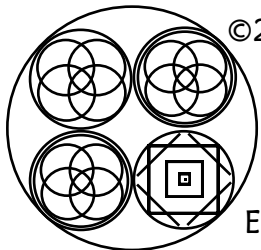
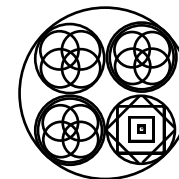


The Role of
Mental Health Work
in the
Goodenough Community
and
Convocation

A good life is not measured by
the absence of problems,
but by how you deal with them.



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Notes

- ¹ *Stuck places* refers to underdeveloped areas in one's psyche and/or emotional life; that is, places where one got "stuck," or fixated, a long time ago, so that this area did not continue to mature and develop with new experiences.
- ² *Family of origin work* refers to understanding the impacts of one's biological birth family on his or her perceptions, emotions and values.
- ³ Walsh, MD, Ph.D., Roger N. and Vaughan, Frances, Ph.D., ed. *Beyond Ego: Transpersonal Dimensions in Psychology*, Jeremy P. Tarcher, Inc., Los Angeles, 1980, pg. 182
- ⁴ Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1948, pg. 30.
- ⁵ *The Shelter of Each Other*, 304 pages, Putnam, 1996.
- ⁶ Self-talk is verbal expression of one's inner experience. Sentences often begin *I think...* or *I feel...* or *I want...* .
- ⁷ *Understanding Society*, Ch. 5 (1987)
- ⁸ *A Preface to Politics*, Ch. 9 (1914)
- ⁹ *Human-ness training* refers to learning to accept all aspects of one's self without judgment.
- ¹⁰ *Seat of the Soul*, A Fireside Book, 1990.

6. We take a healthy attitude toward health and illness here. We are becoming increasingly comfortable with having people around who are in various degrees of needing to rest, reduce stress, avoid conflict, or exempt themselves from a leadership responsibility. We accept that in a group of people over several weeks we are going to see some colds and flu, depression, meanness and angry feelings, and so on. All of life is going to be present. Our intent is to respond to people declaring themselves invalid in the same way we might respond to them saying they have a cold.

The Nature of The Work

What is presented above has been intended to orient the reader to the nature of the transformational work done in this community. While the word *work* can have an ordinary meaning, in the Goodenough Community *The Work* has always referred to the spiritual and moral agenda of addressing the deep needs of human beings and society as a whole—now and into the future. The Work refers to that which awakens individuals to their provincialism and resistance to cooperation and then lifts them by reminding them of large guiding images and showing them again what they have energy for and the potential to become. They recognize the human challenge to be The Work of healing and expanding their minds so that they can understand how to release Divine Energy into their world.

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The Role of Mental Health Work in the Goodenough Community and Convocation

Introduction

The Goodenough Community may be described as a “holding environment,” a womb in which individuals may transform themselves. A person sharing in the life of this community is entering an environment already carefully crafted for assessing individual needs, for directing an individual toward personal growth, for recognizing potential and helping an individual achieve it. Each program of the Goodenough Community conveys a general orientation for encouraging personal growth and mental health work.

To prepare yourself for reading about our offerings to you, please read this statement by Robert Kegan of Harvard University about human development and what really helps.

In an age when psychology has become the secular religion and the practice of psychotherapy the new priestly rite, the impression is often conveyed that the solution to life’s ills could be found in universal psychotherapy, if it were only practical. The natural supports of family, peer groups, work roles, and love relationships come to be seen as merely amateur approximations of professional wisdom. From a developmental perspective this view of things is quite backward. Development

disconfirm that understanding, but works with each person to come to a consensus for a good way for that individual to relate within the community. When people are doing their part to gain self-knowledge and live as agreed with others and with the Watchcare Group, we in this community take the stance that we will be supportive of their goals.

5. Our norms, our ground rules, the way we operate, require people to live among us to an agreed-upon standard or simply declare themselves *in-valid*; that is, unable to function as their highest and best selves at a particular time. Our responsibility to ourselves as a community is that we will not allow individuals to injure, incapacitate, or waste the time of larger groups of people. The way we implement this rule is to require people to “invalidate” themselves. Often that will mean a “time out” for them. Other times they may just need to be quiet for awhile to come back from a split. The point is that the community has the responsibility to support its values and norms. Therefore, it is up to each individual who is a member and a vital part of this community to give feedback to people who are not functioning well—or are dysfunctional. Such feedback informs them it is time to consider how they want to deal with the fact that they are not functioning well. We hope they will say, “Oh. Thanks for the feedback. I think it probably means, as I know myself, I need to take some time out.”

clinic without much understanding from the people with whom we are working. They will use us, but they will not know how to respect or use us well, because they will not have seen anything quite like this before. If we present ourselves as a community mental health center, taking responsibility for people, we are not helping them heal and grow.

