Narratives of Forgiveness: Using targeted Booklist & Playlists for therapy

A LITERATURE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Nurses need forgiveness intervention tools because forgiveness affects their patients’ health. The goal of this project was to review peer-reviewed literature to discover what lists of books or other media help people forgive. Bibliotherapy utilizes narrative in the form of fiction, biography, theology, etc., for therapeutic effect. There is limited information on how to build targeted book or media lists to help people forgive. We searched databases, using the search terms, “bibliotherapy”, “forgiv*”, “media”, “qualitative”, and “quantitative” to answer our research question. What reading material and mass media helps people forgive? Our research indicates that while scholars have developed processes that help people forgive, some developed lists of narrative or didactic literature that helped people forgive. We also found that intentionally modeled behavior, broadcast as a radio drama, encouraged the forgiveness process in areas of the Democratic Republic of Congo. These findings connect to research conducted by Albert Bandura, who showed that behavior modeled by others is one way that encourages people to change their own behavior. This research revealed gaps in the scholarly literature to answer our research question, therefore this literature review is the first step in the development of a qualitative study to fill this gap.

INTRODUCTION

WHAT KINDS OF MATERIAL HELPS PEOPLE FORGIVE?

Our research question for this literature review was: what reading material and mass media helps people forgive? We specified definitions for Mediation, Bibliotherapy, and Forgiveness. Our research question and these definitions guided our critical literature review. The literature review is the first step in the development of a qualitative study to fully answer the research question.

• Forgiveness: In their concept analysis, Recine, Werner, & Recine (2007) defined forgiveness as a moral response which involves a choice to let go of a negative judgment of the offender without condoning the offence. In contrast with forgiveness, which is an immediate positive regard towards the offender that does not take time, forgiveness is a shift from an initial negative judgmental attitude towards the offender that takes time, and moves towards an altruistic choice that is a gift to self, others, and perhaps God.

• Mediation proposed definition, therapeutic use of any media (film, video/ board games, mobile apps, etc.) to express forgiveness and problem solving, coping, or insight (“Mediation”, 2018, p. 84).

• Bibliotherapy, “therapeutic use of literature to express forgiveness, active problem solving, coping, or insight” (“Bibliotherapy”, 2018, p. 84).

RESULTS

DIFFERENT MODES OF ENCOURAGING FORGIVENESS

Two articles were found that used empirically-based process models to encourage subjects to forgive. They are available in lay literature: 8 Keys to Forgiveness & 8 Keys to Mental Health (Enright, 2015) Forgetting and Reconciling: Bridges to Wholeness and Hope (Worthington, 2003).

• “These considerable gains may be attributable to the unique content and features of the REACH forgiveness program. Based on a treatment that has been designed to explicitly promote forgiveness (Worthington, 2001), the REACH was geared to enhance empathy and forgiveness and reduce hostility.”

• Each session followed a prescribed format. First, content from the previous week was reviewed and participants engaged in a warm-up activity (30-min). The warm-up activities introduced forgiveness concepts. Second, group activities helped participants confront and understand the transgressions they experienced and the feelings associated with the unfair treatment (100-min). These activities included role-playing dialogue with parents, drawing pictures that represented family dynamics, and sharing family stories related to forgiveness concepts. Third, the session concluded with a review of forgiveness concepts (20-min). The complete curriculum is available from the first author.”

One article was found that offers insight into the use of targeted media for the modeling of forgiveness behavior. It was a publicly available radio drama. … the radio drama increased openness to the idea that other groups have suffered in similar ways as the ingroup (inclusive victim consciousness), and more support for intragroup communication between social groups (less social distance).”

DISCUSSION

CONNECTION TO THEORETICAL LITERATURE

Bobo Doll Experiment

• Subjects were 56 boys and 56 girls enrolled in the Stanford University Nursery School. They ranged in age from 37 to 69 months. The mean age was 52 months. Subjects were randomly assigned to eight experimental groups of six or a control group of 24. One adult male and female served in the role of models and the experiment was conducted by one female. (Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1961)

• It was thought that conditioned behavior occurred automatically. A closer look shows that it is mediated cognitively. ... reactions based on learned assumptions. A person recognizes that paired events are associated. (Bandura, 1974).

• The Bobo Doll Experiment: in a study about the effects of modeling, behavior was emulated and expressed (12), 859-869. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/h0037514


Lin, Enright, & Klatt, 2012, p. 113

Shechtman, Wade, & Khoury, (2009)

Bobo Doll Experiment

Bandura/Social Modeling Theory

• To the general public, behavior theory is seen as the same as conditioned behavior. The result is that over time, terms such as behaviors and conditioning have taken on unpleasant associations, such as, for example, salivating dogs. (Bandura, 1974).

• It was thought that conditioned behavior occurred automatically. A closer look shows that it is mediated cognitively. ... reactions based on learned assumptions. A person recognizes that paired events are associated. (Bandura, 1974).

• In the bobo doll study (Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1961), “subjects exposed to aggressive models reproduced a good deal of aggression resembling that of the models” (p. 582) while “subjects who observed aggressive models ... were generally less aggressive “. (p. 582)

REFERENCES


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