

DISERTAČNÍ PRÁCE

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Spiritualita a duševní nemoc

Role spirituality v životě lidí se zkušeností s psychotickým onemocněním

Spirituality and Mental Disorder: The Role of Spirituality in the Lives of People with Experience of Psychosis

Abstract

The dissertation investigates the relationship of mental illness and religion. It focuses on the role of spirituality in people with experience of psychosis.

In the theoretical part, the problem of drawing the line between pathological and normal spirituality is discussed, stressing the importance of a functional point of view and the need for a dialogic relationship with the ill person. The theoretical part goes on with mapping the potential of spirituality in the recovery process. Spirituality often helps the afflicted to perceive their illness as a meaningful process, making it easier to cope with the illness. At the end of the theoretical part, four alternative or complementary conceptual frameworks are presented.

The empirical part consists of a qualitative research of nine subjects (believers with the experience of psychosis). The data collection and analysis is based mainly in the IPA method (interpretative phenomenological analysis). The research aims to map how mental illness affected the subjects' spirituality and vice versa. The research further looks into the meaning ascribed to spirituality by believers with psychotic experience.

The research revealed that mentally ill believers are searching for their own interpretation of the psychotic experience and that spirituality often plays an important role in this search. Spirituality also affects their choice of coping strategies. The outcomes of the empirical research are linked to the theoretical part and the four conceptual frameworks (the dark night of the soul concept, the spiritual emergency concept, the concept of psychosis as a rite de passage, and the psychosomatic framework) are further developed.

Based on the findings of the empirical research, other complementary interpretations are discussed, including mainly those drawing on C. G. Jung's conception of the collective unconscious and on the conception of illness as punishment.

The research shows that spirituality affects the recovery process both in a positive and negative way. The outcomes of the research indicate that people affected by psychosis benefit from those forms of spirituality that lead to the so called grounding/earthing effect. Based on the outcomes of the research, clues for distinguishing pathological from healthy aspects of spirituality of the ill are formulated. Functionality, or the way a certain feature affects the life of an individual, serves as the basic criterion for assessing pathology. However, the differentiation of healthy and pathological aspects of spirituality must take place in the dialogue with the ill as respect to the ill person's perspective is prior to the functionality viewpoint.

The work aims to prompt an expert discussion leading to a deeper integration of spirituality into the mental health care. In the conclusion, some recommendations for working with the spirituality of people with the experience of psychosis are suggested in the conclusion.

Key words: spirituality, religion, mental disorder, psychosis, schizophrenia, pathology