We hold as a basic tenet that people are able to be in charge of their lives and be responsible for themselves. Therefore we hold ourselves and each other to the following:

1. Clients are requested not to engage another therapist without first discussing the idea with their primary therapist.
2. We ask people to study their own difficulties and be willing to explore and know the literature on mental and emotional life which might both define and show how to deal with those difficulties. That is, we ask them to study what the difficulty is and understand it.
3. We ask people to learn how to talk about their study and understanding with us in the community, particularly with professional people and key volunteers. People are not only responsible to study themselves, but to communicate to others what they are learning and offer proposals for how they need others to relate to them. Another way of saying this is that we all have the responsibility to train others to relate to us in ways that help us grow.
4. The Watchcare Group responds to individuals' understanding of themselves and how they need to be living. The Watchcare Group may confirm or

theory has a long-standing appreciation of nature as the source of wisdom...[T]he developmentalist urges curriculum designers and teachers first to recognize the agenda upon which the child is *already* embarked, and which the teacher can only facilitate or thwart, but not himself invent.

The theory outlined in this book suggests a life history of what Winnicott, referring to the infant, called the “holding environment.” I have proposed that we are “held” throughout our lives in qualitatively different ways as we evolve. The circumstance of being held, I have suggested, reflects not the vulnerable state of infancy but the evolutionary state of embeddedness. However much we evolve, we are always still embedded. Development at any period in the life history, involving an emergence from a psychological evolutionary state, must also involve an emergence from embeddedness in a particular human context...The theory makes clear why these psychological contexts are more than just social or psychological supports which do or do not aid a separate person; from the point of view of the person, they *are* him or her.

...If the intrauterine environment is a model for the provision of a medium in which the growing organism can thrive, the framework suggests a basis for a kind of lifelong “psychological amniocentesis,” by which the quality of holding environments, their capacity to nourish and keep buoyant the life project of their “evolutionary guests,” might be assessed...How well--it can be asked at any moment in a life's development--is the individual's culture of embeddedness performing its functions of *confirmation*, *contradiction*, and *continuity*?

But the mother, the couple, the school, the chum, and so on, are really all part of a single community, and serve as the vehicles by which that community communicates. Among its most important communications is its recognition of a person's growth and change. Each time a particular culture of embeddedness "holds securely" it insures the integrity of the wider community of which the individual is a part; each time it assists in "letting go" it attests to the community's greater loyalty to the person who develops than to the self-the-person-has-composed... In a community worthy of the name there are symbols and celebrations, ritual, even gesture, by which I am known in the process of my development, by which I am helped to recognize myself... It must operate richly at many evolutionary levels, dedicating itself less to any evolutionary level than to the process itself...

To do so, theories are needed which are as powerful in their understanding of normal processes of development as they are in their understanding of disturbance...

When "self-consciously therapeutic services" are needed, these can derive considerable guidance from their unselfconscious counterpart in nature.

~Robert Kegan, *The Evolving Self: Problem and Process in Human Development*, Chapter Nine, "Natural Therapy," pp.255-262. Harvard University Press, 1982.

Many of us became involved with the Goodenough Community through asking for help with living problems or relationships. A goal of this community is to provide a mental

different experience than for someone whose perception is limited to the five-sense world. The work in awakening to one's true nature as Love—that is, Energy—is not to lie, but tell the truth about the experience, and to be intentional about learning to love even when that is hard to do. This work with touch, with sexuality, with energy, can heal as well as grow mature people committed to their fullest development.

The Issue of Personal Responsibility

The Goodenough Community has developed a consensus statement for the process to be followed by individuals committed to their full human and spiritual development. Taking personal responsibility for accepting and working with one's mental or emotional difficulties is at the heart of it. As a community, we choose not to respond to anyone on the basis of prejudice. After all, prejudice really refers to pre-judgment. Thus, no mental, emotional or behavioral difficulty people have would prevent us from wanting to say: "These people are valid and valuable human beings who have a right to participate in our life if they choose." That is a starting place.

