

*Brining the Hidden Into the Light:*

Application of psychology assessment and therapy to the evaluation, formation, treatment, and on-going support of clergy and religious to not only avoid scandal, but to develop happy, healthy, & holy religious.

Mark S. Glafke, PhD & John  
Cadwallader, PsyD

Catholic Psychotherapy  
Conference 2019

Atlanta, GA

As those who spend significant time evaluating and treating men and women religious and those preparing for religious life, the degree of psychopathology we have observed among them is startling.

Overview of populations served within the Church

Data obtained via review of sample of seminarian applications across multiple dioceses (*unpublished data*)

Recent research regarding data that potentially misrepresents reported decline in abuse cases (cf. Sullins, P., 2018)



Relationship of these issues to health of clergy/religious of the Church and the on-going problem of abuse and scandal

Problems in identification and treatment of psychological challenges at the start of the admissions process, prior to ordination/final vows, and throughout career in ministry

Poor assessments or poor use of assessments by dioceses

Limitations in psychological resources provided for seminarians and religious

# Motivation for this Presentation

# What needs to change?



## Problems missed at admission and during formation

- Lack of clear guidance and recommendations from evaluating psychologists

- Use of evaluators/therapists who do not hold Catholic understanding of human person



## Lack of cohesion between therapists and spiritual directors



## Limitation of involvement of Bishops in reviewing evaluations and treatment progress before ordination (cf. *Ratio Fundamentalis*, 2016).



## Thorough assessment completed only prior to admission rather than at multiple points throughout formation



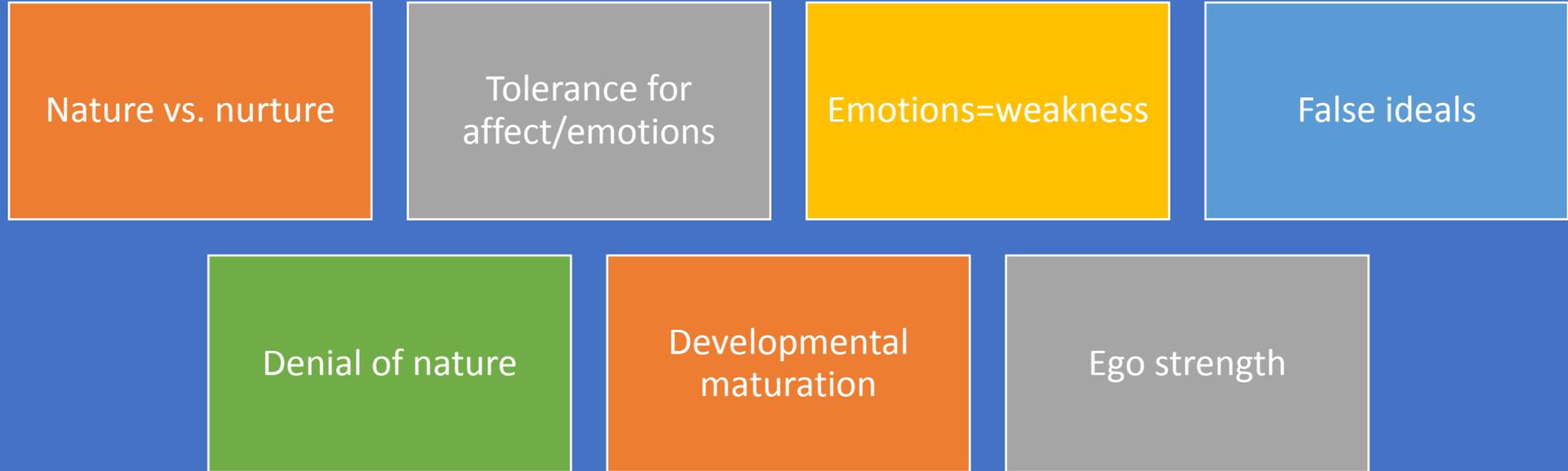
## Need for Church to encourage and support priests/religious to seek out psychological help even for issues not considered as a “crisis.”



