

ABSTRACT

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY AND SPIRITUAL AND PASTORAL CARE IN THE PRACTICE OF A HEALTHCARE CHAPLAIN: AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC NARRATIVE CASE STUDY EVALUATION

GUY HARRISON

October 2015

This project describes and evaluates the relationship between counselling and psychotherapy and spiritual and pastoral care in my practice as Head of Spiritual and Pastoral Care within an NHS Trust. The literature suggests that a gap in knowledge exists regarding the relationship between therapeutic practice and spiritual and pastoral care. The purpose of the research is to generate insight into this relationship within a multi-disciplinary context in order to clarify the role and contribute to both the knowledge base and the development of practice.

The project comprises a personal story researched through an in-depth, single narrative case study of practice, set within an autoethnographic frame. Field stories of my practice are presented using the lens of a researcher-practitioner interpretation of what took place. A reflexive approach is adopted in order to convey as faithful an account as possible of the elements of each encounter. The reflective nature of the writing is both iterative and creative in its approach.

The findings demonstrate that within the complexities of the role of the chaplain who is also a therapist it is possible to bring together psychological, spiritual and pastoral insights into practice in ways that are integrative and holistic. The research evidence together with the products associated with it also demonstrates the current lack of conceptual clarity around the role and the need to describe its psychotherapeutic, spiritual and pastoral integrity and identity.

The study describes an integrated psycho-spiritual approach and concludes that its adoption makes it possible to integrate training and experience in both counselling and psychotherapy and spiritual and pastoral care. It offers the proposition that integration of contemporary spirituality with practical theological insights and the application of a Person Centred therapy can act as a resource for the development of what is described as Radical Presence. The new knowledge generated by the research will be developed through a symposium, the outcome of which will be a book, together with the establishment of a Centre for Spirituality and Wellbeing.