



Original Article

Satir Transformational Systemic Therapy and Spirituality

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Abstract

This study addresses the topic of integrating spirituality into the Satir method, which was pioneered by Virginia Star and is included within experiential family therapies. The concept of spirituality, which had been included in individual therapies after the 1950s, also found room particularly after 1990 in family therapies together with the Satir method. The goal in the spirituality-based Satir method is to increase the client's adaptability and communication skills by integrating spirituality in the psychological counseling process. In addition, this approach also aims to have families notice their emotions using spiritual techniques. Satir, who does not limit her approach to any single religious tradition, can be said to have adopted the concept of universal spirituality. While the concept of spirituality has newly been included in individual psychological counseling in Turkey, it still has no place in the dimensions of family therapy. Little research has been encountered on this topic in the literature as well, and because new studies are felt needed, this work is being carried out. This study is believed to provide an important contribution to the literature. This study makes mention primarily of the Satir method as a representative of experiential family therapy, the Satir method's views on spirituality, how spirituality can be applied in this approach, and how necessary the therapeutic process is in the spirituality-based approach. Afterward, the role and responsibilities of the psychological counselor in the spirituality-integrated Satir method are explained, and the techniques included in Satir's spirituality-based approach are mentioned. Lastly, a case study founded on Satir's spirituality-based family therapy approach has been included, and the issue has been generally summarized.

Keywords: Spirituality • Spiritual counseling • Satir transformational systemic therapy • Spirituality-based therapy

Satir Dönüşümsel Sistemik Terapi ve Maneviyat

Öz

Bu çalışma, Yaşantısal Aile Terapisi içinde yer alan Virginia Satir'in öncülüğünü yaptığı Satir Aile Terapisinin içine maneviyatın entegre edilmesini konu edinmektedir. 1950'lerden sonra bireysel terapilerde yer edinen maneviyat kavramı, 1990 sonrasında özellikle Satir ile birlikte aile terapilerinde de yer bulmuştur. Manevi Temelli Satir Aile Terapisinde amaç, maneviyatı psikolojik danışma sürecine entegre ederek danışanların uyum ve iletişim becerilerini artırmaktır. Ayrıca bu yaklaşımda, manevi tekniklerin kullanılması ile aile üyelerine duyguların fark ettirilmesi de amaçlanmaktadır. Yaklaşımda öncelikle Satir'in de temsilcisi olduğu Yaşantısal Aile Terapisinden, Satir Aile Terapisinin maneviyata bakışından, bu yaklaşımda maneviyatın nasıl uygulanabileceğinden ve manevi temelli yaklaşımda terapötik sürecin nasıl olması gerektiğinden söz edilmiştir. Ardından maneviyatın entegre edildiği Satir Aile Terapisinde psikolojik danışmanın rol ve sorumlulukları anlatılmış, Satir'in manevi temelli yaklaşımında yer alan tekniklerden bahsedilmiştir. En son, Satir'in manevi temelli aile terapisi yaklaşımına dayanan bir vaka örneğine yer verilmiş ve konu genel olarak özetlenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Maneviyat • Manevi danışmanlık • Satir dönüşümsel sistemik terapi • Manevi temelli terapi

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Family therapy is in particular an approach that emerged after World War II; it attempts to help families psychologically by addressing the family with a system. In line with this approach, effects from the surroundings are not ignored while searching for solutions to the emotional problems people experience; this approach has begun to help not just individuals themselves but also their families. With the signing of the National Mental Health Agreement in 1946, studies started being done on family's mental health (Gladding, 1998). These studies have been concerned with what can be done for families to have healthier dispositions. The approaches used frequently today emerged through the many therapy approaches that appeared after the 1950s. Psychoanalytical family therapy, Adler family therapy, Bowen family therapy, structural family therapy, experiential family therapy, strategic family therapy, systemic family therapy, cognitive behavioral family therapy, solution-focused family therapy, and narrative family therapy can be listed as the family therapy approaches used frequently today. Each of these approaches is a therapy that has a theoretical basis and includes techniques/intervention.

The great religions state in their scriptures that both spirituality and religion have important places within family life. Almost every religious book can be said to place importance on the concept of family and to command that giving family its required importance is necessary. Griffith and Rotter (1999) determined that spirituality affects family well-being and the functionality of individuals in the family. Spiritually, which is considered to have an impact on having a healthy family structure, has been explained by Summermatter and Kaya (2017) as establishing connections with and being close to things that are sacred. According to another definition by Pargament, Murray-Swank, and Tarakeshwar (2005), spirituality is explained as the quest done for the purpose of reaching the sacred. When looking at the definitions that have been made, spirituality can generally be said to have been around since the day humans came into existence. The main point of the concept of spirituality, which has no clear definition, is the desire to reach the sacred (Ahmed & Amer, 2015; Ekşi, Kaya, & Çiftçi, 2016; Pargament, 2007). Worthington and Aten (2009) explained the concept of spirituality under four sub-headings: (1) religious spirituality, (2) humanistic spirituality, (3) nature spirituality, and (4) universal spirituality.

