

Course Synthesis Paper Assignment COUC 730

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The Jones family came into the office seeking therapy for the whole family, couples therapy and individual therapy to help them all cope with the new diagnosis of cancer for Mrs. Jones. Two weeks ago, after some symptoms, Mrs. Jones was diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer and told that she has a 10% chance of survival and likely has about 4-6 months to live. Mrs. Jones has a rare form of cancer that is inconsistent in how it responds to traditional cancer treatments. Mrs. Jones is set to begin various traditional and nontraditional intense cancer treatments, in hopes of beating the cancer and surviving. During the intake you notice that many of the family members are reacting differently to the medical news. Every family member said that they chose to seek a Christian counseling approach to therapy because it is central to who they are. The diagnoses for the family are F32.89 Other Specified Depressive Disorder, F43.20 Adjustment Disorder Unspecified, Z60.0 Phase of Life problem, Z65.8 Religious or spiritual problem, Z63.0 Relationship distress with spouse or intimate partner, and Z62.898 Child affected by parental relationship distress. Jones family (parents Joe and Jessica, and children Jim, Jana, and John). The Jones family have always been close, and all have good feelings towards each other, and they are all sincere and committed Christians. The family is struggling with the news differently but want to work through it as a family. John does not contribute much to the conversation, but says he loves his family and knows it will all work out somehow. The diagnoses observed for the family therapy are F32.89 Other Specified Depressive Disorder, F43.20 Adjustment Disorder Unspecified, Z60.0 Phase of Life problem, Z65.8 Religious or spiritual problem, Z63.0 Relationship distress with spouse or intimate partner, and Z62.898 Child affected by parental

relationship distress. The method of family therapy that will be used for the family will be Narrative Therapy. This type of therapy uses self-narratives to help people make sense of their 2 lives, gathering their experiences of events to help them make sense of themselves over time (Goldenberg et al., 2017). The goals of the family therapy will be to help family maintain healthy communication during this journey, provide support for the family as they rewrite their story, help family to stay grounded in Christ. The treatment plan for the family will consist of following interventions, a narrative approach to help direct the family from hopelessness by helping them to recognize the subjugated plots and subplots of their lives. One of the techniques to be used will be journaling, each family member will keep a journal to help promote their spiritual growth through this journey that they will walk through together (Whitney, 2014). This will allow them according to Whitney (2017), a way to become more intimate with each other and God as they reflect their feelings and emotions, they are experiencing each day. They will share their journals with each other during sessions and this will allow for them to help express their thoughts and feeling about the situation and how they are viewing God through all of this (Whitney, 2017). As they walk through this journey together, they will have good days and they will have bad days, so they will be given Scripture to read together about overcoming adversities and remember the importance of staying in God's word during these difficult times.

Understanding their Christian worldview will be crucial as a family, Entwistle (2021), explains that it recognizes that all truth is grounded in our transcendent God as He created an orderly world. Through epistemic inquiry may be used to evaluate truth claims through delving into Scripture (Entwistle, 2021). The family will work through issues that come up through journaling, this will help them support each other. They will look to scripture to study the attributes of God, Grudem (2022), shared that there are incommunicable and communicable