We require that people hold themselves responsible for their behavior and the impact or consequences of their behavior on our community life. How we may think about this includes accepting each other's genetic inheritance and life stories. Having articulated that we will accept people truly without prejudice, this second point is that we require individuals to be responsible even for their mental and emotional difficulties. Our experience over time has taught us that without taking this stance, we make ourselves either a hospital or a mental health

and resistance: an inner cast of characters that refuse to let us have what we most want. It is not possible to separate the inner process of splitting from the way humans sabotage relational intimacy. Working with splitting is a necessary step to becoming a mature, relational person in community. A person who can handle the issues of splitting can handle most of the stresses of life in a healthy way.

Embodiment: The Role of Touch, Sexuality, and Energy in Healing and Transformational Work

Mature relational individuals have learned to: manage their minds and emotions, take responsibility for their resistance to receiving love, and ask for what they want. Given the freedom to say what is really true inside, most will claim that more physical touch and intimacy in relationships is what they need and want. Yet society has grave taboos and many conflicting messages about the body, touch of any kind, and especially sexuality. As a result, most westerners are very constricted energetically.

Virtually all of the world's great spiritual traditions recognize three aspects of a person—body, mind, and spirit—and attest that when all three are balanced and aligned, that person is at one with God, embodying the Divine. Jesus of Nazareth is a premier model for such incarnation of Spirit. The Divine is energy. Spirit is energy. Love is energy. Relationship is energy. Life is energy. Energy is a gift from God. Human bodies are made to receive this kind of energy and express it in the world. For someone with a multi-sensory awareness such as described by Gary Zukav,¹⁰ working with this energy is a very

health system for the benefit of members, friends and others who may simply want to avail themselves of our mental health personnel and services.

Our mental health services are offered primarily through the pastoral counseling service called Quest: A Counseling and Healing Center, which is sponsored by Convocation: A Church and Ministry. Quest counselors, John L. Hoff, Th.D. and Colette Hoff, M.Ed., are employees of Convocation. The Board of Convocation also oversees a Watchcare Group that makes sure that people are utilizing programs and services well. The Watchcare Group is composed of the staff of Quest and other professionals engaged in counseling and the healing arts. The Watchcare Group is empowered to consult with all leaders and programs within the community system and to make sure that each person is contracted with in a clear and careful way; that each person identifies his or her needs and goals for participation and that they make an ongoing “growth plan” for guiding that development.

In the pages that follow, a description of our professional staff, the functions of Quest and the Watchcare Group, and the culture and lifeways of the Goodenough Community provide the context in which to discuss and illustrate our mental health model and methodology.

A Brief History of This Mental Health System within the Goodenough Community

Remember as you read this pamphlet that it represents the work of members over a thirty-year period trying to improve methods for dealing with common psychological, emotional,

and relational problems. We have moved away from our society's tendencies to see each other as bad, sick, lazy or crazy and toward seeing each other as simply unfinished and in the process of learning. Hence, we join each other in a shared attempt to be more mature, mentally healthy, and proactive in approaching life's problems. We have found that most people have much to learn about the practicalities of being responsible to each other relationally.

The mental health system developed by this community has its roots in the 1960s when President John F. Kennedy initiated a concern for community mental health systems and brought together professionals from many disciplines—psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, educators, clergy, and pastoral counselors—in order to apply the wisdom of these disciplines to the problems found in streets, neighborhoods, and work places. Dr. John Lawrence Hoff, working under a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), provided consultative and educational services to professionals and mental health systems. He found himself relying heavily on some of the insights and training models used by the National Training Laboratories (NTL Institute). In 1970, he began a human relations laboratory for training professionals, a laboratory which has been offered annually for 31 years. This human relations laboratory allowed a cross-section of mental health practitioners to work with a broad range of clients who were also motivated to understand their own difficulties and to support better methods for diagnosis and treatment. The community surrounding the laboratory was often a model for creativity and innovation in providing mental health services.

These characters often distract a person—disconnecting, separating, *splitting* him or her—from knowing authentic feelings and, therefore, from being connected with others.

Splitting is, at essence, living outside of relationship, a refusal to be in relationship with oneself and others. Again, it is a natural human event and is prevalent in our experience. It is a learning disorder, *not* an illness. Splitting tendencies are learned patterns. Splitting is a method of coping, a means of survival. It is also a way of being in the world; a way of dealing with stress and fear (or anger).