The holistic view is highlighted when integrating spirituality into the psychological counseling process by taking into consideration individuals' beliefs, values, feelings, and thoughts (Frame, 2003). According to Walsh and Harrigan (2003), the concept of spirituality should be included in the psychological counseling process. When examining the both the Turkish and international literature in this regard, people are seen to solve and cope with their problems through the mediation of spirituality; these people's psychological well-being is seen to increase (Horozcu, 2010; Krook, 2008). Apart from this, in the research Carlson, Fitzpatrick, Hecker, & Killmer (2002) did,

two thirds of those receiving marriage and family therapy training specified that the concept of spirituality was required in the psychological counseling process. Another research that was done showed spirituality to have an important place not just in individual counseling but also in family therapy, and spirituality must be used in family therapy (Breen, 1996; Haber, 2002; Tam, 2006).

The concept of spirituality started occurring in family therapy after the 1990s. In order to be able to solve the problems present in family life, discovering the basic dimensions of spirituality was considered necessary, and discussions were made in line with this (Haug, 1998; Helmeke & Bischof, 2007). The spread of the concept of spirituality into family therapy is stated in the literature to have occurred in three waves. While including spirituality in family therapy was discussed in the first wave, whether or not spirituality would harm the nature of therapy was mentioned in the second wave, and finally in the third wave, how much did should the therapy contain spirituality was discussed (Akça-Koca, 2017a; Ko & Kim, 2010). When looking at the historical process, the first discussions that were made enabled the spiritually-oriented family therapy approaches to develop by looking at the previous use of spirituality in family therapy in the beginning (Cook & Kelly, 1998). Virginia Satir played a significant role in developing spiritually-oriented family therapies in this process (Akça-Koca, 2017a).

This section will respectively address the experiential family therapy where Virginia Satir made her representation, the Satir method's view toward spirituality, how spirituality can be applied in this approach, and how the therapeutic process should go in the spirituality-based approach. Afterward, the psychological counselor's role and responsibilities in the spirituality-based Satir method will be explained, the techniques located in Satir's spirituality-based approach will be mentioned, and case examples that support Satir's spirituality-based family therapy approach will be included. The fact that, when examining the literature in Turkey in particular, studies using the concepts of spirituality and religion with family therapy approaches are limited (Akça-Koca, 2017a) makes doing this study necessary. By doing this study, a significant gap in the literature is believed will be filled. The most basic goals in writing this section are to address the spirituality-based Satir method more comprehensively and to explain what needs to be done in the therapeutic process.

Experiential Family Therapy and Satir

Experiential family therapy is an approach based on humanistic and phenomenological roots. Experiential family therapy is essentially based on family members no being aware of the feelings they experience or suppressing these feelings (Gladding, 2015). Not experiencing emotions distances family members from one another and creates communication barriers within the family (Nazlı, 2016).

Problematic behaviors are stated to be solved as a result of expressing emotions in this approach that Satir also represented. Carl Whitaker (1990), being another important pioneer of the therapeutic approach, included emotions in the process while working with families and observed changes in the behaviors afterward. In line with this, experiential family therapy sees gaining insight into family members by having them realize what they are doing here and now to be the basic goal. Satir (2001) stated that dysfunctional behaviors are maintained because family members aren't aware of their emotions. She stated being aware of emotions and expressing them as experienced in the moment to be necessary for solving these.

According to Satir, Banmen, Gerber, and Gomori (1991), families who listen to each other, show affection/value, and behave respectfully are healthy families. In this type of family, unhappiness as well as disappointments are also spoken as frankly and openly as happiness (Nichols & Schwartz, 1998). Families that are not happy have been studied in therapeutic processes based on this approach generally by addressing the subjects of "little or no communication" and "not expressing emotions clearly" (Murdock, 2013). The main points in this approach are addressing the unhealthy communication present within the family and sharing feelings.

