figure captions are to be on an attached page, as required by APA style. Figures (graphs, illustrations, line drawings) must be supplied in electronic format with a minimum resolution of 600 dots per inch (dpi) up to 1200 dpi. Halftone line screens should be a minimum of 300 dpi. JPEG or PDF files are preferred. (See APA Publication Manual, pp. 128–150, for more detailed information on table preparation and pp. 150–167 for further details on figure preparation.) References: References should follow the style detailed in the APA Publication Manual. Check all references for completeness, including year, volume number, and

pages for journal citations. Make sure that all references mentioned in the text are listed in the reference section and vice versa and that the spelling of author names and years is consistent.

Footnotes or Endnotes: Do not use. Incorporate any information within the body of the manuscript. Other: Authors must also carefully follow APA Publication Manual guidelines for nondiscriminatory language regarding gender, sexual orientation, racial and ethnic identity, disabilities, and age. In addition, the terms counseling, counselor, and client are preferred, rather than their many synonyms. Page Limitations Manuscripts are typically between 8 and 20 double-spaced pages. This does not include title page, abstract, and references. Permission Requirements Lengthy quotations (generally 500 cumulative words or more from one source) require written permission from the copyright holder for reproduction. Previously published tables or figures that are used in their entirety, in part, or adapted also require written permission from the copyright holder for reproduction. It is the author's responsibility to secure such permission, and a copy of the publisher's written permission must be provided to the Editor immediately upon acceptance for publication. Accepted Articles Authors will receive information for submitting a final copy of their article upon acceptance from the journal field editor. This final version of the article should have any previously masked author references and in-text citations reinstated, and include all author names with their departmental and university affiliations. Full contact information should be included for the designated corresponding author (CA). Once the article is in production with the ACA Publications team, the CA will receive copyedited PDF page proofs for review via email. Please note, the article cannot be published until the publisher (Wiley) has received a signed copyright license agreement. The CA will be contacted by Wiley via email to log into the Wiley Author Services (WAS) portal and electronically sign the licensing agreement.

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