

NOVEMBER

8

FRIDAY



33rd Annual

Psychotherapy & Faith Conference

Psychotherapy *and* Faith as Safe Harbors in Turbulent Times

Fondren Hall at St. Paul's United Methodist Church

5501 Main St, Houston, Texas 77004

with accommodations for virtual attendance via Zoom

8:45 am - 3:30 pm (Networking begins 8:00 am)

www.spiritualityandhealth.org/events/pf2024

Register
Today



Baylor
College of
Medicine

ISH Institute
for Spirituality
and Health
AT THE TEXAS MEDICAL CENTER

UTHealth Houston
McGovern Center for
Humanities and Ethics

Learning Purpose Statement

Ongoing social, political, and environmental turbulence has left many individuals feeling confused, disoriented, fatigued, and disenchanted. Images, experiences, and stories of human suffering seem inescapable as we witness conflict unfolding all around us. Despite these challenges, there remains an enduring possibility and capacity for resilience, transformation, connection, and a sense of togetherness. This conference explores perspectives that demonstrate how psychotherapy and faith may work together to facilitate the reconciliation of internal conflicts, enabling individuals to confront and integrate emotions that otherwise may be repressed, on one hand, or maladaptively expressed, on the other. Both may serve as vital resources, offering spiritual anchoring, a sense of solace, and the soothing balm of community and connectedness.

By gaining a deeper understanding of how these resources are situated within the current social context, mental health professionals and clergy can enhance their ability to foster healing. Join us in this exploration of important themes that can guide us through life's most challenging moments and discover how they can enrich your professional practice and personal understanding.

Target Audience

The Psychotherapy and Faith Conference is ideally suited for physicians, psychologists, social workers, licensed professional counselors, licensed marriage and family therapists, clergy, chaplains, theologians, spiritual caregivers, and other professionals from religious/spiritual communities from all levels of experience (novice to expert).

Learning Objectives

At the end of this event, learners will be able to:



1. apply principles from world traditions to inform the experience of suffering.
2. integrate spiritual resources in clinical settings.
3. engage in depolarizing interactions with those who hold differing beliefs.

Continuing Education Credits

Successful completion of this activity requires 100% attendance of the activity. Five and one-half (5.5) credit/ contact/clock hours have been designated by UTHealth Houston McGovern Medical School.

Physicians: McGovern Medical School at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

McGovern Medical School at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston designates this live activity for a maximum of 5.5 *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™*. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

Social Workers: This activity is offered for 5.5 continuing education credits for social workers. We adhere to the Texas Behavioral Health Executive Council and Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiner guidelines.

Licensed Professional Counselors: Institute for Spirituality and Health, Provider #959, is approved to provide continuing education credit through the Texas State Board of Examiners of Professional Counselors.

Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists: This activity is offered for 5.5 continuing education credits for marriage and family therapists. We adhere to the Texas Behavioral Health Executive Council and Texas State Board of Examiners of Marriage and Family Therapists guidelines.

Psychologists: This activity is offered for 5.5 continuing education credits for psychologists. We adhere to the the Texas Board of Examiners of Psychology guidelines.

All other attendees will receive a certificate of attendance.

Agenda

8:00 am	Light Breakfast and Networking
8:45 am	Welcome Stuart Nelson - Institute for Spirituality and Health Nathan Carlin, PhD - McGovern Center for Humanities and Ethics James Lomax, MD - Baylor College of Medicine
9:00 am	Faith & CARE: Supporting our Patients with Gender Difficulties Chris Flynn, MD - Aerospace, Clinical, & Operational Psychiatrist
9:45 am	AI Won the First Round with Social Media: Reflections on what comes next, and the implications for faith communities and care providers Kirk Bingaman, PhD - Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education, Fordham University.
10:30 am	Morning Break
10:45 am	Suffering, Meaning-Making, and Religion Liz Hall, PhD - Rosemead School of Psychology, Biola University
12:00 pm	Lunch Break with Learning and Discussion Facilitated by Braver Angels
1:30 pm	Interfaith Panel: Faith as a Safe Harbor in Turbulent Times Moderated by Stuart Nelson - Institute for Spirituality and Health Abbot Gaelyn Godwin - Houston Zen Center Rabbi David Lyon - Congregation Beth Israel Dr. Basem Hamid - Wasat Institute & Shadowcreek Islamic Center
2:30 pm	Afternoon Break
2:40 pm	Clinical Integration Panel Moderated by Jim Lomax, MD - Baylor College of Medicine Nate Carlin, PhD - McGovern Center for Humanities and Ethics Kerry Horrell, PhD - Menninger Clinic
3:25 pm	Closing Remarks
3:30 pm	END

Conference Rates

General – \$100 | Students – \$35
(Includes light breakfast, lunch, and CEs)

Virtual – \$75
(Via Zoom, CEs included)

Featured Presenters



Faith & CARE:

Supporting our Patients with Gender Difficulties



Christopher F. Flynn, MD, is an aerospace, clinical & operational psychiatrist with broad national and international experience supporting and treating top performers and their families in conflict zones, hardship posts, post-disaster events, and during spaceflight. As a recent FAA Assistant Chief Psychiatrist, Chris provided return-to-flying recommendations to the US Federal Air Surgeon for more than 2200 aviators, including those with Gender difficulties. Chris is a Board-Certified Psychiatrist, past USAF Senior Flight Surgeon, past NASA Flight Surgeon/Crew Surgeon and Psychiatrist, and past overseas Regional Psychiatrist, and has held leadership positions in the USAF, VA Healthcare System, and US Department of State.