The basic concepts of the Satir method are expressed as self-value, the self-mandala, communication, family rules, the iceberg metaphor, and the triangle. Some of these basic concepts are not just contained in Satir's approach but are found in all family systems theories. Explanations for these basic concepts are given as follows:

- 1. *Self-Value.*** The most basic concept of the Satir method, self-value is explained as the value individuals give themselves without worrying about what others think of them (Satir & Baldwin, 1983). This concept emphasizes the need for individuals to love themselves first (Satir, 1988). Caring a lot about what others say shows the individual to have low self-value. This type of individual can be said to have high levels of anxiety and low self-confidence (Murdock, 2013). When considered from the perspective of family therapy, individuals with low self-value can be considered to marry individuals who resemble themselves, and their children also have low self-esteem (Nazlı, 2016). Satir (2001) Satir stated that every person is unique and the individual with low self-value needs to be supported on this topic in the therapeutic process.
- 2. *The Self-Mandala.*** Satir (2008) explained this fundamental concept through eight sub-dimensions: physical, spiritual/psychological, mental, nutritional, emotional, sensitive, and interactional, in order. Each of these eight sub-dimensions can be said to be interconnected; they should not be considered independently and have psychological effects on the individual's well-being. These eight sub-dimensions are the structures that make up the individual's

ego (Akça-Koca, 2017a). Each of these interrelated sub-dimensions affects healthiness and general well-being, and therefore are considered important in terms of experiential family theory.

3. **Communication.** While the importance of internal family communications is emphasized in Satir's approach, it explains the need to establish communication as a life requirement (Murdock, 2013). Consistency and harmony are important in both verbal and non-verbal communication. According to Nazlı (2016), the gestures and mimicry of individuals who establish healthy communication are consistent with what they say. Satir (2001), who emphasized the necessity for family members to establish harmonious communication with one another, stated that family members use one of four basic behaviors when experiencing a problem with communication. These behaviors are placating, blaming, computing, distracting, and leveling (Murdock, 2013; Satir, 2001). Those who placate don't want to have a problem with the person confronting them and assume a humble position even if they are right. These people generally put themselves to the side and in their desire to not be contrary attempt to agree with others on almost every issue. Those who blame act tough and jittery; they raise their voices. These people constantly see themselves as right and look for flaws in others. Those who compute do not show their emotions and act with logic. These people can be said to implement their cognitive control. Those who distract are confusing and their words don't make sense. In general, these people are stated to no deal with events very much (Brothers, 2000; Nazlı, 2016). In summary, people who exhibit these four behaviors can be said to have low self-esteem.
4. **Rules of the Family.** According to Satir and Baldwin (1983), the rules specified in the family should be realistic and feasible. For example, in a home where the rule is to be constantly happy, people will start hiding their emotions and emotional distance will form among family members. Satir emphasized that the determined rules need to be flexible and to vary according to maturity (Murdock, 2013). A child who might have a bedtime that is early when younger but then is allowed to go to bed later as they grow up can be shown as the best example to give for this situation.
5. **The Iceberg Metaphor.** This metaphor suggests that individuals have a multi-dimensional structure and shows that these dimensions affect one another (Satir et al., 1991). Satir stated that, part of a person appears as an iceberg and a large portion of person is in fact unseen (Akça-Koca, 2017a). While people are specified as having three dimensions (i.e., interpersonal, intrapsychic, and universal spirituality), these three dimensions are explained in seven stages.

While the visible part is said to have the communication attitudes in the scope of the interpersonal dimension, the unseen part expressed as having the intrapsychic and universal spirituality dimensions (Lee, 2002; Wai-Lan, 2015). The stages located in these unseen sections in the intrapsychic dimension are emotions, feeling emotions, perceptions through expectations, and beliefs. The stages in the universal spirituality dimension are individuals' aspirations and personalities. The concept that can facilitate or complicate these three dimensions is explained as harmony (Satir, 1988). Harmony, being one of the most fundamental issues studied in the Satir method, plays a role in revealing family members' three dimensions and in healthy expression. Banmen and Banmen (1991), explained Satir's concept of harmony as the bond one established with God or one's source of life energy.

6. *The Triangle.* Satir stated the concept of the triangle, which occurs in almost every family systems theory, as the structure that is formed between the parents and child (Murdock, 2013). When talking about the communication between two people in established triangles, the third person is said to be left out, and cases where the child is left out have been emphasized to be able to cause low self-worth. Satir and Baldwin (1983) stated that how children see themselves in the triangle is important and can have lifelong effects. Family members with an established healthy triangle have been emphasized to be able to have high self-respect.

Satir did not specify a fundamental personality theory in experiential family therapy. She spoke of life as a journey and an adventure from inception to death (Murdock, 2013). Satir, who emphasized that everyone is open to development in this adventure, took a humanistic approach and also emphasized that all people can establish harmonious relationships both in the family as well as in one's surroundings while establishing communication (Nazlı, 2016). In summary, in the Satir method, family members' noticing both their own feelings as well as others' and expression of these feelings in a health manner facilitates harmony. After the 1990s, Satir emphasized the need for including the concept of spirituality in the therapeutic process in order to increase individuals' harmony. How spirituality has been integrated into the Satir method and how Satir viewed spirituality are given below.