attributes of God. 3 These attributes will be important as things progress with Mr. Jones' cancer treatments will either help or she gets worse. The communicable Attribute such as God is love, knowledgeable, merciful, and justice (Grudem, 2022). Through sharing these attributes and reassuring them of Gods, love and mercy is for all His creation. This needs to be integrated into their narratives to help them remember when they begin to doubt God, that His love is sufficient for us all. 2 Corinthians 12:9 share this, "And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore, most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." It will be important to get the family to understand according to Grudem (2022), that no one should single out one attribute of God as greater than another, for they are all equally important to His character as it is God Himself in His whole being that is most important. Teaching them that death is not a punishment for Christians, as Grudem (2022) described it is the final outcome of living in a fallen world. Sharing that Death is a way of completing our sanctification in Christ, as it hopefully will bring some form of encouragement (Grudem, 2022). This will help them to see that, if Mrs. Jones should pass, this does not mean that their prayers were not answered, and that God lost His sovereignty, Grudem (2022) but she will be risen and have a glorified body, where there is no more suffering or pain. They will also use the church community as a way of comfort and support, as God gave us the church to act as the body of Christ, Grudem (2022) tells us that the Lord has given gifts to the church for building up the body of Christ. Mr. and Mrs. Jones will receive some couples counseling as well to help them work on and focus on each other for supporting and tearing each other down. The diagnoses related to the couples therapy is F32.89 Other Specified Depressive Disorder, F43.20 Adjustment Disorder 4 Unspecified, Z60.0 Phase of Life problem, Z65.8 Religious or spiritual problem, Z63.0 Relationship distress with spouse or intimate partner. The

key to couples therapy will be to work to prevent couples distress. Couples distress according to Athony & Barlow (2020), is clinically significant relationship impairment in the couple's behaviors, cognitive processing, and other affective domains of relationship functioning. The goals for the couple therapy will be to help the clients maintain effective communication, teach clients to support each other in a healthy way and keep each other grounded in Christ. The interventions will be techniques from narrative couples therapy. The couple requested biblical principles to be integrated into the session and narrative couples therapy allows for this.

Narrative therapy recognizes that individual identities may change over time, shaped from experiences with relationships and culture according to Freedman (n.d.), as a couple they are to help shape each other's identities. Just as God tells us about man and woman are to leave their families and become one, Genesis 2:24 (NKJV) shares this "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be[a] joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." The techniques will be externalizing conversations as Whitney (2017) shares it helps to express your thoughts and feelings to the Lord, sometimes we just need to share something with the Lord that we are struggling with our spouses, family or friends. Helping the couple to understand that the techniques being used are well integrated in Scripture will help calm them, as they were concerned with psychobabble. Use of the Allies model, according to Whitney (2021), would work well with the family, as we explore their core convictions about what is happening and why God is allowing these things. Naming the problem and the project and linking their lives through shared purposes according to Freedman (n.d.) naming the problem allows for the couple to explore what they value and rewrite what has changed, along with looking at how their lives are cojoined. Joe and Jessica have become one when they were married in the Church witnessed by God. Joe is the spiritual leader, and Jessica is to submit to him but he is also told to submit to

Jessica. They are also to remain together in both sickness and health. Grudem (2022), shares about the gift of the Holy Spirit and healing, we must realize that our healing comes from God and sometimes we must seek healing through medicines, God made everything, and he gave man the ability to create medicines. The couples session will consist of Scripture and prayer for each other integrated into the techniques already discussed. Mr. Jones, (43 yo) is a bi-vocational pastor, and part-time computer programmer. Mr. Jones stares at the wall much of the session, periodically says repeatedly- "This just doesn't make sense...she was fine." At one point Mr. Jones says, "I want to be able to say- 'The Lord gives, the Lord takes away, blessed...'" then struggles to finish the sentence. Helping Pastor Joe to understand his stigma with counseling can be done, by sharing the Allies model, according to Entwistle (2021), this model looks at two books of God, His word and His works. Pastor Joe understands his role and gifts of the Holy Spirit, to be a leader and teacher. According to Grudem (2022) he can explain scripture and apply it to people's lives, he was given this gift from God, he must return to this understanding when he loses his way from God. Joe is diagnosed with F43.20 Adjustment Disorder Unspecified, Z60.0 Phase of Life problem, Z65.8 Religious or spiritual problem, Z63.0. Whitney (2017) tells us that beyond the walls of a church, our serving can be seen through babysitting for neighbors, taking of meals to families who are dealing with situations such as sickness and loss of a family member, getting groceries for those who don't have a car or drive, but the hardest is displaying a servants heart in your own house. 6 For his method of therapy, he will be receiving cognitive behavioral therapy with some meditation added as needed. This will help with any anxiety that he may experience as things progress with Jessica's cancer. The techniques he will use through integration will be cognitive restructuring, by keeping a journal of daily events that may bring about any negative thoughts (Clinton et al., 2005). Use this list of negative thoughts that are

