



INTEGRATING TRADITIONAL SPIRITUAL HEALING IN CYBER COUNSELING CONSULTATIONS

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ABSTRACT

The value of spirituality in healing is a time-honored concept. There has been a recent surge in interest in the eastern philosophies for mental health care. For instance, successful amalgamation of Zen's principles with cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) in the form of dialectical behavioral therapy (DBT), as well as the psychotherapeutic application of mindfulness is on the rise. In most cultures for centuries, different formats of directive or non-directive talk therapies for treatment of mental-health problems have been utilized. It cannot be denied that in the present technology era of online boom permeating into almost all aspects of our daily life, But every coin has two sides and the positive side of this is that this dependence has paved way for the relevance of research on cyber psychology. There are so many issues which affect us in daily life which needs resolution and needs immediate attention. Owing to this increasing competitiveness in the present day world, there is not enough time for people to be able to interact with their near and dear ones. In such a scenario, where is the time for them to spend on visiting a counselor? Money is not the constraint but money cannot buy happiness. And before they realize it, its too late and their interpersonal relations have been brought to a point

of no return. Its not surprising that recent developments in the area of counseling and psychotherapy also take on a new form of cyber counseling consultations with an interesting intermix of traditional healing approach along with the modern one. The present paper will dwell upon one such case study in which a client's life with history of depression, low self esteem and gender rejection from parents also gets enmeshed into an unhappy marital life although it was a love match minus the parent's blessings. She had lost all hope and was bordering on suicidal ideations. How traditional spiritual psychotherapy was successfully used in conjunct with cyber consultations is the context of this paper.

Key words ; CBT, DBT, Cyber consultations, technology, counseling, psychotherapy

Introduction

To know better about this condition, Borderline disorder, lets have a look at this example first.

Thanks for the session yesterday. I know i need to be a little more strong and confident. and with time I am trying to build that. As far as materialistic things are concerned, everyone looks forward to living a comfortable life. But at present my first priority is my mental peace. I want to live a peaceful life. I know Harish talks all positive but somehow he has failed to be a good husband. Has always been very dominating and bossy. I have always felt like an employee of his rather than his wife. Why does he love me and I am not able to have the same feeling for him? Thats the question. And somewhere he knows and feels the same and has asked me many times whether I also love him or not. To which I have always lied that 'I DO',, just to sustain our relationship. He use to torture me with his these questions so much that once i Cooked up and lied to him that I had an affair before marriage so am not able to give myself fully to him at night. Because it was only during the nights when I had to give in myself to his demands that he use to feel I am not willingly doing the act. This made him develop that feeling that somewhere I don't love him.

Yesterday we didn't go for any dinner or outing together as he had a business meeting which lasted for few hours. I am not a girl who puts forth her demands. I am little shy personality. But nevertheless, if i have somehow managed to tell him something as simple as going for a movie of my choice, which no doubt he has done but again making me realise that it was a favour to me. and many times it has also happened that he has walked out of the cinema hall leaving me alone saying that 'its your choice so u watch and i am waiting outside.' Can

someone explain me that in such a situation what shall I do? I also use to get up and come out of the hall coz he use to be full of anger and then I had to control the situation by saying that yes this is a stupid movie , lets go somewhere else. And gradually I stopped my little demands also.I don't know where my life will take me but I have just one son, whom I want to remain unaffected by whatever is happening between us.

The term borderline personality is highly evocative, suggesting someone living life on the edge. In reality, borderline personalities are characterized more by volatility than by risk. Emotional dysregulation and impulsivity are at the disorder's core. Sufferers swing from happiness to despair to fury, often in minutes, and each feeling is vastly disproportionate to its trigger. "Life is like a ship in a stormy sea without a keel," says New York psychiatrist Frank Yeomans. Borderline personality disorder cuts a wide swath of destruction. Slowly, the condition is yielding to new understanding—provided patients get the correct diagnosis.

Another case:

It had been an idyllic day celebrating a cousin's wedding until Rohan's wife turned to him during the reception and said she was having a panic attack. The loud music in the room seemed to be engulfing her, heightening her anxiety. After the main course was served, Rohan and his wife got up to go for a drive and get some air. To respect his wife's privacy, Steve did not tell anyone why they were leaving, including his sister, Sunita who was seated at their table.

Minutes after the two left the wedding, as Rohan later learned, Sunita started approaching family members to claim that Steve and his wife had stormed off over something she did—and that they'd refused to tell her what she'd done wrong. She marched from table to table sharing the story, adding more drama with each telling. She ended up in the ladies' room a few minutes later, sobbing, and it took Rohan's mother, other sister, and several close friends to calm her down so she wouldn't disturb the festivities.