The Satir Method's View on Spirituality

Satir, who gave weight to the concept of spirituality shortly before her death, talked about a universal spiritual approach in the therapeutic process. Satir (1988), who believed that universal spirituality needs to generally be present in the therapeutic process, stated seeing it as the basis of our existence and the bond we establish with the world. Satir, who possessed a humanistic perspective, thought everyone to be able to possess a more spiritual bond by exhibiting a positive approach (Bentheim, 2009; Ruhl,

2013). Advocating the human spirit to be inherently good, she stated that people turn to evil as a result of the difficulties and pressures they face and that they can find well-being again through the mediation of spirituality (Lee, 2001; Wretman, 2016; Yang-Li & Lou, 2013). Satir believed in realizing the relationship between Humans and God using the spiritual bond that will be established and based this idea in her approach. Akça-Koca (2017a) stated that Satir focused on healthy development and growth based on spirituality rather than disease or pathology in her therapeutic approach.

The fundamentals of Satir's family therapy are based on three different theories: Gestalt therapy, existential therapy, and humanistic therapy. Taking the concepts of "here and now" from Gestalt therapy, "meaning" from existential therapy, and "acceptance" from humanistic therapy, Satir aimed to have family members differentiate their own feeling from others' by allowing them to be in "the here and now" in the therapeutic process, thought family members would be able to see the realities of life by way of spirituality with the search for "meaning," and lastly believed that family members would be able to solve their problems together through "acceptance" (Akça-Koca, 2017b). According to Woods and Martin (1984), Satir took spirituality in hand in the family therapy approach and formed a new model by benefitting from these three approaches. Satir's purpose in creating this model was to allow spirituality to be used in the therapeutic process as a tool for harmony. In other words, Satir used spirituality in the model not as a goal but as a tool for increasing harmony. Lee (2001) explained this harmony as a spiritual reconstruction process that enables individuals to establish a connection with themselves and their past. Satir's main goal in the therapeutic process is to enable family members to reveal their spirituality-based thoughts and to openly express their feelings by increasing family members' harmony levels toward each other through the mediation of spirituality. When family members exhibit these behaviors sincerely and candidly toward each other, the therapeutic goals are seen to have been reached and the therapy process can end (Mook, 1997).

Lastly, the concept of universal spirituality, which is found among the types of spirituality Worthington and Aten (2009) have addressed under four headings, can be said to be in harmony with Satir's model. When considering that different concepts exist on spirituality, Satir, who believed that humanity is a "life force" that comes from all living things, didn't give any name to this life force that she called the foundation of human existence and did not limit this to any one religious tradition.

Spirituality-Based Satir Transformation Systemic Therapy and Its Application

The first interview carried out with the family is considered very important in Satir's approach, as in all family therapy systems (Satir, 2001). In the Satir Transformation Systemic Therapy in which spirituality has been integrated, Satir expressed the first interview conducted with the family as "souls meeting with souls" (as cited

in Akça-Koca, 2017a, p. 396). When considering that using spiritual methods will not be appropriate for every family in a therapeutic approach, the first interview with the family can be said to be quite important. The decision is made in the first performed interview as to how much and to what degree spirituality will be used in the therapeutic process. Satir's spirituality-based family therapy can be applied after making the necessary adjustments and forming an environment of trust.

Different steps are seen to have been applied in the therapeutic process in the literature. Carlson, Sperry, and Lewis (1997) implemented Satir's spirituality-based family therapy in four steps:

1st Step. Family members gain awareness toward their own spirituality and experiences.

2nd Step. Family members develop new spiritual understandings starting from the awareness of what they have gained.

3rd Step. Reflecting the newly developed understandings onto real life is attempted, and the relationships are reorganized based on the recognized spiritual approach.

4th Step. The spiritual understandings that are noticed and developed are used not just toward family members but toward everyone in their surroundings.

The most basic goal in these four steps is to notice the spiritual reasons underlying the problems experienced by family members and to use spirituality in solving the problems. The literature states Satir to have focused on the process rather than the content in the therapy (Woods & Martin, 1984). In Satir's therapy, family members are stipulate not to focus on what they say to one another but on how they say it (Murdock, 2013). In line with this, Satir and Baldwin (1983) summarized the therapeutic process in three stages:

1. Contact (Stage 1). Families who come to psychological counseling are considered to have many difficulties that they are unable to cope with. Accordingly, trust needs to be given in a therapeutic environment intended for families. The family needs to be made aware of the importance of every member and the family structure should be observed while establishing a sincere environment. In this stage, every family member's perspective on spirituality should be addressed, and after this the decision should be made as to how often spirituality should be used in the sessions. In Satir's (2001) approach, even the first encounter with the family members is important. The decision on whether or not to use spirituality for the problem the family brings is made in this encounter. This is because applying a spirituality-oriented family therapy does not appear

possible for every problem. The contact stage is important as establishing a good relationship at first and the evaluation will reflect throughout the therapy.