Patients with Gender difficulties arrive with a complex set of interweaving biological, psychological, and socio-cultural factors that create a heavy mental health burden for them. These pressures create higher rates of depression, anxiety, substance abuse, trauma, and self-harm compared to cis-gender individuals. Two concepts may strengthen our strategies to help reduce their suffering. First, the CARE model guides us with four enduring values of treatment: Compassion, Active listening, Respect, and Empathy. Second, our own “Faith Experience” asks us to withstand the conflict between empiricism and spirituality, and our “Faith Family” teaches us that to grow – we need others who support us. These Faith lessons can prepare us to have compassion and empathy for our patients’ conflicts regarding their Gender difficulties. Working together, we can nurture their hope that despite their burdens, they will be able “to Love and to Work,” creating two key pillars in a meaningful life story.

AI Won the First Round with Social Media:

Reflections on what comes next, and the implications for faith communities and care providers



Kirk Bingaman, PhD, is a professor of mental health counseling and spiritual integration at Fordham University. He is a licensed mental health counselor in New York and a psychotherapist member of the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education. Dr. Bingaman is editor-in-chief of Pastoral Psychology, one of the most well-established journals in the field of psychology and religion/spirituality. He is the author of four books: Freud and Faith: Living in the Tension; Treating the New Anxiety: A Cognitive-Theological Approach; The Power of Neuroplasticity for Pastoral and Spiritual Care; and Pastoral and Spiritual Care in a Digital Age: The Future Is Now.

Digital technology is changing what it means to be human, as it becomes an “irreversible commitment.” We are now dealing with evolutionary forces that are historically unprecedented: an increasingly “aware” AI that is capable of its own recursive self-improvement. The presentation will initially focus on humanity’s first contact with a more primitive version of AI, manifested in the creation of very powerful social networking sites (SNS) simultaneous with a significant increase in mental health issues and religious disaffiliation. For example, multiple studies have linked problematic social media use (PSMU) with anxiety and depression, even finding a possible causal link when there is frequent social comparison when using SNS. The presentation will then focus on likely outcomes if AI continues its rapid advancement, specifically the psychological and spiritual significance of a techno-driven society guided more by effective accelerationism (e/acc) than by alignment and safety issues.

Suffering, Meaning-Making, and Religion



Dr. Liz Hall is a Professor of Psychology at Rosemead School of Psychology, Biola University. She is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association, associate editor of *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, and past president of Division 36, Society for the Psychological Study of Religion and Spirituality of the APA. Dr. Hall has published over 150 articles and book chapters on a variety of topics, including embodiment, religious doubt, virtues, missions and mental health, and most recently, meaning making in suffering. She is supported by generous grants from the John Templeton Foundation, the Templeton World Charity Foundation, and the Templeton Religion Trust.

What is the difference between suffering that leads to flourishing and suffering that leads to more suffering? The short answer is that it depends on the quality of the meaning-making in which the sufferer engages, that is, how successfully the sufferer ties the suffering into their life story. In this presentation, I will highlight the important role of religion in meaning-making, drawing on Crystal Park's meaning-making model as a framework. I note the unique resources that each religion brings to the meaning-making task in the form of beliefs, practices, and valued outcomes, using Christianity and Buddhism as points of contrast. Finally, I illustrate some of the unique resources of Christianity, including both beliefs about suffering and practices, that can be incorporated into religiously accommodative clinical practice.



Braver Angels

Braver Angels is a non-profit organization focused on reducing political polarization in the United States. It promotes constructive dialogue and understanding between individuals with differing political views. The organization conducts workshops, debates, and events designed to foster respectful conversations, encouraging participants to listen actively and engage empathetically. Braver Angels aims to bridge divides, promote civility, and strengthen democratic discourse by helping people find common ground, even amidst deep differences.

This one-hour session serves as both an introduction to Braver Angels and a chance to experience the skills that it offers participants. During this session, the audience will be presented with the problem of polarization and will learn how Braver Angels workshops are structured to address this problem. Attendees will then get to practice an essential skill in the context of difficult conversations by forming an “agree statement” in response to two prompts.

History of the Conference

In the summer of 1992, Mrs. Loise Wessendorff had the vision to start a new conference with a very clear motivation and mission: “Preachers and Doctors don’t talk to each other enough. They should. I want to do something about that!” Loise knew that when people are hurting with emotional distress they often turn to their faith community with important questions about what is wrong with them and what type of help they need. For 33 years, the Annual Psychotherapy and Faith Conference has been a forum for mental health professionals and faith community leaders to discuss shared topics of concern. Neither mental health professionals nor clergy are predictably well informed about their counterpart’s perspectives, and here we have the chance to appreciate our diverse conceptual approach in ways that enrich the “practices” of all involved.



