

PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

Ep. 2 An Ethical Approach to Christianity In Private Practice

Camille McDaniel, LPC (00:03.504)

this episode let's take a look at the foundation that we would need in order to incorporate our faith in Christ into our counseling practice and services. So you know when we take a look at this you know one of the things that I know to be true is that there are a number of mental health professionals who are Christians they follow Christ but maybe you

that's just their personal life because in their business life it doesn't really line up the same way and they would actually like for the two worlds to come together and be just more aligned. So they want to be able to incorporate their faith in Christ into their business practices and into the services that they provide but they're just not really sure how to go about doing

and they don't want to go about that haphazardly, obviously, they wanna have some solid steps to moving forward. And so we're gonna dive into that because I know that there's a number of Christians who also are mental health professionals who really do feel like there's a pull.

on their heart, there's just a calling for them to integrate their life, their personal life and their business life as far as their faith. So that they are taking their faith with them wherever they go, including the work that they do, which is scripturally based. And I know I have mentioned that scripture before, you know, in all things, do them as if doing them unto the Lord, you know, and so.

So let's take a look at some things that we want to make sure to do just as a foundation of getting started with offering more services that incorporate our faith and belief in Christ. I think I have four for this episode. think there are about five things that I'm gonna go over. And so,

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you know, let's go ahead and get right to it. Because we know that the first thing we need to do, first and foremost, we need to pray. We need to talk to the Lord. We need to find out what He wants us to do with this business that He gave to us. And

and we don't want to take any steps until we are really clear. We want to really have some conversations with the Lord. We want to really pray about some things. We want to really get some things off our chest, questions, concerns, you know, all of that. We want to lay it all at His feet and we want to make sure that we're clear on hearing from Him. Who does He want us to serve? How does He want us to serve? You know,

Some of us might need strength to move forward in this way because maybe we have some fears about it. And hopefully what we cover today will give some information so we really don't feel like we have a lot of questions versus well, a lot of questions at the end of this episode versus feeling confident that we know a little bit more of how we can move forward.

And so, you know, after we have prayed and we've really sought the Lord on this and heard from him about how he wants us to proceed and how he wants us to live out our faith, not just in our personal life, but in everywhere that we go, you know, then we want to make sure that we take it now, take all of the information that we got from that prayer time from

you know, just that quiet time with Him contemplating, asking questions, talking, listening to Him then we want to make sure that we educate ourselves according to our ethical codes. And so before we introduce our Christian faith into our practice, it really is going to be very important that we understand our beliefs and how

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aligns with the ethics that we agreed to uphold when we got the various licenses that that we have obtained by our state. So I am a licensed professional counselor. My code of ethics, you know, I find those in the American Counseling Association code of ethics. I know there's a code of ethics

other mental health professionals and we want to take a look at what our code of ethics say. I know that for myself the code of the ACA code of ethics and it includes several different things right but there are just a few things that we want to just take into account and make sure that we feel clear we understand we are confident on

to move forward without breaking these codes that we promise to uphold. So, you know, we have informed consent. That is, you know, that's first and foremost something that we learn, you know, right in our training. So we want to make sure that we are informing our clients or potential clients.

of what they are going to receive from us if they decide to choose to get their counseling support from us. And so that's, you know, one reason why this, the informed consent and being super transparent about how you practice and what your specialties are and what your licenses are. And if you belong to any organizations, you know, just everything,

fully informing your clients about what they can expect when they come to see you. And then there's a number of other things that are involved in informed consent, you know, as it relates to payment or other procedures, missed appointments and all of that. But as it relates to the counseling experience, I really do, I encourage

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people to make sure that they are transparent and open if they happen to provide counseling services from a Christian worldview, then you want to make sure that you fully inform any potential clients about the fact that you offer that and answer any common questions that might come up. So I make sure that I list

With any insurance panels that I have gotten on or that I'm you know that I'm in network with I make sure to list that I provide Christian counseling services. They ask you what your specialties are they ask you what you provide I make sure to list that I make sure that it's listed on any directories that I'm a part of. So if I happen to be which I am on I think one or two directories.

and I make sure to just list that I provide Christian counseling services. I think I'm just on one directory at this point though. I can't remember. Actually, I signed up for more than one, but either way, I'm transparent about it. And then my website is also transparent about the fact that we offer Christian counseling services and what does that even mean?