2. ***Chaos (Stage 2).*** This is the stage where the problems experienced among family members begin to slowly emerge and these problems begin to be expressed in the consultation process. This stage requires careful consideration because this is where the family reveals why it came to the therapy. The ability to benefit from discussing the problem by starting with each family member's spiritual thoughts is considerable. In this stage, being able to stay in "the here and now" is important.
3. ***Integration (Stage 3).*** This last stage is when the moment emerges where the family overcomes the chaos. The integration stage is where the family notices their spiritual problems and finds solutions by using spirituality for these problems. Because in the chaos stage the family members had revealed their thoughts based on spirituality, in this stage they are able to solve their problems more easily and the sessions come to a finish when they reach this stage.

Another method wherein the therapy process is explained in the scope of experiential family therapy in the literature is described in brief as follows (Fenell & Weinhold, 1989, as cited in Nazlı, 2016). In the stages below, the literature is scanned on how spirituality has been integrated into experiential family therapy, and how spirituality can be used is explained in these stages (Pidcocke, 2010; Tam, 2006; Thickens, 2012; Yang, 2000):

1. ***Going around.*** Both because family members are in the stage of recognizing the process and also because sufficient trust has not been formed, the problem goes around without clear information being shared about it. Because of generally being the recognition/introduction phase, the psychological counselor can ask the family members questions about spirituality.
2. ***Resistance to counseling.*** When the trust environment has not been fully established, family members may have reservations about sharing information. Establishing a good therapeutic environment is essential at this stage because talking about religion and spirituality will be difficult, particularly as some see this as taboo.
3. ***Talking about the past.*** Family members can talk about their past experiences on behalf of getting away from this moment. In this stage, the psychological counselor needs to follow the process and allow the family to be in the "here and now."
4. ***Negative feelings.*** They can begin to talk about their negative feelings toward the problem they experienced through the formation of trust in the therapeutic

environment. From this stage onward, all information, from family members' spiritual experiences to their daily lives, needs to be received and their experiences about the problem they've witnessed must be listened to carefully.

5. ***Expressing and explaining personal issues.*** Because trust has formed between the psychological counselor and the family members, they start to discuss the problems, and in this stage the psychological counselor must be able to comfortably receive spiritual ideas from the family members.
6. ***Completely expressing what they are feeling in the here and now.*** In this stage, permission is given to family members to experience the feelings related to the problem they've brought to the consultation environment. At this stage, the client should be focused on what they feel in that moment, and the client should be enabled to notice these feelings.
7. ***Family members' ability to heal.*** Accepting and understanding within the environment of trust makes embracing family members' hurts easier. At this stage, the problems of the family member or members who have a spiritual issue are discussed.
8. ***Self-acceptance and change.*** In this stage, family members realize the process of accepting themselves and others. Accepting priority for solving the experienced problems is stated, and family members are prompted to take responsibility for changing.
9. ***Gradually weakening the external view.*** This stage is where real feelings and thoughts are discussed. Family members' spiritual thoughts and feelings have strong influence in this stage.
10. ***Giving feedback.*** Family members are prompted to give feedback about the process for developing one another. In this way, each family will observe their behaviors from the outside.
11. ***Forming confrontation.*** This is done for the purpose of having family members become aware of the problem they don't see. The purpose in this stage is to raise awareness and insight. Accordingly, if one of the family members has a problem in terms of spirituality, noticing this falls on the other family members.
12. ***Assisting family development.*** Family members are requested to start applying the exercises done in the therapy process to real life. In line with this, family members are seen to observe each other's behaviors and assist on the outside too.
13. ***Family interactions.*** The family starts to feel like a group. In this way, all family members possess a boundary.

14. Fully expressing sincerity. All the feelings family members hadn't been aware of or couldn't say appear, and family members are able to express their sincere feelings toward one another at this stage. Sharing feelings in terms of spirituality will help family members relax.

15. The changed family. This is the last stage and is seen as the stage where the problem the family had brought has been solved. In this stage, each family member is seen to notice and recognize their feelings.

Different stages are applied in the therapy process within the scope of Satir's method, as seen in the literature. Each therapist can be said to develop their own method and to try and help their clients in the light of this method. When looked at generally, even though different paths are observed, the common goal of the scientists has been to provide benefit to the clients through the Spirituality-based Satir Transformation Systemic Therapy.

The Therapeutic Process in the Spirituality-Based Satir Transformation Systemic Therapy

As in all family therapy systems, the therapeutic process is also important in the spirituality-based approach of Satir Transformation Systemic Therapy. Within the scope of this approach, the most fundamental goal in the therapeutic process is to ensure family members' development emotionally (Gladding, 2015; Lee, 2001; Nazlı, 2016). Another basic aim in the spirituality-based Satir family therapy approach is to provide awareness spiritually and to provide the family members' development (Ko & Kim, 2010; Srikosai, 2008). One of the main goals in this approach is to ensure transparency among the family members' external behaviors using their internal experiences (Murdock, 2013). Accordingly, family members talking about their spirituality-based inner experiences and discussions on how much spirituality reflects onto behaviors are seen important (Dawson, 2008; Srikosai, Thapinta, Kittirattanapaiboon, & Piyavhatkul, 2014).