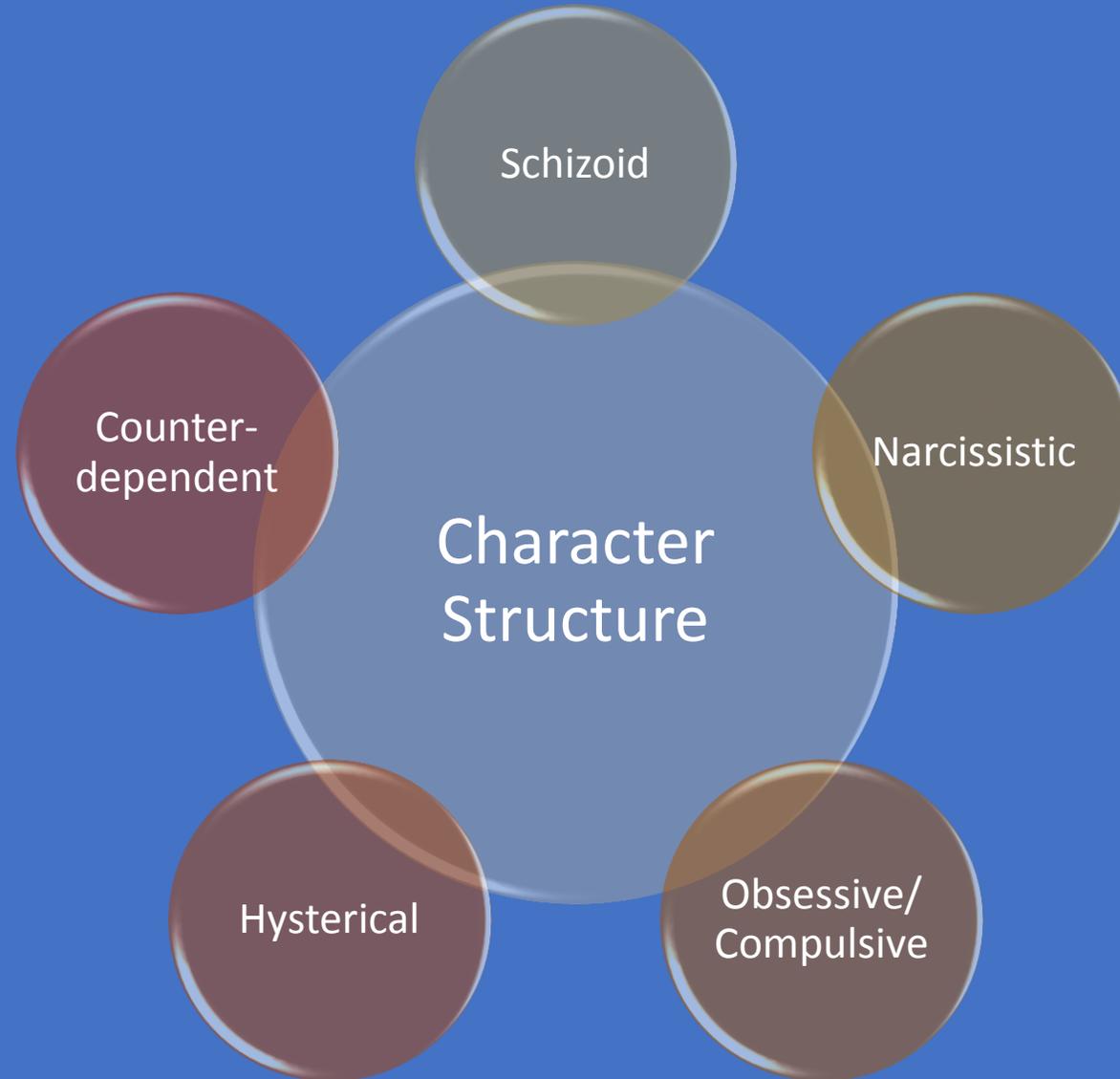
## Development of Increased psychological resources for seminarians and religious

- Target interventions that go beyond simply addressing symptoms but tackle deep-rooted underlying issues.