Splitting only becomes pathological when someone succumbs to it. Splitting happens when a person resists what he or she most wants; that is, says “no” instead of “yes” to what is really desired. Avoidance and denial of personhood, aspects of self, and the existence of relationships with others is the way splitting manifests. It is a method of running away from oneself and a situation. Splitting manifests in behavior when someone *acts out* inner anger, instead of *talking it out*. Examples are when someone stops talking about their inner life with a therapist or intimates, when someone stops initiating contact, and when someone quits an agreed-upon relationship or process without having addressed identified issues.

When people engage in intentional living and involve themselves in committed relationships, they discover their resistances to such mature behavior. To intend change is to discover resistances. To commit to intimacy with a friend is to be confronted with the desire to escape. Thus, while mature relationships are necessary for full human development, they are also the occasion of calling forth one's shadow, sabotage,

The modern science of the mind, or study of human consciousness, indicates that individuals dissociate from anything that challenges or stresses them. The occasion can be a wonderful time of making love or some other person's insightful comment. Dissociating, or *splitting*, is human and a normal aspect of mentation. The viewpoint of Quest counselors is that individuals must first learn how natural and common splitting is and study how their minds split beneath conscious awareness. They must learn to differentiate between what is normal and what is pathological. Even extreme forms of pathology are best dealt with by understanding the natural process of dissociation. Because working with splitting addresses most mental health issues, we use it as our basic methodology.

Splitting is about being afraid to acknowledge one's humanness—feelings, wants, loves. It is the discrepancy between what an individual wants to be doing and actually is doing. The most severe cases of splitting are caricatured in schizophrenia and schizoid processes where splitting is the main symptom. *Schism*, the root word in schizophrenia, means *split*, or to cut off or set apart. Applied to one's mind, *split* means to be out of touch and apart from reality. R.D. Laing advocates returning to the old meaning for schizophrenia—where *schiz* means *broken* and *phrenos* is *soul* or *heart*—where one who is schizophrenic is really one who is brokenhearted.

Everyone wrestles with splitting in varying degrees. Splitting acknowledges the reality that human beings are made up of a multitude of inner characters that clamor for attention.

By the early '80s, the human potential movement had already been challenging psychology for twenty years to focus less on problems and more on the potential or the capacity to transcend difficulties through acquired insights. It also stressed new techniques for releasing outdated emotions and developing supportive relationships. By 1985, the emerging discipline of transpersonal psychology, with its recognition of the essential spiritual nature of persons, was applying insights and methods from eastern sources, teaching us about meditation and Self-Realization.

In 1984 and '85 our Goodenough Community, valuing the potential of people to choose healthier lives and relationships, became a covenantal community. Our covenant was a series of common-sense agreements, yet our first discovery was that most people could not or would not live up to the promises of our covenant. We discovered individually and as a community the phenomenon of psychological splitting—that while one aspect of our psyche (spirit or self) would promise change, another aspect of our psyche (ego and its sub-personalities) seemed dedicated to sabotaging the intended changes. We discovered that splitting was both a general tendency in everyone and a serious and incapacitating habit for some people. Over the last 20 years we have developed guidelines for acknowledging our own splitness or invalidity and norms for responding both kindly and firmly to people who are experiencing inner conflict and spreading social anxiety.

To summarize, throughout almost 30 years of history, many therapists, body workers, and medical practitioners have worked together to develop theories and therapies which more

adequately recognize our inherent abilities to heal ourselves and support others in making life style changes required for maintaining wholeness and a fully functioning life. The remainder of this brochure describes both the theories and therapies we find helpful. Much of our work these days might be seen as prevention rather than intervention. We believe that “getting better” involves an educational process.

Our Mental Health Professionals

John Lawrence Hoff, Th.D., ensures the professionalism of the staff of Quest and is responsible for protecting the principles of practice held in consensus by the mental health staff. Having been a teacher and counselor for 40 years, John brings a unique depth of scholarship and a breadth of experience to his work with people. He has taught psychology in universities and seminaries and has supervised a variety of therapists. His professional approach and the way of life he models and teaches others calls people to live a conscious and courageous life. John has a gift for drawing out a client’s strength and wisdom while also enabling a client’s release from ineffective emotional patterns and relational habits. As a *scientist of the soul*, John has utilized his years of research to develop a practical process for personal growth and transformation.

John describes his lifework as facilitating the unlearning of ineffective ways that were demonstrated to us as children, and teaches us as adults to learn mature and responsible ways of coping. John says, “I often find that I am helping adults to want to do what they have to do, and to find a better attitude toward their problems.”