According to Satir (1988), everyone sees change somewhere in life. In other words, Satir's view of human behavior is optimistic and hopeful. As a result of reflecting this optimistic approach in the therapeutic process, family members feeling comfortable and safe is seen important in this approach (Loeschen, 1998; Morrison & Ferris, 2002). Aside from this, one of the most important elements of the therapeutic process in the spirituality-based Satir family therapy is authenticity (Satir et al., 1991). According to İlhan and Özdemir (2013), authenticity is explained as the individual being one's self and acting in this way. Both the psychological counselor and the counseling environment are thought to facilitate spirituality being addressed (Murdock, 2013). Family members increasing their awareness spiritually and raising their self-worth is able to ensure their being much more authentic.

According to Satir and Baldwin (1983), The psychological counselor must be accepting while discussing spirituality and needs to also pay attention to not being judgmental. When considering that spiritual concepts are a private issue, are still seen as taboo in some societies, and are not often mentioned, the reason for this understandably needs attention. The fact that some clients think that they will be judged or excluded due to their religious views (Haque, 2018) is evidence of the necessity for sensitivity in this matter.

The Role and Responsibilities of the Psychological Counselor in the Spirituality-Based Satir Transformation Systemic Therapy

According to Gladding (2015), the psychological counselor is active in Satir's approach and plays a facilitating role within the process. Apart from this, both the literature in and outside of Turkey has expressed the necessity of the psychological counselor to also have the role of researcher (Nazlı, 2016; Nichols & Schwartz, 1998). Therapists or psychological counselors who adopt this role are able to be considered as attempting to discover the family members' abilities and feelings. The main task of psychological counselors within the therapeutic process is to enable family members' identification of both their own and other family members' feelings (Satir, 2001). In line with this, Satir family therapists should adopt a warm, sincere, and accepting approach and encourage family members by acting energetically and applying the techniques.

The literature states that some family members view therapists as experts on every subject, and therefore want therapists to make the decision about what they have experienced (Murdock, 2013). The therapist or psychological counselor needs to be careful on this point and show diligence in not making judgments about the family members' ways of life. In addition, psychological counselors who adopt this approach should have a teaching role in order to allow family members to establish effective communication and realize their feelings (Kang, 2010; Nazlı, 2016). These days, the literature has determined that psychological counselors who adopt the Satir approach have four duties (Woods & Martin, 1984). These tasks are briefly listed as follows:

1. They should take on Carl Roger's sincere, transparent, and accepting role.
2. They should use Perl's method of the here and now.
3. They should apply Satir's search for clues like a detective.
4. They should take Satir's humanistic aspect as an example.

While some therapists use structured techniques in this approach, others are said to let the therapeutic process flow (Carlson et al., 1997). The literature has specified behaving spontaneously, acting together with the family in the process, and preferring

interventions in the moment rather than structured techniques to be important in Satir's family therapy (Mitten & Connell, 2004; Nazlı, 2016). Rather than whether the technique being used is structured or not, providing benefit to family members and using the therapy for its intended purpose are considered important.

In addition to the roles and responsibilities expressed above, all psychological counselors are expected in general to not judge their clients, to be accepting, and to be sincere and candid (Rogers, 2003). Psychological counselors in the spirituality-based Satir family therapy need to know their roles and responsibilities starting with all these roles and responsibilities. No matter what the theoretical approach is, the psychological counselor has universal roles and responsibilities. However, apart from these roles and responsibilities, psychological counselors' skills in addressing spiritual issues together with family members are also important (Akça-Koca, 2017b). The first task of psychological counselors who practice the spirituality-based Satir Transformation Systemic Therapy is to learn in the first interview done with the family how the family members view spirituality (Satir et al., 1991). After determining whether or not family members are willing to discuss spiritual issues, knowing the family's attitudes toward spirituality is important as this will determine the degree to which spirituality will be addressed in the sessions to be performed.