We took the time to have a page that explains what is Christian counseling? What does that look like? How does that relate to mental health? We answer common questions. Can I be seen at your practice if I'm not a Christian? And that's something that we wanna make sure to help people understand. That's also a part

Again, just fully informing people before they commit to making a phone call or sending an email to your practice. And yes, for our practice, the answer is no, you do not have to be a Christian to receive counseling care from us. However, and this is also stated on our website, however, we find that it is just important to let potential clients know

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of the worldview, the belief systems that the therapists hold so that they can make a fully informed decision and make sure that we would be the right therapist to provide the care that they're seeking.

Now there's going to be more to that, you know, when it comes to, then if I happen to be of a worldview that is Christ centered, then how do I provide care for individuals who may not believe like me without having to compromise on my belief system? Because you can see anybody, I mean, you can see anybody

you happen to have a specialization in training to see. That's really honestly not the issue at all. Now you may find though that there are some issues that come up because whatever is happening in the moment could potentially cause you to come into conflict with the God that you serve, who is Jesus Christ.

I had an example that I can share of somebody, there was something going on in a session, there was just some symptoms that somebody was explaining that they had been experiencing. The things that they were explaining led me to ask them, had they been involved in any kind of religious practices that involved spell work, conjuring?

you know, kind of opening portals to spirits and inviting them in, anything like that. And I really kind of said it just like that. I think one of the things that is majorly important when we are going to serve individuals who may not have our same beliefs is to build rapport so that they know, build good rapport so that they know everything that you are sharing is coming from a place of true desire for them to experience healing.

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For for the best for them there. There is no judgment We're we're not you know looking down on anybody This is just recognizing that there are some areas as we stated on the website as we you know talked about That might be a little different and we may have to have some conversations around it So in this person's case when I asked the question

they did acknowledge that there had been some things that they had been involved in spiritually that were that were impacting them negatively and and they were they were a bit concerned. They were quite concerned. And that's where I was able to again just from a place of genuine caring. I was able to ask questions and I said, do you know

how to, according to your belief system, do you know how you might be able to put that back essentially in its box, close the portal? And I continued by saying, because in this particular scenario, from my perspective as a Christian, there's only one way to do that. However, I am not aware.

if according to your belief system there is another way. Because according to, and I did not go on to say this part to the client, but according to my belief system, darkness cannot cancel out

darkness and there is only one way to defeat darkness and that is through the power of Jesus Christ. However, I was very aware

that in this particular person's situation, they were not comfortable with the idea of Christ, even though they had come from a background and household where that was the belief system. That was not something they were comfortable with. And we had talked about that. So in that case, I know that we both know that there has been some things going on.

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But we also know that they're gonna have to do a little research on their own as it relates to the spiritual part to see what might be done to help. Because, you know, from a spiritual point of view, we did not have the same information. And my perspective was different from theirs, not just perspective as in opinion.

but the perspective that I used as a guideline for how I conducted my counseling, even with individuals who were not of my same belief system.

That goes into making sure that we are clear that we actually are operating in a Christian counseling treatment way. This is not just because this is going to be something else that ethically could cause trouble. And I think also causes some people fear for my code of ethics with the ACA.

there's one line item that talks to personal values of the counselor and just being aware that you're not imposing your values or your belief systems on your clients. And I know that for many of us who had just regular secular training to become counselors, for me, I know my experience in grad school was one where

it was really stressed that it was stressed that you put yourself on the shelf. It is all about the client. And so you come to the room and you adopt whatever worldview the client has to help the client. This is not about you, this is about the client. And so we, I'm not, I'll say, speak for myself.

