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THE THEOPHOSTIC® MODEL OF CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

INTRODUCTION: The aim of this presentation is to give information about the Theophostic method, its theoretical base and counselling or ministry applications. It is not a teaching or training session in how to do the process. Anyone who wishes to use this model needs to first obtain formal video training including the required texts, which is available locally. (Western Australia)

DEFINITION: A cognitive-spiritual model within the Christian context.

AIM OF PROCESS: To heal emotional pain from present and past events by correcting false interpretations of them, expressed in this model as “lie-based thinking”.

COMPARISONS: Other cognitive models describe false interpretations (lie-based thinking) as cognitive distortions (CBT), erroneous thinking (RET), life schemas (Kelly and Beck), life-scripts (TA), “the fundamental error of childhood” (Empowerment Therapy), faulty thinking, self-defeating beliefs, etc. The aim of all these therapeutic models is to correct cognitive distortions and thereby remove pain from an experience. There is a common recognition that the interpretation or meaning applied to the event has a more lasting impact than the experience itself.

CONCEPTS: The main theoretical concept of Theophostic relates to the storage of memories, described as “the two roomed house”. The logical mind remembers without emotion and can rationalise or objectify events. This is described as the “light room”. The traumatic memory material and emotional pain is stored in the “dark room”, not able to be rationalised away. This concept equates to current thinking in Traumatology relating to the storage of emotional and traumatic memory in the non-dominant brain hemisphere. This material surfaces in emotional reactions to events, flashbacks, nightmares, intrusive thoughts, phobias, etc.

Another major concept relates to the ‘echo’ principle, that today’s emotional pain is magnified by previous unresolved emotional pain stored in the “dark room” of emotional memory. The triggering event may seem to be unrelated to any previous trauma.

The spiritual concept involved is the willingness of God in Jesus Christ to heal emotional pain and replace cognitive distortions with His truth, imparted directly to the client rather than through the practitioner.

PRINCIPLES:

- My present situation is not the source of my pain.
- If I heal my past, my present will also change.
- My current emotions are echoes of the past, an open window to my wounds.

- I need to stop blaming the present situation for my emotional pain.
- In order to heal I must be willing to feel my pain.
- I look for the historical emotional echo, a memory picture and the original lie.
- My pain comes from my interpretation rather than the actual experience.
- If I believe the lie it has the same consequences as if it were true.
- The pain I feel will match the lies I believe.
- To be free of the lie I must grasp it more firmly rather than reject it.
- I am then able to receive a healing word of truth from God to give me freedom.

WHAT THEOPHOSTIC MINISTRY CANNOT DO: Change current reality; remove appropriate shame and guilt; change what is true in a memory; heal true mental illness; heal a person against their will; prevent future wrong choices.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT FINDING HEALING: inability to access wound but it will still be triggered > pain; unhealed wound symptoms are passed down in families; deep wounds may be labelled as mental illness. Symptoms include childhood amnesia; shame and guilt; sexual dysfunction; emotional difficulties; compulsions and addictions.

PROCESS: The aim of the Theophostic process is emotional healing rather than Christian evangelisation. The practitioner facilitates the client in uncovering feelings and faulty thinking. Jesus Christ is the healer who takes the client to the memory of the original source of the pain and breaks the client's "lie" by revealing His truth to them internally.

The practitioner will need good listening and questioning skills, empathy, genuineness and non-judgemental acceptance. They also need an active Christian faith with a strong awareness of the authority of Jesus Christ and a sound knowledge of the Bible. It is not necessary for the client to be a Christian, only to give permission for Jesus to work in them. There is no need for special settings apart from a private counselling or ministry environment and clients do not have to access some 'altered state of consciousness' in order to benefit. It is wise for the practitioner to have supervision available for debriefing and processing any personal issues arising from others' traumas.

GUIDELINES FOR PRACTITIONERS:

- No suggestions, interpretations or guided imagery.
 - No prophesy or 'words of knowledge' to the client.
- This is important, to guard against any possibility or implication that the practitioner has suggested the events recalled or put their own meaning on them ("implanted memories")
- Take precautions regarding the possibility of negative spiritual attachments in the client's painful memories and be prepared to deal with them through Jesus Christ.
 - If the client recovers previously unremembered traumas, eg CSA, take care to process properly before allowing them to leave the session. Arrange a follow-up appointment before they go, as additional material may arise after a session. The client may have difficulty believing what they are recalling. Encourage them to debrief/journal/ pray through the material to consolidate memories. Remind the client that the material was accessed by asking Jesus to locate the source and origin of the pain, not by any suggestions from the counsellor.

APPLICATIONS: Emotional pain in any context. Some problems I have used the Theophostic method with are trauma, grief, past hurts, relationship problems, eating disorders, phobias, childhood sexual and other abuse, church abuse, spiritual problems, anger, obsessiveness, depression, dissociation, suicidality, traumatic intrusions. For

many of these applications the Advanced Training is an advantage, although difficult to obtain in Australia. (More information: www.theophostic.com , email: phostic@kyol.net)
A broad general counselling knowledge is also helpful for practitioners.

REFERENCES:

Edward M Smith. (1996/2000). *Genuine recovery*; Campbellsville, Kentucky: Alathia Publishing.
Edward M Smith. (1996/1999) *Beyond tolerable recovery*; Campbellsville, Kentucky: Alathia Publishing.
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