affecting him and begin to use prayer to lift up to God, these negative thoughts and give them to Him. Prayer and reading of Scripture will be an integral part of the healing process, this will be seen as meditation, Joshua 1:18 (NKJV) tells us “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.” Whitney (2017) mentions that he believes that “meditation on Scripture is the greatest devotional need of most Christians.” Grudem, (2022) shared that we are to ask God for healing by going to Him and requesting a physical healing for someone in need. Grudem (2022) also shared that when using healing, that the person must be prepared to deal with disappointment if no healing occurs, at least the way they are praying. Outside support such as other family members and church family will be important for helping him cope. Mrs. Jones (43 yo) is a real estate agent. Jessica is very confident and keeps shifting her attention to various family members trying to encourage them. She quotes various verses to them, hugs them, tells them God has a reason for all this, while empathizing with their struggles. She is diagnosed with F43.20 Adjustment Disorder Unspecified, Z60.0 Phase of Life problem, Z65.8 Religious or spiritual problem, Z63.0. Although there have not been enough signs to diagnose depression, this should be considered when developing treatment. Depression can come from physical factors, Clinton (2005) a chronic illness such as her cancer, can lead to depression. 7 The method of treatment will be CBT, such as cognitive restructuring, along with meditation. Maybe some narrative therapy will come into play. Recognizing her Spiritual gift of empathy as a strength to use for cognitive restructuring will be helpful. Grudem (2022) shared that these gifts are given to equip the church and to also show what is yet to come. Journaling will also be used for the purpose of meditation as Whitney (2021) when he writes down what has been revealed to him, as he studies

scripture gives him a better understanding of what he has read. Another way to work with her cognitive distortions that may arise concerning her faith, Grudem (2022) discusses looking at the question of whether or not she puts her trust in Jesus to take away her sins and leave her without blame to allow her to gain access into Heaven? This will help her with any cognitive distortions, and she can use it as a journal entry to help her come to terms with her current state she is in. I will share what Entwistle (2021) shared about cognitions, it is our mental processing that will help guide us through life but it is not perfect. This imperfection produces negative cognitions, that can bring about anxiety and depression. The use of deconstruction can be helpful to remind her that a dominant ideation that she has more than one meaning and that what she may be seeing or thinking could actually mean something else (Goldenberg et al., 2017). I will encourage her, as Whitney (2017) suggest, to seek daily times of silence and solitude when she is overwhelmed with life, depending on her mental state. Prayer will be important and praying with her family, friends, and her church family will be imperative. Grudem (2022) explains that the nature of the church is to nurture believers. Clinton et al. (2005) recognizing the warning signs of stress will help to reduce it. Any spiritual support will be helpful when the stress has been recognized and will bring about a more positive response to stress or anxiety. 8 Son Jim is 19 years old and a freshman in college. Jim, an Eagle Scout and Deans list student in college, tearfully says that he has always tried to live his life right so that they could avoid these kinds of things. F32.89 Other Specified Depressive Disorder, F43.20 Adjustment Disorder Unspecified, Z60.0 Phase of Life problem, Z65.8 Religious or spiritual problem, Z63.0, and Z62.898 Child affected by parental relationship distress. Jim will be given CBT with restructuring of his cognitions, narrative therapy, journaling, and meditation. He appears to have some self-blame for his mother's diagnosis. Whitney (2017) explains that journaling will be a place for Jim to open his heart to