# Ignorance & Need for Human Integration



# Role of Personality Structure



# Defenses



# Why aren't candidates getting help?



Ignorance and  
good intentions



Stigma of  
Mental Health



Differences of  
viewing from in  
illness vs. health  
perspective



Concerns of  
internal vs.  
external forum



Formators not  
recognizing  
impediments

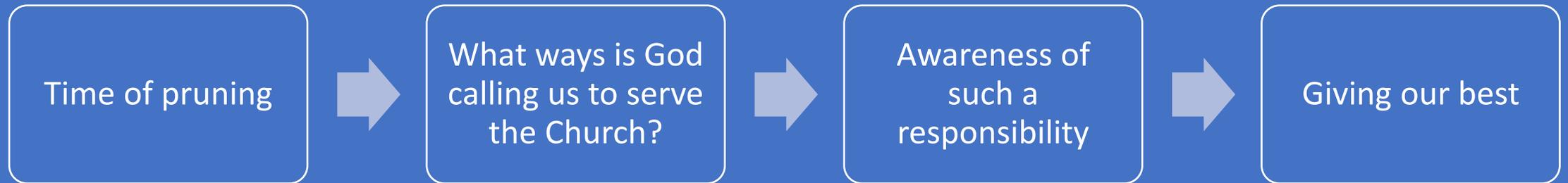


# Case Example: “James”

---

- Summary of results of initial psych evaluation upon admission to seminary
  - Problematic issues with assessment report
- Summary of behavioral observations/concerns noted within first two years
- Interventions utilized
- Lack of Progress: Re-Evaluation in 3<sup>rd</sup> year reveals different picture
  - Findings & Contrasts to initial assessment
- Impact on Seminarian
  - What could have been avoided
- How common is a case like this?

# Where do we go from here?



# Better Assessment

- More than personnel evals
- Better use of formalized testing
- Semi-structured interviews
- Thorough psychosocial histories
- Recognizing limitations of self-report
- Developmental/Relational Considerations
- Greater depth (sexuality)
- Implicit vs. explicit
- Fears of being wrong

# Better Psychotherapy

- Moving beyond symptom only approaches
- Origins of their suffering
- Psychoeducation of our clients
- Challenging in addition to support
- Continuum of health and development
- Health vs. illness
- Tolerance for healthy emotional intimacy
- Use of implicit/projective techniques

# Better Collaboration

- Overcoming stigma to increase referrals
- Supporting bishops, vocation directors, spiritual directors, formators
- Balancing the challenges between the clinician and vocation directors
- Psychologists talking directly with bishops or religious superiors about assessments to encourage dialogue and support for Church leaders



# Contact Information

**Mark Glafke, Ph.D.**

(765) 268-0709

glafke@gmail.com

www.glafkepsych.com

**John Cadwallader, Psy.D.**

(317) 780-1610x1

drcadwallader@centralpsychservices.com

www.centralpsychservices.com

# References

- Catholic Church. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 41 (6), 526-532.
- Keddy, P. (2017). Using the R-PAS in the pre-employment evaluation of a candidate for a Roman Catholic Seminary. In Mihura, J.L. & Meyer, G.J., *Using the Rorschach Performance System (R-PAS)*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- McGlone, G.J., Ortiz, F.A., & Karney, R. (2010). A survey study of psychological assessment practices in the screening and admission of candidates to the priesthood in the U.S.
- McWilliams, N. (2011). *Psychoanalytic Diagnosis, Second Ed.: Understanding Character Structure in Clinical Process*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- *Psychodynamic Diagnostic Manual*, PDM Task Force, 2006.
- U.S. Catholic Conference of Catholic Bishops (2015). *Guidelines for the Use of Psychology in Seminary Admissions*, Washington, D. C.: Author.
- U.S. Catholic Conference of Catholic Bishops (2005): *Program of priestly formation*. Washington, D.C.: Author.