*While trying to help his wife through her panic attack, Rohan had stopped paying attention to his cell phone. When he next looked at the screen, he faced a torrent of messages from Sunita , each more indignant than the last. "I deserve better... what the **** is wrong with you!... I*

HATE YOU!... Never call me again. You're dead to me!" Steve still marvels at how quick SunitaKlara was to erupt in response to her perception of events. "Despite there being no argument, no unpleasant words exchanged," he says, "our absence was presumed to be a slight directed at her and her alone."

Sunita's spontaneous emotional combustion at the wedding would probably seem totally unremarkable to the 14 million adults in the U.S. who are estimated to have borderline personality disorder. They make up 2 percent of the general population but 20 percent of psychiatric inpatients. Most are women, and they typically turn the ups and downs of everyday life into a roller-coaster ride of moods. In doing so, they don't just alienate others around them, they subvert their own life trajectory. Explosively reactive, and often struggling to get a grip on themselves, borderlines have difficulty maintaining stable relationships or even holding down a job.

Courting Chaos

If interacting with a borderline is confounding, the condition is highly disruptive to borderlines themselves. During her worst flare-ups, says Kavita, her emotions became so overwhelming they gave rise to physical symptoms. **"My head would feel like it was spinning. My breathing would become shallow and my muscles tense. I would get what I describe as a flush of cold adrenaline flooding through my body. The urge was to curl up in the fetal position and cry until I was so exhausted that I wanted to sleep."**

Although BPD has long been ascribed to problematic parenting scientists now believe that the borderline personality develops out of a neurobiological flaw. Borderlines exhibit a highly reactive limbic system in conjunction with a decreased capacity for cortical control of it, reports Mayo Clinic psychiatrist Brian Palmer. Vulnerability to the disorder appears to be inherited in the form of a tempestuous temperament, although early caretaking in some way seems to activate it.

The condition may not manifest until adolescence—often with self-cutting, burning, or frank suicidal behavior—but it begins long before. "As children, they are hard to parent," says Palmer.

In the absence of exceptional parenting, they never achieve self-regulation or a stable sense of self and never learn to tolerate any distress.

Hence living with a BPD becomes an ordeal in itself. And the worst sufferers become the spouse and the children especially in the Indian context.

They are quick to assume others are excluding them—and quick to react to that perceived rejection. "Say you're having dinner with a borderline person and someone else comes into the room, and you start a conversation with that other person," "The borderline is liable to think that the other person is preferred, and to feel betrayed. When the other person leaves, the borderline will say something like, 'What was so good about her?'" Paranoia, especially arising in interpersonal conflict, has been one of the diagnostic criteria for borderline disorder.

Borderlines' all-consuming fear of rejection stems from a bone-deep terror that the people they're close to will abandon them. "The fear of abandonment commonly drives borderlines to seek confirmation that they truly matter. In practice, it could mean interrupting a boyfriend during an important work meeting or showing up at his doorstep in pajamas in the middle of the night. "I feel I'm going to die if I can't contact the person," is the feeling these persons suffer from.

Their overwrought rejection sensitivity leads borderlines to assess other people and situations in all-or-nothing terms. "There's a tendency to operate in extremes—black or white, right or wrong," says psychiatrist Jerold Kreisman, author of *I Hate You—Don't Leave Me: Understanding the Borderline Personality*. Chaos and crises, in fact, bring comfort to borderlines. "They actually feel safer in chaotic environments and relationships," says San Diego psychiatrist David Reiss. "In a chaotic situation, the person knows the territory. In a calm situation, the person feels insecure, not knowing when the next shoe will drop and unprepared for what type of abuse or disruption may lie ahead."

Intense Irony

The affirmation that borderlines pursue so desperately from others turns out to be the Achilles' heel of their lives. Their interpersonal intensity—emotional outbursts, heated middle-of-the-night exchanges—often jeopardizes their most important relationships. Calling a friend at four in the

morning after a fight, pleading "I have to see you right now. I have to know that things are OK between us," is seldom endearing. "Borderlines engineer the ending of the very relationships they covet" by wearing out friends and loved ones..

Intractable No More

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of borderline personality disorder is the view that has emerged over the past decade that, despite the array and depth of deficits, it is not an intractable condition. With treatment, symptoms like suicide attempts and cutting remit. "Most patients lose some symptoms rapidly," observes McGill University psychiatrist Joel Paris.