Moderator

Stuart C. Nelson serves as the President & CEO of the Institute for Spirituality and Health at the Texas Medical Center, working with an interdisciplinary team to envision, execute, and sustain a diverse portfolio of programs and projects at the intersection of health, medicine, spirituality, and religion. He completed bachelor's degrees in cognitive science, psychology, and religious studies at Rice University and a master's in religious studies at the University of California at Santa Barbara. He is currently pursuing a PhD in Mind-Body Medicine at Saybrook University, focusing on the psychophysiology of nature contact.



The Abbot of Houston Zen Center, Setsuan Konjin Gaelyn Godwin, is connected nationally and internationally with Buddhist teachers and organizations. She serves as the Director of the International Division of Soto Zen, North America (a department of Soto Zen Headquarters based in Japan). She received ordination as a Zen Priest in 1991, from Tenshin Reb Anderson, Senior Dharma Teacher at San Francisco Zen Center. She received Dharma Transmission, also from Tenshin Reb Anderson, in 2003, and was appointed Kaikyoshi (formal recognition from Japan) in 2005. Her Zen lineage is Soto Zen, through Dōgen Zenji, and through Suzuki Shunryu Daisho, founder of San Francisco Zen Center.



Imam Dr. Basem Hamid is a practicing neurologist and pain specialist and a former faculty member of MD Anderson Cancer Center. He is the Imam of Shadowcreek Islamic Center and a member of the Jurist Council of the Islamic Society of Greater Houston. Born and raised in Syria as part of the refugee program for Palestinians, he graduated from Damascus University's School of Medicine and attained a Master's Degree in Islamic Studies. Since immigrating to the United States in 1996, he founded Wasat Institute, an organization dedicated to exploring the intersectionality of health and spirituality. His work has been published numerous times regarding his research overlapping socio-economic issues, health, and faith.



Rabbi David Lyon has had a rich and diverse career in the rabbinate since his ordination in 1990 from HUC-JIR in Cincinnati. In his current role as Senior Rabbi of Congregation Beth Israel, Rabbi Lyon serves a vibrant congregation of 1600 families, focusing on inclusive participation in education, worship, interfaith outreach, and Israel advocacy. He serves on the board of the Jewish Community Legacy Project (JCLP), and ADL's Coalition for Mutual Respect. He also holds national leadership positions, including President-Elect of the CCAR Board (Central Conference of American Rabbis) and serving on the Board of Trustees of the Reform Pension Board (RPB).

Clinical Integration



James Lomax, MD is a psychoanalyst whose clinical effort involves psychotherapeutic and psychoanalytic treatment of individuals with anxiety, mood, and personality disorders, as well as those with complicated grief, traumatic loss, and other adjustment reactions. He is interested in the interface between psychiatry (from a psychoanalytic perspective), religion, and spirituality. His interdisciplinary efforts involve various organizations, including Baylor College of Medicine, the Institute for Spirituality and Health, the Department of Religious Studies at Rice University, and the Hope and Healing Center and Institute at Saint Martin's Episcopal Church. These relationships deepen the exploration of phenomena, such as healing, grief, and response to loss, from different perspectives.



The Reverend Dr. Nathan Carlin is the Director of the McGovern Center for Humanities and Ethics at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston. Dr. Carlin holds the Samuel Karff Chair and the rank of Professor and is the Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Medical Humanities. Dr. Carlin is a medical humanities scholar and has published 10 books. In recent years, the focus of his writing has been oriented toward developing core texts for medical humanities. Currently, Dr. Carlin is writing a monograph on medicine and secularization; co-editing a book with Keisha Ray, titled *Medicine, Meaning, and Identity*; and, with Renee Flores and Joanne Lynn, preparing the third edition of *Handbook for Mortals: Guidance for People Facing Serious Illness*.



Kerry Horrell, PhD, is a staff psychologist on Menninger's Compass Program for Young Adults as well as the coordinator of the Youth Division. In addition, she is the co-host of Mind Dive, Menninger's podcast for mental health professionals. She is also an assistant professor in the Menninger Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences at Baylor College of Medicine (BCM). Her clinical expertise includes the treatment of shame, trauma and attachment issues, with a particular focus on self-compassion, mentalizing and psychodynamic psychotherapy. Her research interests include experiences of gender and sexuality, as well as religion and spirituality, in how they relate to mental health and well-being.

This conference is sponsored by:



Information for Participants

For assistance with registration, payment, dietary, ADA, or lactation needs, or information on continuing education credits, please contact our operations team at operations@ish-tmc.org

The Institute for Spirituality and Health does not discriminate on the basis of race, color,

religion, gender, gender expression, age, national origin, disability, marital status, sexual orientation or military status in any of its educational activities or operations. These activities include, but are not limited to the selection of presenters, planning committee members, volunteers or exhibitors. We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming learning environment for all.