Camille McDaniel, LPC (16:14.326)

I have come across many counselors who did feel like I have to check my faith at the door. I have to put Christ on a shelf. I can't bring him in this session because that would be kind of against my code of ethics. And this is where we have to kind of really decide, am I gonna move forward with providing Christ-centered counseling?

not because you really can't straddle the fence on that one, you know, you you can't say well I'm a Christian so I can't you know, I can't see Certain people or I can't condone certain things or I can't it's like well, are you providing Christian counseling? You know, you have to be clear on how this is gonna operate. Otherwise, you can find yourself kind of slipping into that ethical code where your belief systems

are being imposed on someone in a way that is not a therapeutic treatment that you informed them about. But if this person is coming to you fully aware that this is the perspective upon which you provide your counseling services, then that's a totally different situation because you are sharing that you provide

and your treatment has a guideline, a boundary of faith around it. So even individuals who don't share your same faith can come, but you just know this is something that is a part of the treatment that I provide for the clients who come my way. you know, the other thing that we want to make sure that rolls right on into all of this is just very clear marketing, you

We want to be very transparent. We want to be transparent about everything, you know, from our license to our specializations. And Christian counseling is a specialization. You have to study on it. have, you know, there is actually, there's technique that integrates faith into some of the other treatment modalities. So it's a real thing.

Camille McDaniel, LPC (18:34.958)

The next thing that I would say as we are trying to build this solid foundation outside of also just being very aware of our ethical codes is to then get resources. You know, we have resources for all the other treatment modalities that we use in order to help our clients. And if you would like to start incorporating your faith as a Christian into the counseling that you offer,

then you need the resources to do so. And one of the very first resources that you will need is the Bible. And so you want to get comfortable with reading your Bible, with researching in your Bible, just the same way that you would do if you were trying to research some other treatment modality, like dialectical behavioral therapy or cognitive behavioral therapy or EMDR or whatever.

whatever other thing, you know, whatever other treatment modality that you might be using, you researched it, you studied it, you trained for it, you know. Well, this is no different. You want to train, you want to know what's in your word, you want to know how it applies to some of the challenges that people are experiencing in your practice. You want to then know how you can take the word of God.

and use it to be a comfort or to be a guide or to inform those clients who have said they would like their faith as believers in Christ to be incorporated into their counseling experience. I've encountered some individuals who they didn't even know that was an option. They were like, what exactly is Christian counseling? What does that even mean?

And these were individuals who are, they are Christians themselves, but you know, they did not know anything about Christian counseling. So they were actually pleasantly surprised. They did want their counseling experience to align with their faith. And they just wanted more information about what that actually entails. What does that look like? And so at our practice, you know, for myself, what I let them know is

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And in addition to certain modalities that we may use to help them, let's say for example, they were coming for anxiety. So I would say, know, in addition to some of the mental health treatment modalities that are used to help individuals work through anxiety and identify the roots of their anxiety, scripture is also used, biblical truth.

is used in order to structure our time together in order to inform you about what the God you serve says about your anxiety and about what might be contributing to that anxiety. And then we also use some of biblical truth to encourage clients in ways that they may feel defeated or ways where they might be just fatigued from this ongoing struggle.

You know, I let them know that, you know, prayer is up to them. If they would like to pray in the session, then we can, but it is their session and they can let me know if that is something that they would like. And if they don't want that incorporated, they don't have to ask for it. But I have had clients at certain points in time in our journey together who have just said,

Could you pray for me? And I said, absolutely. And so again, you wanna be able to feel comfortable with what that looks like depending on maybe some of the interventions that you use in practice. The other thing you're also gonna have to just make sure is that those interventions that you've been using, that they actually align with your faith.

So that you can feel, you know, real comfortable about about using them and knowing that it actually does line up with biblical truth. And for for some people they also have the question, you know, okay, well when you integrate the Bible into the the counseling experience and the treatment is that evidence based? And I would, you know, to that I would just say well how

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how evidence -based is the Bible itself? How much research has been done on the Bible and its truths? Or, you know, for those who don't believe, you know, in Christ, they may say, okay, well, you know, well, not necessarily calling it truth yet, how has it been proven, right? And there's actually a lot of literature about individuals, scientists, archeologists, you know, other professionals who were not necessarily Christians.

who were able to find that there were indeed many things that were outlined in the Bible that came to pass. There have been studies to try to figure out the spiritual realm, but many, many research articles already note that a faith base is very important in the healing of many individuals for a multitude of things.

You know, it's a whole mind body spirit approach and everything is interconnected and everything affects everything else. So you want to again, you want to do some of your own research and study because you want to feel confident in this and and hopefully you'll be you know, you'll be asking your clients in the initial assessment whether or not they have a belief system that they consider a support.