The most specific and best-evaluated treatment for borderline personality disorder is dialectical behavior therapy. Developed by University of Washington psychologist Marsha Linehan, DBT grew out of her failed attempts to treat borderlines with traditional cognitive behavior therapy. Patients perceived its emphasis on change as totally invalidating and often dropped out of therapy. The "dialectical" in DBT reflects the paradox at its heart—communicating radical acceptance in the face of constant self-invalidation while recognizing the need for change.

The therapy aims first to diminish suicidal behavior, then to impart such basic behavioral skills as emotional regulation and distress tolerance. "The ultimate goal of treatment," Linehan has said, is "to move the client from a life in hell to one worth living, as quickly and efficiently as possible."

Spiritual Leanings

Sometimes it requires only the spiritual age old practices and thoughts help in healing.

Dear Doctor,

I always think about the people in my life and how they insulted me and hurt me and always carry those things. this would have happened some 5 or 10 or 15 years before but still it will keep flashing in my mind and be upset as it happened today or yesterday. I have seen so may people who neglected me and hurt me. I was an easy victim to bear all the

insults. this thinking is kind of killing me like anything. moreover, my plight now ie. my poor health and no kids make it even more miserable. I thought of having a good accomplished life but I was not gifted. so what I feel is they will look down upon me. infact I am ashamed to tell you this that I feel jealous of those who had played with my emotions. one example is my cousin was staying in our house for nearly 5 to 6 years and he pretended to be affectionate with me. I didn't realise that he stayed with me to cut his cost staying in hostel. me being an emotional fool, thought he is also affectionate but slowly he started taking a ride on me he was very clever. he never respected me even though he is younger, his parents also acted like that. they used to say that he is like my own brother. but when he had to wind up he behaved very badly, like he wont even inform if he will be late or go to his friends house. after all I cooked for him that many years. there are so many instances like this if I had to tell them you may feel bored.

do you understand why I am upset like this. I cant bear a child, now those people are looking down upon me. they influence other people and are isolating me. this is just one such instance.

I will tell you one more thing. once my sister and my aunt had an argument. I advised my sister not to make argument with elders. after a while my aunt was normal with my sister and didn't talk to me. it was evident that was my sister's fault and for no reason she didn't talk to me. you please tell is there any fault on my side, so like this I have faced so many issues and after a certain point of time I became unable to bear it. now please help me doctor all these so many problems I have faced keeps flashing my mind every now and then. I started feeling inferior. but not working on it.

Please help me. I am jealous of only those people who hurt me and taken me for granted though it may not be morally correct. what do I do now. may be you may think thatj I am talking good of myself but no doctor, definitely I am not that bad.

Please help me to come out of this trauma of mine. I feel my life itself is finished. I have not had the best of my life and is still worrying, grumbling, getting frustrated and don't want to do anything.

keeping all this in mind I feel my husband didn't support me very well. he gave least importance to my health. I always think that he is also one of the reason for this low of mine. thats why I suddenly become very angry on him when I think of all these. once his bhabhi told me not to touch her child when she had delivered the baby, for no reason. you know what my husband said, what she may be sentimental about her child only mothers will know the importance of child. I died partially that day doctor. he is simply pretending. when he brought his female friend here he was all praise for her. just to put me down. why on this all these happen to me. is this the fate of my birth.

and now my life itself is over. I am entering my forties and lot **of my hair has gone grey.** where can I go for hope. can I ever add meaning to my life. can I rise like a phoenix bird. is it possible or is it too much. can you tell me please.

even if I work hard my health is not improving. all my medical reports say things are normal for me, except my for my fertility. I have run out of ovums, so I cant conceive. that's what doctor said. otherwise also I am not healthy. should that be because of depression. or am I a mental patient.

please help me out.

The individual was in such a state of emotional stress that she was suffering from suicidal ideations when she came to me for consultations.

She was embittered that life/destiny/God has forsaken her and she was suffering ever since the day she was born.

The following is another of her conversation.