God and let out his concerns and worries. This will be helpful if he has trouble sharing with others. His thoughts of self-blame can add to stress, Clinton et al. (2005) shares that encouraging optimism, and a sense of control will help with reduction of anxiety or stress. Looking at his strengths will help with cognitive restructuring, as he believes his prayers have failed him, Entwistle (2021), the sins and assumptions of a persons culture will influence the ideation of those within the culture. Some of his strengths are that he is smart as he is on the deans list and he is an Eagle Scout, abiding in the code of honor, loves Jesus. Using these strengths when there are cognitive distortions will be helpful, Grudem (2022) discusses the promise of forgiveness and eternal life, can be used for cognitive restructuring when he starts to feel that he isn't faithful enough to keep his mother from getting sick. Looking into what spiritual gifts he has been given will add to his strengths Grudem (2022) shared that although there are many spiritual gifts, everyone is given specific gifts to edify the church and honor God. Teaching him about thick descriptions when rewriting his story will be extremely helpful, as Goldenberg et al. (2017), this will help to reauthor his story, replacing the negative with a positive one. Understanding Jim's worldview will be helpful, according to Entwistle (2021), as his worldview is Christian, but how does it affect his worldly beliefs can help with cognitive restructuring of negative thoughts influencing anxiety and possible depression. Meditation on Scripture and prayer will be helpful in journaling, Whitney (2017), shares that sometimes just taking notes while reading Scripture are helpful later on when it may be needed, as it was his way of learning while in school. Accepting and spending time with other like-minded believers his own age may be helpful as having others that he can rely on will be an important part of the treatment process. Grudem (2022) expressed that the church is made up of all kinds of people but are one unified body in Christ, and Jesus as the cornerstone. We as a church are meant to support each other, through

prayer and fellowship. Daughter Jana is 17 and a junior in high school. Jana refuses to talk in session and just crosses her arms and sits. Mrs. Jones says that although Jana is very peaceful and sweet, she has found various household items smashed in her room and says she thinks Jana seems somewhat depressed since hearing the cancer diagnosis. F32.89 Other Specified Depressive Disorder, F43.20 Adjustment Disorder Unspecified, Z60.0 Phase of Life problem, Z65.8 Religious or spiritual problem, Z63.0, and Z62.898 Child affected by parental relationship distress. Jana is exhibiting signs of denial, followed by a great deal of anger. The methods to be used in her treatment will be narrative therapy, CBT cognitive restructuring, meditation and journaling. The goals are to explore and reduce clients anger, and to explore and reduce any stress or anxiety leading to depression. When journaling Whiteny (2017) expressed that when he sat with a pen and paper or his fingers typing away on the computer keyboard it increased his sense of oneness with God as he reflected upon God's word. Reflecting and meditating on Scripture as a form of reduction in anxiety and depression is important to her treatment. 10 Praying is a form of meditation as well, Entwistle (2017) explains that the Bible tells us that we must pray for the glory of God , for His will to be done, and to show our faith and trust in the name of Jesus continually. Justification, according to Grudem (2022), is the acknowledgement of our sins being forgiven and declares us as righteous in God's eyes. This can be used when looking at the development of a strengths list for Jana, to help with her cognitive restructuring of any maladaptive thoughts she may be experiencing. Those leading to her depression, Clinton et al. (2005) shares that it is important to identify the interpersonal disturbance or relationship problem that is leading the depression. Anthony and Barlow (2020) expressed that through the addition of complexity of depression, there are different symptoms, and they change at different rates. The use of cultural meaning in the narrative therapy process is dependent on the clients

cultural background (Goldenberg et al., 2017). Rewriting her story as she identifies with her cultural background, as being Christian, she can rely on Scripture that relates to the cause of her depression. Grudem (2022) explains that to believe in God we must trust in the evidence found in Scripture and nature. Identifying Jana's strengths will be important in helping with cognitive restructuring. Will she be able to express her identity, is it with Christ or with the world.