And if they do, and it happens to be Christian, then you can ask if they would like that incorporated into their counseling experience, because that is something that you can incorporate. And then for clients who actually do not have that faith base, then I usually have to assess how important their faith shows up in their life.

because I have had along the years certain times where I did need to refer them to somebody who had more of a specialization in that particular faith because that individual's faith really guided like everything, every part of their worldview, just the same way as my faith in Christ really guided everything in my life. And I just

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not able to provide the counseling from that perspective and I knew they needed it. So we would have just open honest conversation about the fact that I felt like they really needed to probably seek out counseling that also would allow them to incorporate that. And usually because they had questions, so they wanted to work through certain challenges, but they also had questions about how this was going to line up with their faith.

And that went outside of my scope of practice because there are some parts of faith that you really have to be in it to understand. I remember somebody asked me, they said, know, technically the Bible is a book. Couldn't I just read that book and then provide counseling? And I said, well, it is more than just a book, but it's a relationship.

with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. And I said, if you don't have the relationship, then it doesn't work the same way. I mean, there have been times where Holy Spirit has shown up in a counseling session and put on my heart things to either question or a direction to take the counseling session in that was just what that client needed. And

And that was because I have relationship with the Holy Spirit, with Christ, with God the Father. I ask, you know, God to come into the session. I ask the Holy Spirit to, you know, to be in the

session with me as I am using, yes, my training, but I know that my training only takes me so far. And I know that, that my belief in Christ tells me that the God I serve

is outside of space and time. So where my training is limited by my humanness, the Holy Spirit can tell me about things that are to come, things that have happened, things that are going on right now that I cannot see, that I cannot perceive. So it's more than just reading the book, but it's also the relationship that you have with the God of that book.

Camille McDaniel, LPC (28:04.764)
that gives it the power.

you know, as we kind of come to a close because I have just one more thing that I want to kind of note that I think is going to be important as we build this foundation is that you want to make sure that you have someone to consult with or collaborate with, you know, whether that's a pastor, your pastor, you know, a colleague.

somebody that you know is kind of, you know, able to support you, able to inform you, where you can talk to them about different things that may be coming up as you are trying to structure things in a way that aligns with your Christ-centered worldview. It's really important. We consult for a multitude of things, whether

business, whether it happens to be the treatment modalities that we are using, we consult. And so same thing, you want to be able to identify who or what groups you can kind of consult with or collaborate with in order to make sure that along the way you have the support that you need and you can get your answers when you need them.

So I really, I hope that all of this gave you a lot to think about, a good start. I'm sure that there'll be more things that come up and we will have more individuals who will come on the podcast. Stay tuned for episode three because in episode three I'm going to be interviewing somebody who is.

Camille McDaniel, LPC (30:01.906)
who is going to help us identify how to actually develop a kingdom mindset when we are trying to build our private practice. And she has some wonderful supports that she wants to also offer. And she has a phenomenal story and she's supported people and she has consulted with churches and she's consulted with businesses and she's consulted with organizations.

And so, you know, this is again, this is all about community. This is all about us working together, supporting one another so that we can move forward and align our beliefs in our personal life with the way we practice in business. And so, you know, integrating our Christian faith into our counseling practice, it can be a phenomenal way to support our clients, at least the clients who desire that, right?

because it's a holistic approach. You know, the spiritual life of an individual can really, it can really make or break their world and in so many different ways and it's nothing to be ignored. It's very important in the journey. So incorporating these faith-based practices and interventions can allow you to also.

you know, start being more holistic in the care that you give. So again, I was so, I'm so humbled always to be able to come to you one more time and share insights and information. And if you haven't already, let's connect. You know, we're on Facebook. Our group is called Christ in Private Practice. And if you haven't seen me on the YouTube channel,

That one is at Christ in Private Practice. And if you're listening on Spotify or Apple Podcast, then you already know Christ in Private Practice. Hopefully we will be jumping right on into together the next episode with a lot of energy and excitement for what's to come. And then we have much more in the following episodes.

Camille McDaniel, LPC (32:23.098)

So until we meet again, God bless.