I was very cautious that I should not argue with my husband yesterday. I am obsessed with so much feelings, which come across my mind almost every day. My health has gone very bad. I feel very tired most of the time. I travel nearly 4 hours everyday from my residence to office. My husband bought an apartment at a very far off place inspite of me resisting

him from. I told him that I have travel allergy but he didnt listen to me. He is more oriented towards his family consisting of a brother and sister who are settled very well. He gives money to them. So he purchased an apartment which is away from the city and cheaper so that he could give his earnings to his family. I am not the one who wants to stop my husband from doing good things to his family but he has so much loans. All these things really bother me. We had a late marriage. So he didntrealise that we only had a few precious years left for maintaining health and getting a baby. He made me travel for such long distances though I told him many times that I have travel allergy and that it is taking a toll on my health. He never gave importance to me. I know for pretty sure that his brother is not at all a good person and that he doesnt have any love for him. I am not exaggerating. It is true but I really wonder how he is after him and gives all his money. Though he is earning well his bank balance was only rs. 500/- Doctor, I m not a money minded peroson. Though I dont interfere in his money matters, what makes me worry is that he doesntrealise what is good and bad. He doesnt value me and my health at all. I am unbale to explain it to him. Even if he can understand he will pretend as if he doesnt. What do I do.

Then whenever I watch a movie or serial and if something bad happens in it I related it myself also., like for instance if somebody is murdered, then I imagine that this will happen to me also and strongly believe in it and be upset for that for a long time or if somebody is suffering from some disease, I imagine I will face such things one day. Sometimes it may be some weird and wild imaginations that it may keep me upset for days together. What shall I do doctor.

I am very angry on my husband cos he is also one of the reasons for my poor health and I am still travelling because of him.because of poor health I dont look good and that is why people dont value me that is what I feel. He is not concentrating on the areas which are important and simply blaming me for not mingling with people. He should realise that I m also a human being who is like his brother and sister.

Due to this wild thinking and imaginations I am preoccupied and losing concentration and focus. He shouts at me for that also. Sometime when I m obsessed with such thoughts, I

may not listen to my husband but he doesnt understand that and he says its better not to talk to me.

With all these problems evident in me and me not becoming a mother, makes my relatives to avoid me.I started feeling very inferior. Even if I do good things they dont value me. I feel very lonely and that I dont know how to survive in this world. Always trust people who are not worthy of and emotionally do all good things to them and regret for it. This sort of experience has taken my innocence away and am always suspicious of others, thinking that they will harm or hurt me. Even in office I feel that my officers extract lot of work from me and favour others when is comes to settling some issures. I can be fooled very easily or taken for granted.

Please help me. This may seem so simple but all these keep eating my mind 24x7.

Please hep me doctor. I am feeling very low, insecured, no interest to do work, keep postponing all the work and living only for the sake of it. When I have to do something I question myself what am I going to do by doing this.

Doctor, please help me to come out of this worry.

She was given spiritual healing practices during counselling. The necessity of inculcating and practicing the art of forgiveness for her own sanity and strength was brought home to her like in the following interactions, she was told to :

Regarding your health

1 What cannot be cured must be endured.

Do not worry too much regarding the distance.

Nagging him will not change him.

soits better to keep quiet - not because he is right but to retain our sanity.

2 Trust in God- even tho He may have given u little reason to trust Him.

3 Worrying will increase ur ill health. sopl do not worry.

4 Take care of ur health.

Eat balanced diet at all times Milk, fruit etc

5 Never stop taking food in anger.

6 Never react when angry - it will make your health deteriorate. Try to respond, not react.

7 Let him get old, resolve his loans - you just do not bother.

8 Think of him as your neighbour - just do not bother about his issues.

9 Be courteous and polite with him - as if to a neighbour

DO THESE THINGS NOT BECAUSE HE IS RIGHT

BUT BECAUSE YOU HAVE TO RETAIN YOUR SANITY AND HEALTH

Many such cyber sessions were undertaken before she could bring herself to forgive all those who had hurt her from childhood, continued to hurt her and move forward. She felt lots better, relieved, changed her perspective about the situations in her life and realized that yes, she is NOT a victim, but maker of her own destiny.

This is how traditional spiritual healing helps the individual in letting go and moving forward.

Efficacy of Cyber consultations

In such a scenario, family members of BPD's feel crushed and trampled after years of living in such an unstable environment with an unpredictable person. They suffer from low self esteem

and depression and need counseling themselves for their own sanity. But as life is becoming more and more hectic and daily hassles of living have become numerous, it gets really difficult for such family members to get help. Sometimes it's due to lack of time or even space (which a BPD family member refuses to give). So in this era of technological advancement, cyber consultations provide the next best solution for retaining the sanity of such family members who get overwhelmed and overwrought by living in such pathetic mental health conditions which living with a BPD reduces them to. Also, to stay ahead of competition, as professionals too, cyber consultations are an area with needs more exploring and passionate commitment requiring different and specific set of skill sets.

The authors have been successfully involved in doing cyber consultations and yes, the success rate of such therapy is also quite high as many researches do also suggest. (Barnow et al, 2009)

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