Teaching Jana about the meaning of prayer as Grudem (2022) shares, it is not for God to find out what we need, but for the expression of our trust in God, with the ability to increase this trust in Him. When we doubt His ability to heal someone, when we pray can be associated with increased depression, as one will lose hope. Journaling as a form of mediation when indulging in Scripture and prayer will help with identifying areas of struggle, allowing her to reflect on them and eventually surrender them to God through prayer. Utilizing support from her church family and friends as another part of her treatment plan will be essential. Leaning on the body of Christ as it is more than just ministering to believers and the world, Grudem (2022) explains that we must work for the unity of the church. Son John is 16 and a sophomore in high school. John admits that he has always liked video games and often plays 2 hours a day but has been playing about 8-10 hours a day since the diagnosis. John says at one point, "maybe if I'd had enough faith this wouldn't have happened, or maybe God would have already healed Momma." Young John blames himself, but Mrs. Jones corrects John gently and says his level of faith was not the cause of anything, and he listens but mentions that their aunt Jeanne told him "By His stripes we are healed" and that if they all had faith enough, there would be a supernatural healing. Mrs. Jones contradicts the aunt's viewpoint, but John seems unsure of what to think and tearfully says he just wants to believe whatever will make his mom healthy again. F32.89 Other Specified Depressive Disorder, F43.20 Adjustment Disorder Unspecified, Z60.0 Phase of Life problem,

Z65.8 Religious or spiritual problem, Z63.0, and Z62.898 Child affected by parental relationship distress. John appears to be struggling the most with His faith in God and the healing of his mother. His treatment will consist of CBT restructuring negative cognitions, narrative therapy, meditation and journaling. His goals will be to help him redirect the negative thinking that places the blame on himself. Work on reducing his anxiety and possible depression. Provide support and develop understanding of how his religious beliefs affect his cognitive distortions. While working with John, teaching him that prayer is learned according to Whitney (2017), a child of God will gradually learn to pray. Although he already knows how to pray, he must learn that he is not responsible for how his prayers are answered. Grudem (2022) expressed that we must understand that not all of our prayers will be answered as we want them to be during this age and this is due to His sovereign purpose. This can be quite difficult for a teen to understand, 12 concerning the current circumstances. Grudem (2022) also points out that we must seek God's healing eagerly and trust in Him to bring good out of the situation. John has stated some maladaptive cognitions as he has blamed himself for not praying good enough, and these negative cognitions can now be addressed and should start with observing and identifying some of his strengths. We will also begin using think descriptions, as Goldenberg et al. (2017) suggest, making use of the clients hopes, dreams, and commitments can be eschewed. The client will reauthor his story and free himself of the problem that is affecting him (Goldenberg et al., 2017). Grudem (2022) describes how we may never completely understand God and His ways of thinking, but we can know Him relationally. Whitney (2017) explains that we are expected to pray, and some nonconformists may struggle with this, but true believers through trust and faith in God believe it is the will of God, and we believe this is good. God according to Grudem (2022) true prayer reveals our wholeness of our character and allows us to relate to the

personhood of God. Helping John understand this will reinforce his trust and faith in his prayers, derailing his maladaptive thinking. Meditation and journaling will also be a part of his plan.

Whitney (2017) believes that through meditation in the word of God, it helps us to express our thoughts and feelings to God. This journaling is a way for him to surrender to God and give Him all that is bothering him, without speaking it aloud. By mediating on Scripture Entwistle (2021) reveals that evangelicals rest on the belief that all Scripture is God-given, and we can trust and have faith on all of it. His mother tried to downplay his aunts statements of healing. Entwistle (2021) mentions that his father never witnessed a miracle but believed in a God who has brought forth in Scripture miracles. Grudem (2022) further adds this of healing, God sometimes chooses not to heal, even when we are praying for it, we must still give Him thanks as he uses sickness to draw us closer to 13 Him. Relating to fellow believers his own age will be helpful and useful for him as additional support. The church is a source of hope, help and support as the body of Christ. John will call upon his family and his church family for help and support when needed. God created the church for this purpose, Grudem (2022) shared that the church is made of different ministries and each ministry is designed to serve its purpose all under the headship of Christ. 14

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