Members of the Goodenough Community are interested in creating ever better ways of life for healing broken spirits, nurturing souls, and transforming human life. Many have come to believe that the primary organism of human evolution is not the individual but the community, since for humans to develop they must live in a nurturing context. The Goodenough Community has intentionally developed its culture to be a transformational community.

The Healing Process

Within the holding environment of community life, the healing process has three phases:

1. *Unlearning* what is no longer helpful; that is, the unloving ways demonstrated to us as children.
2. *Relearning* new ways that are more effective. Goodenough Community members have learned together that judgment impedes growth and that replacing judgment with learning creates a more healing environment. In the community, therapy is seen as education about human transformation, sometimes called *human-ness training*.⁹
3. *Resocialization or* learning to be more collaborative and relational with others by practicing intimacy and authentic self-expression.

He thought his childhood was easier than what kids go through now.”

Community functions as an extended family and provides the occasions for work with relationship no longer available to most of us in other ways. This community has a culture intentionally developed over many years to be a place that nurtures human souls.

This culture began in the *within* of people’s lives—in their hearts and relationships—and was created among them as they claimed the importance of their inwardness and the necessity of intimacy in their relationships for them to feel whole. They know from experience that to survive and flourish, souls need a place where *self-talk*⁶ happens. They need a culture that provides opportunities to play, sing and dance, laugh and cry—and, at other times, opportunities to have solitude and silence, knowing that there is still a place where they belong.

Community impacts and transforms people through its energy and culture. Caroline Hodges Persell puts it this way: “Culture affects almost everything we do, think, and feel. Culture surrounds us like the air we breathe. It shapes our habits, behaviors, language and interpersonal style. Often it does this in invisible ways—for example, by influencing our ideas about what is natural, good or beautiful. Culture affects what we take for granted as well as what we question.”⁷

And as Walter Lippmann noted in 1914: “Culture is the name for what people are interested in, their thoughts, their models, the books they read and the speeches they hear, their table-talk, gossip, controversies, historical sense and scientific training, the values they appreciate, the quality of life they admire.”⁸

In the community, John carries the roles of Creative Director of the Goodenough Community System, Senior Pastor of Convocation, and sometimes a Key Faculty in the Private School for Human Development. In Quest, John serves as a pastoral counselor, spiritual director, and coach. He has inspired many to awaken and develop their spiritual natures. John is recognized as the first elder in the Goodenough Community System and teaches throughout the system about the role of eldership in the community.

As a pastoral counselor I experienced John as a good listener who displayed appropriate empathy and wise counsel. I felt my life was in the hands of a caring master. I had no trouble trusting him. In short, he provided a “safe” place in which I could grow.

Charles D. D. Min.

My individual counseling work with John radically changed my psychology, freeing me to a more joyful and less anxious way of being. He has extensive knowledge and wisdom in the areas of personal transformation and healthy marital and family life.

Lee B. M.P.A.

As a professional colleague I have the pleasure of referring to John those people who are looking for deeper, more meaningful lifeways and more spiritually grounded habits and disciplines with which to fashion loving and satisfying lives. John brings a unique depth of scholarship and breadth of experience to his work

with people, dating back more than 30 years. He maintains a thorough understanding of the various disciplines of modern psychology. He uses Transpersonal Psychology, especially, as a wellness model for mental health and a bridge for seekers between the psychological and spiritual disciplines.

Fran M. M.Ed., M.C.

Colette Hoff, M.Ed. provides primary leadership for mental health services in the community system and is the administrator of Quest. She earned her master's degree in education and counseling from the University of Puget Sound and a certificate in Pastoral Counseling from the Christian Counseling Service (1983). Prior to that time, she spent 10 years at the Northwest Lipid Research Clinic in Seattle, providing counseling and workshops that help people change their behavior around eating and exercising. Colette has extensive experience in adult remedial education, women's studies, and in the use of community as a method for human growth and development.

Colette works with people to strengthen their inner core, their sense of self. She offers both practical help in dealing with life's problems and a warm relationship that provides encouragement for growth. One of her many gifts is the way she helps people remove barriers from their hearts and minds. She has a respected ability to coach people individually in bringing improvements to their relationships. Her knowledge of human development and her commitment to a holistic perspective enable her to move people from their *stuck places*¹ to finding energy for improving life.

At first, as a relatively new person, I felt quite shy about all the things I didn't understand and was surprised at how much others seemed to be really wanting me to ask questions. After awhile I realized that my questions were actually helping others discover what they knew as they responded to me.