The Techniques Used in the Scope of the Spirituality-Based Satir Transformation Systemic Therapy

Many different techniques are used in Satir family therapy, such as family life chronology, family maps, family sculptures, touch, play therapy, metaphor, role play, me speech, humor, family restructuring, meditation, and awareness (Gladding, 2015; Murdock, 2013; Nazlı, 2016; Nichols & Schwartz, 1998). However, adapting each of these techniques that have been used to spirituality, or in other words, using all of these techniques in the spirituality-based Satir family therapy approach is not considered possible. In addition to techniques such as meditation, worship, self-respect, the iceberg metaphor, family maps, family restructuring, and humor, awareness efforts such as imagination power, breathing exercises, and relaxation techniques are used more in spirituality-based Satir family therapy. Family harmony can be said to increase through the use of these techniques. Akça-Koca (2017b) determined that the clients' intuitive behaviors are important while using these spiritual techniques. Spiritual techniques that have been applied are mentioned below in detail:

1. **Family maps.** The aim in this technique, which is planned similarly to a genogram, is to examine family members' inter-generational structure and determine their spiritual views. The family map technique shows the structure of family relationships, the strong and weak ties, and the triangles that exist within the family. Each family member's identity is defined with an adjective

on this map (Gladding, 2015). This technique deals with how the family addresses spirituality from generation to generation (Nazlı, 2016). Evaluating the spirituality that occurred in both the mother's and father's past life can also be achieved with this technique.

- 2. *Humor.*** Aside from being a risky technique, it is also considered effective. In this technique, which is believed to sometimes be useful for change, tension in the family can be decreased. In handling this technique in spirituality-based Satir family therapy, humor should be used in times when spirituality is exaggerated and at a troubling level. The point that must be noted in this technique, which is used on spiritual matters for exhibiting family members' strict attitudes, is that the therapeutic relationship needs to have been established. One should not forget that when this technique is applied without providing the adequate therapeutic environment, family members will grow apart from one another as well as from the psychological counselor. This technique allows the cognitive distortions present in family members to emerge, alongside allowing family members to notice their hard and strict attitudes. Satir generally used this technique in her approach in order to enable change and facilitate taking a step toward change. This technique can also be said to be useful for the purpose of revealing a very absurd situation among family members or noticing a situation that is being taken too seriously (Gladding, 2015).
- 3. *Family restructuring.*** Satir put forth this technique. Together with being a creative technique, it also aims to have individuals discover the things they have learned spiritually that are distorted. The technique is applied in three steps. The first step determines what the family has learned spiritually from past to present. The second step enables family members to notice what kind of personality they have as a result of their spiritual learning. In the third step, paths are found that will help family members discover a realistic personality that also doesn't ignore their spirituality (Griffith & Rotter, 1999).
- 4. *The iceberg metaphor.*** This technique, frequently used in the spirituality-based Satir family therapy approach, examines the clients' iceberg metaphors and, after being evaluated, attempts to eliminate the imbalances present that prevent harmony (Akça-Koca, 2017b). As a result of the effect of the part of the iceberg that is unseen, the problems that family members experience in communication are addressed through this technique (Satir et al., 1991). Family members possessing a strong spiritual belief also facilitates the use of this technique. In this oft used technique, family members are made to notice how the interpersonal dimension is affective at reaching the intra-psyche and universal dimensions of spirituality. Because what the sources of the problems

experienced among family members are is detected this way, the solution is more comfortably reached.

5. ***The self-mandala.*** The self-mandala, like the iceberg metaphor, is another technique frequently addressed. In this technique, family members must create their own mandalas. Role playing or verbal activities can be done in the process of creating this self-mandala. The main purpose of this technique is for family members to notice the personal pieces found in the self-mandala, the pieces that form the self (Satir, 1988). In accordance with this purpose, each family member creates a self-mandala, and these mandalas, which have eight sub-dimensions, are discussed together with the psychological counselor (Satir, 2008). If freedom is granted to the family members to express their thoughts and beliefs in the counseling session, the spiritual dimension in this technique can be benefitted from. Thanks to this technique, family members with a strong spiritual side are seen to be accelerated in the therapy process and to show improvement. Research showing this technique to be effective is found in the literature (Caston, 2009; Yang, 2000). In these studies, families have been said to improve in the relationships by noticing themselves.
6. ***Meditation.*** This is a technique Satir often used for the purpose of having family members look at the inner life experiences relax internally. This technique basically aims to have family members find the wisdom contained within their selves. In line with this, having family members focus on their inner selves will help them later to develop self-respect (Nesbitt, 2010).
7. ***Imagination power, breathing exercises, and relaxation techniques (Awareness).*** The common aim in these techniques is to allow family members to gain awareness (Satir, 1988). These techniques are considered necessary for reaching the family's spiritual aspect and for working on their problems by addressing the spiritual aspect. This technique, which is required for having families relax by doing exercises and later gaining awareness, emphasizes the concept of energy. The literature has expressed the importance of radiating the existing energy to people (Akça-Koca, 2017a). Research showing these techniques to be effective is available in the literature (Dawson, 2008; Ruhl, 2013). These techniques can generally be used in all family therapy approaches.

