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## Managing Spirituality in Solving Family Issues

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### Abstract

The decreasing of religious values and the occurrence of conflicts in the family institution are contributing to the existence of social diseases of today. These situations has led to the need for proper treatment in solving family issues. In the Malaysian context, Western approaches have been used for quite some time in the arena of counselling. Apparently, some Western approaches are found inappropriate for local culture with strong traditional Asian roots. Each person carries a set of values and beliefs that may aid in their well-being. There is no denying that religious discussions and spirituality management within therapy can be essential for treatment because Islam provide its followers guidance and procedures on how to live in this world. This paper will examine the religious counselling and spirituality management in solving family issues. This study is also to explore and evaluate the effectiveness of family counselling process by implementing religious values and spirituality management in solving family issues. Furthermore, this study also look into the selected professional counsellors who are involved directly in family counselling on their views and stances in implementing and including the religious values during their sessions with clients.

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### 1. Introduction

The decreasing of religious values and the occurrence of conflicts in the family institutions are contributing to the existence of social diseases today. This situation has caused many conflicts in human lives and rendered the need professional counselling service.

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In the Malaysian context, Western approaches in counselling have been used for quite some time. Apparently, these Western approaches are deemed not to be suitable for local culture with strong traditional Asian roots. Each person carries a set of values and beliefs that may aid in their well-being. Thus, there is no denying that spiritual management or religious discussions within therapy can be essential for treatment because Islam provide its followers guidance and procedures on how best to live in this world.

Islamic counselling has long been discussed in our country, (Baharom, 1989). Unfortunately, there are a number of Muslim counsellors or therapists who seem to be afraid to fully practise the Islamic counselling, whereas they are more comfortable with the theory, principles and methods of counselling highlighted by the West.

## 2. Objectives of the Study

The main aim of this study is to explore and evaluate the effectiveness of spirituality in solving family issues. Furthermore, this study also seeks to look into the selected professional counsellors who are involved directly in family counselling on their views and stances in implementing and including the religious values during their sessions with clients.

## 3. Design of the Study

The method used in this study was interview. The subjects of the study were five professional counsellors were the subjects of this study. They worked in different settings and locations. These structured interviews were conducted on the subjects in three different areas such as in Kuala Lumpur, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan.

## 4. Findings

This part will discuss the findings of the research. The findings are qualitative in nature and will look into family issues faced by the respondents.

### 4.1 Family Issues

Various family issues were presented by the clients of the subjects, ranging from common to serious and extreme. For the purpose of this study, six main themes were chosen which were the themes of marriage, children, health, religion, cyber sex addiction and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT). The findings showed that marriage topped the list of family issues faced by the clients of the subjects. Subsequently, the problems of children, religion, health, cyber sex addiction and LGBT also affected and disturbed the harmony of the family institutions.

For example, pertaining to the marriage issue, participant C said,

*“Communication issues, secondly; responsibility issues and thirdly; sexual issues were three main issues faced by the clients”*

While, participant B said,

*“misunderstanding between husband and wife usually started small. As the couple have no skills to deal with marital conflict, the issues becomes bigger.”*

Cybersex addiction also contributed to the issues faced by the subjects' clients and has created the need for counselling treatment as participant B mentioned,

*“Cyber sex addiction has caused a few of my clients to divorce”* Participant E faced worrying problems in sexual misconduct among his clients, *“For family issues, many of my clients are teenagers who are facing on sexual misconducts or problems. Perhaps they were referred to me because my research is on adolescent sexual misconducts. Most of them are involved in physical and cyber sex.”*

The appearance of HIV issues among family members also lead to the disturbance in the cohesion and harmony of a family. Participant A said,

*“I also have cases of HIV clients that could be considered as extreme cases”* while participant C said, *“There were also transgender cases, clients with HIV who wanted to get married...”*

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