Claudia R.

Transformational Community, a Context and Methodology for Growth and Healing

I never understood before how this all ties together. There are actually people in the community who are caring about me, watching over me, thinking of my welfare in the courses that are planned.

Russ P.

The Goodenough Community's approach to healing and self-development evolved from the experience of both counselors and clients who learned that many traditional psychotherapies did not address what it means to be a human being in all of its full potential. They began to realize it was *the community* that was providing the context for growth, for understanding mental health and mental illness, and for developing compassion for the human condition. Gradually the awareness grew that community is not only the context, but also the methodology for growth and transformation.

Best-selling author and psychologist Mary Pipher⁵ emphasizes this concept. An example she gives is: "A school superintendent told me he came from what would be considered a dysfunctional family, but he lived in a functional community.

relationships, roles, and situations that will facilitate and draw out this potential. They offer practical leadership training and supervision.

The Goodenough Community provides Quest counselors with the context for offering a person a role or leadership position for training in advanced human development. Such an opportunity helps people affirm their own creativity and become as involved as they wish in areas that interest them. This approach to living and relating encourages people to be intentional in the development of their own way of life and unique way of doing things. The Quest staff works to develop the inner resources of each person so that these will eventually show up in a life that works.

If you want to know yourself, I recommend participating in community leadership. You will learn about your own unique self, both your darkness and your light. You will learn about your energy, how to raise it, release it, shape it, use it. You will practice actively living in covenant, testing your ability to live in love. You will sample a life of service and learn that it is not servitude. You will give back what you have received. You will grow frustrated with forever attending meetings, and then you will realize you have a social life with meaning and depth, a social life that feeds you and grows you into the finest person you can be.

Hollis R.

Individually and as a couple, John and Colette, offer a unique model for educating couples on marriage and family life. Their workshop on Friendship Training has enabled many couples and families to greatly improve their lives.

Colette also serves as Director of the Private School for Human Development, an adult education center. With John and a team of others, she helped launch the school in 1987 and she has continued to play a key role in the school's curriculum and in its continued success. That success is due in large part to the relationship Colette offers each individual in the school. This relationship further strengthens the relationship between and among other groups and teams in the school.

The compassionate, non-judgmental nature of Colette's work transforms the otherwise impersonal-sounding world of conflict resolution to a world where relationship and mutual benefit are the operative words.

The context of my work with Colette has been in pastoral counseling. She offers a very safe, accepting presence where I have felt my Spirit drawn out. I brought Colette the unhealed areas of my life and she did not give me judgment, but love. The very personal relationship Colette offers is rare and the most healing aspect of her work. Rather than focusing on fixing my problems, Colette persisted in seeing and encouraging a larger, stronger "Self" in me. She helped me construct relational learning experiments and suggested more effective ways of communicating and responding in relationship. Eventually I began to feel more the Self she saw in me.

Marjorie G.

My most significant learning through Colette is to accept, value and love all parts of myself. In the process I have let go of much fear and overcome cyclical bouts of depression which I had experienced for many years. As a result I have been able to access a fount of energy within me that I had not experienced consistently since childhood.

Bill S.

Colette has offered herself to a group of us who, while putting our hearts and souls into playing music together, were getting stuck in some hard places in our working relationships. She thoughtfully assessed our situation, helped us talk out some hard places and assisted us in negotiating some changes.

Leo G.

Quest, A Counseling and Healing Center

Quest, a pastoral counseling service, is the most visible aspect of the Goodenough Community's deep intention to see people actively involved in improving their lives. The community's mental health service has been shaped by counselors and clients so that it has become a unique blend of education and therapy. Counseling begins with a thorough assessment of the client, requiring them to tell their own story and identify their own problems in living. The response by counselors usually involves *family of origin*² work; however, the main focus is on educating individuals which starts with knowing that a human being is a spiritual entity. The focus is on the potential of each person. Clients are helped to learn from

of Convocation: A Church and Ministry.

- Give yourself some space for being in limbo for awhile until new ways for you to think, feel, and be emerge on their own from within you.
- Don't assume all community people in a room are in the same place in their growth. Everyone is in a place uniquely his or her own.
- Notice the people you want to be with and what you want to be doing. Look at this as a new beginning, a starting over. Watch for models and resources that you want to use.
- These are good times to ask other people how they see things.
- Stay with what is going on without indulging it. It is important to let *your* process run its unique course and not abort it prematurely. It is also important to treat it somewhat matter-of-factly and still live your life and carry out your responsibilities.
- Remember that once you become aware, you will see all the times and ways you do whatever it is--and it hurts. The pain feels like it will kill you, but it won't. It will help you change what you are wanting to change.

