

Excerpted from:

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**Table 1.3: A Catholic Christian Meta-Model Framework for Mental Health Practice**

The following text identifies four ways that the Catholic Christian Meta-Model of the Person (CCMMP) contributes to and benefits mental health practice.

**The CCMMP expands the vision of the person.** The Catholic Christian Meta-Model of the Person presents a systematic, integrative, nonreductionist understanding of the person, marriage and family, and society, an understanding that is developed from the psychological sciences, philosophy, and the Catholic theological tradition and worldview. The Meta-Model integrates the methods and findings of these three disciplines to understand eleven essential dimensions of the person. These include the narrative of the person as (1) existing and fundamentally good (created), (2) affected by disorders (fallen), and (3) capable of healing and flourishing (redeemed). The person is (4) a unified whole, (5) fulfilled through three types of vocational callings (individual goodness and relationship with the transcendent; vocational states; and life work), (6) fulfilled in virtue strengths and character development, (7) and fulfilled in interpersonal relationships. The person is (8) sensory-perceptual-cognitive, (9) emotional, (10) rational and intelligent, and (11) volitional and free.

**The CCMMP enriches mental health practice.** The Meta-Model serves as a framework for mental health practice and for understanding the person. Mental health practitioners can use the Meta-Model to assess and diagnose client strengths and weaknesses, psychological disorders, and problems of everyday living; to explain how

problems have developed; to establish treatment goals; and to select and implement evidence-based treatment interventions. Adopting the integrative perspective of the CCMMP as a framework benefits clinical practice, because the Meta-Model provides the structure to integrate existing personality theories and evidence-based therapeutic interventions to fulfill its comprehensive view of persons and the treatment of their problems. Furthermore, the Meta-Model approach also brings benefits by identifying the importance of life callings and vocations of clients and of the development of virtue and character to fulfill them. Finally, the Meta-Model enhances ethical practice by grounding traditional professional ethical principles and the respect for diversity in a moral normative understanding of the person, who possesses innate goodness and dignity in being created unique and in the image of God.

**The CCMMP benefits the client.** The Meta-Model approach to mental health practice helps the clinician and client to understand the client's life narrative and its challenges through this nonreductionist framework. This framework requires consideration of personal development, interpersonal relationships, values, character strengths and weaknesses, vocational commitments, existential issues, diversity, social contexts, and spiritual life. The client is viewed as a unique person, essentially good and possessing dignity. The practitioner acts collaboratively with the client to understand and implement treatment. In doing so, the clinician acts for the client's healing and flourishing in a manner that reflects love of neighbor and respect for the client's conscience and freedom to make life decisions.

**The CCMMP clarifies and supports the clinician's Christian identity.** The CCMMP clarifies how practitioners' lives and faith are integrated with their professional

practice. Becoming a mental health professional is experienced as a calling by God to serve his people. In accepting this call the clinician becomes responsible for developing the professional competencies and virtues (such as empathy, patience, practical wisdom) needed for effective practice. The Meta-Model's worldview motivates a capacity and willingness to generously and unselfishly help all people, especially poor and disadvantaged populations. It also motivates working with Church ministries and brothers and sisters in the faith.

Christian practitioners integrate both professional and Christian ethics in their clinical work to promote their client's freely chosen goals aimed at psychological, moral, and spiritual flourishing. When some aspects of the clients' goals are contrary to Christian ethics and to their ultimate welfare, the practitioner works in a compassionate and nonjudgmental way to assist with as many of their goals as is allowable, according to professional and Christian ethics. This ethical attentiveness allows respect for the client's dignity, conscience, character development, and freedom, while also enabling practitioners to remain faithful to their own consciences.