Case Studies Within the Scope of the Spirituality-Based Satir Transformation Systemic Therapy

The fact that not many case studies are present in the literature within the scope of the spirituality-based Satir family therapy is striking. When examining the literature, one case is encountered in Morrison and Ferris's (2002) study; Satir's spirituality-

based approach was determined to have been used in the group counseling session. In this case, techniques were determined to have been used that are in harmony with the spirituality included in the Satir approach. In this case, both the iceberg metaphor and self-worth have been mentioned, and how spirituality is addressed in Satir's family therapy is briefly mentioned. This case is presented in Table 1:

Table 1.

Case Study of Spirituality-Based Satir Family Therapy

Carol is a client, 29 years old, and married 11 years. Carol has a 19-month-old daughter. She's gotten help from individual therapy two times both in childhood and in adolescence due to being sexually abused by her father. She is currently participating in support group sessions where Satir's techniques are used. The support group therapy she participates in is related to sexual abuse. The leader in this therapy process uses Satir's spiritual techniques and is very supportive of Carol. In this way, these group sessions have provided Carol with awareness and she sees benefit. Additionally, Satir's spirituality-based approach has been benefitted from for the purpose of ensuring that they absorb the process of abuse in the group session. For example, the group members were first explained the iceberg metaphor, and this enabled them to understand the spiritual experiences they live within themselves and to gain self-awareness. Through the mediation of the iceberg metaphor, having group members notice the chaos they experienced becomes easier and their anxieties have decreased. In the iceberg method, the spiritual aspects that the group members had not noticed were strengthened, and the women were determined to have started perceiving both themselves and the world more realistically. The different perceptions of the world that had come because of the abuse was seen to start changing. Carol, who had previously thought of the world as a dangerous place, through the sessions that were held opened the way straight to the thought that the world is a reliable place. The leaders in the group had formed both a reliable therapeutic environment and one where members felt their self-worth. The group members were seen to learn new ways of drawing borders for themselves and others. The group members, who had increased their awareness as a result of the iceberg metaphor, have been able to feel that they are not a permanent victim of life. They feel stronger anymore, have found spiritual sources of support, and because of this, have stated that the self-worth has increased. The sessions that were held had enabled group members to construct their self identities, and the eight stages determined in Satir's spirituality-based approach showed what each one had gained. The group members understood that they in fact needed to live their lives for fulfilling their own expectations rather than the expectations of others. Carol now feels greater self-worth anymore and less anger towards her abused through this group experience. At the end of the sessions, Carol understood she needed to face her father in order to regain her peace of mind. Carol, who thought it would be proper to receive individual counseling assistance to complete her psychological well-being after the group sessions, was interviewed once every three weeks over nine months, for a total of 10 sessions. One last session was done with Carol, who had reached a positive and hopeful place in her life as a result of these sessions, for celebrating her individual healing and spiritual inner peace. The most important point in Satir's spirituality-based family therapy is that it increased the harmony present in the client's life. Carol was also seen to have captured this harmony and the sessions ended.

Results

The hard attitude that exists toward spirituality has been broken through the new paradigms in both the process of individual counseling and in family therapies. The concept of spirituality began to enter more into the family therapy literature after the debates on family therapy that had begun in the 1990s in particular and has found a place for itself in almost all the approaches. The concept of spirituality has also entered experiential family therapy, which is based on a humanistic and phenomenological approach and had been pioneered by Carl Whitaker and Virginia Satir. Experiential family therapy aims at having family members notice the feelings the experience and to have them reveal their suppressed emotions (Gladding, 2015). In line with this, the concept of spirituality has been started being effectively used

in the therapeutic approach for the purpose of becoming aware of and revealing emotions. Satir in particular gave importance to spirituality in her family therapy approach and provided many contributions to the literature through the research she did on this subject. Another purpose in using spirituality in Satir's approach is to increase the harmony in clients' lives (Satir et al., 1991). Many techniques are found used in accordance with this purpose, and clients' senses of self-worth have been raised through these techniques, and enabling harmony in their lives has been facilitated. Satir, who felt humans possess a life force that comes from all living things, handled her approach without limiting it to any one religious tradition; her approach is based on the concept of universal spirituality.

While the research that mentions spirituality-based Satir family therapy is usually done outside of Turkey, when examining research done in Turkey, one research emphasizing the spiritual aspect of the Satir method was done by Akça-Koca (2017a). When looked at from this angle, not enough studies are seen on this subject in Turkey. Therefore, different types of studies based on Satir's spirituality-based approach are able to be performed by researchers. Apart from this, the effectiveness of Satir's spirituality-based approach can be researched by adopting a psycho-educational-based approach; group sessions can be planned in line with the obtained findings. In planning these group sessions, the case applications from abroad can be utilized, and similar studies can be performed in Turkey. In addition, by noting the client's needs and expectation in the therapeutic process, interventions/techniques can be developed toward Satir's spirituality-based approach, and this therapy approach can be benefitted from more effectively. Lastly, this study is believed to make a serious contribution to the literature. This study is also considered important and to facilitate other researchers for studies done after this.

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