Lifeswork and Leadership Training

As healing and growth work progresses, clients find themselves wanting to get clear about their unique purpose and goals in life, what we call *lifeswork*. Lifeswork is usually some kind of service that calls out an individual's unique gifts. The Quest staff intends to prepare people for their lifeswork. They watch for a person's fullest potential and put individuals into

22 Healing Strategies

Strategies to deal with the symptoms of the healing process fall into three categories: those for the client, those for the therapist, and those for the community that is holding the work and providing support for the person or relationship involved. Here are some general strategies for clients to help them deal effectively with these symptoms:

- Remember that while you are just becoming aware, everyone around you already knows about how the symptom impacts you and them and your friends will still love you.
- Stay in close touch with your therapist. Your experience is like going through the rapids in a river, so it is important to have a competent guide. Talk about what is going on inside you with a therapist or an elder who has successfully done similar work. And be careful choosing whom you talk with.
- Self-care, such as eating well, exercising, getting enough sleep, getting a massage, paying extra attention to grooming, are especially important at these times.
- Remember that this experience is what is going on now. It will not be your experience for the rest of your life—even if it seems that way at the moment.
- It is tempting to talk with people who haven't yet navigated the passage you are in. Sharing with these people is likely to create repercussions that you and others will be required to address later, and will probably set your personal work back as well.
- If you have concerns about your process or about your relationship with your therapist, talk to the chairperson

their experiences and their relationships in order to move beyond their negativity and self-judgment.

Frances Vaughan, Ph.D., one of the developers of transpersonal psychotherapy, says it well:

Transpersonal psychotherapy may be conceived as an open-ended endeavor to facilitate human growth and expand awareness beyond limits implied by most traditional Western models of mental health. However, in the process of enlarging one's felt sense of identity to include Transpersonal dimensions of being, the therapist may employ traditional therapeutic techniques as well as meditation and other awareness exercises derived from Eastern consciousness disciplines.³

What is unique about the community from which Quest has evolved is that counselors and clients have worked together to create an atmosphere that is not judgmental. Quest counselors guide clients away from a life that focuses on problems into one of learning how to become a creative expression of one's true nature.

I give thanks in everything you are and all that you do to bring Spirit to a wounded world. Thank you for every step you have taken in your own healing so that your cup is often full enough to spread the wonder. I do need you to keep on doing it. It inspires me and uplifts me in moments when I have forgotten what I am doing because the pain of remaining emotionally available and spiritually present in such a broken world is ripping me apart inside.

Pat F.

Quest helps clients wrestle with a variety of life issues:

- Stress and anxiety
- Depression, and mood difficulties
- Relational, marital, and family issues
- Work and career issues
- Emotionality and instability
- Abuse and trauma
- Nutritional issues and relationship with food
- Spiritual emergence
- Splitting and dissociative issues
- Lack of direction and meaning in life
- Grief and loss
- Human development, individuation, ego development
- Personal integration
- Being a good man
- Being a good woman
- Improving sexual relationships
- Unresolved conflict

Phases of the Counseling Process

There are generally four phases to an individual's counseling process:

- Problem identification and assessment;
- Uncovering deeper levels of anxiety and depression;
- Developing the counseling relationship,
- Helping work become more meaningful and relationships more satisfying.

At the beginning of the counseling process, a client is learning how to view their life, seeing how their problems

expand and receive or express more positive energy; they are likely to find old patterns emerging seemingly out of nowhere. The truth is that people keep spiraling through these patterns. Each time the pattern clears, it is refined and a new level of learning is reached.

- Fragmentation. In the struggle to let go of egoic patterns, fragmentation often occurs. Subselves battle for power inside when they feel threatened by the increasing number of choices being made for life and connection to others. Fragmentation is the experience of having pieces of one's self in a million different places, feeling all over the place. One's energies are scattered. It is hard to focus attention. It is a place of feeling disconnected, a place where it is hard to receive love.
- Dark night of the soul. When individuals see themselves clearly and are repenting for how they have been—feeling and knowing the cost of life-long patterns—a profound grieving sets in. The grieving can be for how they have been and for the plight of being human and its cost to the individual and those around them. Some people find themselves not wanting to come out of their homes, feeling unworthy to be loved by anybody and hardly able to live with themselves. They want to run away, but the awful truth is there is no where to get away from being one's self.

replace the old ones. The experience has been described as being in free-fall or in-between two worlds: a world that no longer works and a world yet to be created. People can feel extreme pain at seeing themselves in action and have a hard time living with themselves, and there is no new place to go—*yet*.

- Cognitive dissonance. When individuals let go of a long-held way of thinking or a belief system, they have the experience of not knowing how to think or see things. It is as if the circuits of their minds are not linked up anymore. They can start a sentence and then no words come. They can feel incompetent in areas where they previously felt confident. Situations that once were comfortable no longer are. The normal ways of the mind are being rewired and new pathways are not yet created. It becomes hard to think in any kind of linear fashion. There is disorientation, not knowing how to be anymore. A major mental sorting out is going on.
- Clearing. Clearing is most extreme just before a transition into a better life. During clearing, a person will find all the troublesome patterns and subselves raising their ugly heads with emotions pouring out at the most inconvenient times. Clearing is likely to happen after someone has received a lot of positive energy that pushes against the emotional/relational/psychological blocks within. This in turns pushes out into consciousness what has been kept hidden.

With every stage of growth, each time individuals

developed and the role relationships have played in their own psychology. This assessment may include the use of standard psychological tests and inventories. The assessment generally takes from four to seven sessions after which the information is reviewed and the areas of growth are discussed. John or Colette then makes a recommendation for the direction of the person's work and propose either a contract for services within Quest, or a referral elsewhere. The intention behind the contracting process is to guide and empower self-responsibility for a transformational journey.

The purpose of the assessment phase is to develop a climate of trust and to create an understanding about the way relationship between counselor and client is itself a healing force. This is crucial for supporting the work. A growth plan, identified by the client, becomes a guide for both client and counselor.

In looking over one's life and problems, a variety of questions emerge:

- Where do I feel tension in my current life situation and relationships?
- How can I use these areas of tension for my own learning and development?
- Where do I want to improve my life and relationships?
- What type of social relationships do I need?

Quest's goal for each individual is to awaken an interest in what it means to be human, and to experience a hunger for self-improvement. Individuals are encouraged to explore their inner worlds and understand the concept *self*; to learn to know and

express their own unique *truth*; and, how to pay less attention to their problems and more attention to a plan for change. **A good life is measured not by the absence of problems but by the way one deals with those problems.**

As clients get in touch with the way their life is based on a true story, they are able to see ways they have learned to survive, lessons they have learned, and resources that have kept them going. After honoring their own story, individuals are able to see their similarity to others. Joseph Campbell called the human story the monomyth: “The standard path of the mythological adventure of the hero is a magnification of the formula represented in the rites of passage—separation-initiation-return—which might be called the nuclear unit of the monomyth.”⁴

The Role of Relationship in the Counseling and Transformative Process

A basic tenet of the Goodenough Community is that relationship is the context for human growth—that no one grows well in isolation. Thus, people are encouraged to develop relationships and resource themselves with others who are also about the task of growing themselves. Utilizing the interpersonal world of relationship would involve Quest clients in:

1. Learning the value of relationships; that is, where they can learn from and teach others.
2. Understanding the current type of relationship they offer and refining that relationship so that it works better for them.
3. Examining and refining their personal set of relational

skills, for example improving communication skills by practicing such techniques as asking clarifying questions, expressing themselves authentically, asking for what they want and negotiating with others.

4. Recognizing their own relational dynamics such as *triangulation*, *mystification*, and *projection*.
5. Dismantling old relational patterns developed in childhood, while at the same time finding pathways to express one’s true self in relationship.

At times, intervention processes are used by inviting the client to gather friends and family to engage in a process of discernment or empowerment for new decisions or ways of life.

What to Expect in the Process of Change

A thorough orientation to this work must include various signs and symptoms an individual might experience in the process of healing. It is common for people to appear to get worse before they get better. As healing proceeds, parts of an individual rebel and fight the increased connection to others and to life. Sometimes the subjective experience seems unpleasant. Counselors, however, typically rejoice at the signs of healing. Members of the Goodenough Community who have already gone through similar experiences offer support quite naturally. Examples of some common experiences during healing are:

- Pain of awareness. As self-awareness increases, individuals become hyper-aware of the patterns that don’t work and feel the pain of seeing themselves in those patterns. At first there are no new patterns to