

Three Principles for Realizing Mental Health: A New Psychospiritual View

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We offer a new psychospiritual understanding of mental health grounded in the three principles of Universal Mind, Consciousness, and Thought. This understanding proposes that all people have innate mental health they can access and sustain regardless of past or present circumstances. We first describe the three principles, explain how they appear to work within people to create their psychological lives, and present evidence in support of their spiritual basis. We then distinguish the intervention based on these principles from cognitive and other psychotherapies and describe several guideposts followed by practitioners grounded in this understanding. Finally, we offer empirical evidence of the effectiveness of the three-principles intervention.

KEYWORDS *the three principles, Mind, Consciousness, Thought, innate mental health, spirituality, health realization, creativity in counseling*

In 1890, the founder of American psychology, William James, expressed the need for undergirding principles for psychology that represented true human nature (James, 1981). Despite James' pleas to the field, psychology has not yet discovered, recognized, and approved such principles. Yet, what if such principles really exist that explain the true nature of all human experience? Moreover, what if those principles also provide the heretofore-elusive link between psychology and spirituality? The purpose of this article is to examine these questions and posit an answer.

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The direction William James suggested for this then-emerging field offered clues to where possible principles might be found. James (1981) stated, “The only thing which psychology has a right to postulate at the outset is the fact of thinking itself” (p. 219). James also linked thought inseparably to consciousness and postulated, among other things, that:

- “Every thought tends to be part of a personal consciousness;
- Within each personal consciousness, thought is always changing;
- Within each personal consciousness, thought is sensibly continuous” (p. 20).

According to James, “The consciousness of Self involves a changeable stream of thought . . . although [that], at each moment, [is] different from that of the last moment . . .” (p. 386), and he proposed that the primary direction for psychology was to better understand this process. James also considered the “spiritual self” and saw its link to thought:

Our considering the spiritual self at all is a reflective process, is a result of our abandoning the outward-looking point of view, and of our having become able to think . . . of ourselves as thinkers . . . We can feel, alongside of the thing known, the thought of it going on as an altogether separate act and operation in the mind. (p. 299)

Further, James saw this “spiritual self” connected to what he called, “Absolute mind . . . the essence of which we know nothing” (p. 329).

With such statements, James (1981), perhaps unbeknownst to himself, pointed in the direction of a trinity of principles behind the psychospiritual nature of life: *Thought, Consciousness, and Absolute Mind*. Yet, for whatever reasons, what became mainstream psychology did not appear to notice or embrace these principles or their interrelationships, or their relationship to human behavior. Then, in the early to mid-1970s, a man from outside the field, Sydney Banks, whom community psychologist and preventive mental health pioneer, Klein (1983, 1988), referred to as a sage blessed with spontaneous spiritual enlightenment, “saw” these principles and how they worked together to create all human experience. Within a few years, Banks came to the attention of psychologists George Pransky and Roger Mills, who, while conducting an international search for promising mental health practices, visited with Banks in Salt Spring Island, British Columbia, Canada, and were exposed to his spiritual teachings (Golan & Eisdorfer, 1972; Mills, 1977).

Banks (1998, 2001, 2005) asserted that all psychological experience is constructed by the use of three principles: *Universal Mind, Consciousness, and Thought*. He referred to these as principles because he viewed them as

fundamental truths existing in the psychological domain, much the same as gravity is a truth that exists in the physical domain. In other words, just as gravity acts upon all people whether they realize it or not, these principles operate in everyone, at every moment, and affect all behavior (J. Pransky & McMillen, 2012). For an in-depth understanding of the three principles, readers can review Banks' work (1998, 2001, 2005), and for its application to psychology and mental health, readers can review some of the early writings of its cofounders (Mills, 1995; G. Pransky, 1998) or more recent writings of Halcon, Robertson, Monsen, and Claypatch (2007), Halcon, Robertson, and Monsen (2010), Kelley (2003a, 2003b, 2009), Kelley and Lambert (2012), Kelley and Pransky (2013), J. Pransky (2003, 2011a), and J. Pransky and McMillen (2012). The description of these principles that follows is based on the views of these educators, researchers, and practitioners, and it directly addresses the principles that William James implored the field of psychology to discover and adopt.

THE THREE PRINCIPLES

The Principle of Universal Mind

Banks (1998) referred to the principle of Universal Mind (hereafter called "Mind") as the formless energy that animates all of life—the intelligent life energy behind human psychological functioning. Mind represents the energy that powers thought and consciousness and people's use of them. Furthermore, Banks viewed Mind as the source of inner mental health and wisdom available to everyone via a quiet, clear mind.

The Principle of Consciousness

According to Banks (1998), consciousness is the gift that allows people to see creation, "the gift of awareness" that ". . . allows for the recognition of form, form being the expression of Thought" (p. 39). Consciousness is the ability to experience life. Banks (1998) writes:

Somewhere in the innermost recesses of our consciousness lies the answer to the questions all mankind seeks. As our consciousness descends, we lose our feelings of love and understanding, and experience a world of emptiness and despair. As our consciousness ascends, we regain purity of Thought and, in turn; regain our feelings of love and understanding. (p. 40)

Spiritual teacher Goddard (2005) stated, "Man moves in a world that is nothing more or less than his consciousness objectified" (p. 4).

The Principle of Thought

Banks (1998) defined the principle of Thought as “A divine gift . . . the creative agent we use to direct us through life” (p. 47), the *ability to think*, and thereby to create psychological experience from within. Banks (1998) emphasized that thought does not refer to what people think or to the content or products of their thinking (e.g., perceptions, feelings). A psychological principle cannot exist at the level of thought content because no two people think the exact same thoughts. Rather, it is the fact *that people think* that is constant from person to person. Banks (1998) viewed the ability or agency of thought as a psychological common denominator used by all people to create various thought content. Braden (2012), a pioneer in bridging science and spirituality stated,

In the instant of our first breath, we are infused with the single greatest force in the universe—the power (of thought) to translate the possibilities of our minds into the reality of our world . . . an awesome power and our knowing that we are never more than a thought away from our greatest love, deepest healing, and most profound miracles. (p. 17)

THREE-PRINCIPLES UNDERSTANDING

The importance of these three principles for the field of psychology lies in how they work together to give all people their unique experience of life, out of which they think, feel, and act. A simple yet deep explanation of the three-principles understanding, as well as how these spiritual principles appear to work within everyone to create people’s psychological lives, follows.

There exists within, throughout, and behind all things, including human beings, a formless life force, spiritual energy, and intelligence referred to in this understanding as “Mind.” If it is possible for the essence of this pure energy to be directly and “purely” experienced within human consciousness, it would be experienced as a state of pure peace, pure love, and the source of pure wisdom that appears to come to people as insights from beyond what they already know. This state is always present in people whether they know it or not and can never leave them, for it is the essence of who they are.

The only way this inner health or “pure consciousness” can appear to not exist, or not be directly experienced by human beings in every moment, is because people inadvertently use their Divine gift of the power of thought to contaminate it with thoughts, to obscure it, to keep it hidden from view. People use the power of thought to construct mental images. As these images merge with the faculty of consciousness, they immediately register as sensory experience through the physical senses, thus appearing and feeling real to people; in other words, people have an experience in the form of a feeling,

a perception, and what they would call “reality.” Thus, consciousness uses thought to produce people’s moment-to-moment psychological experience from the “inside-out.”

Levels of Consciousness

A thought appears within people’s consciousness somewhere on a continuum of different levels ranging from pure peace and love to suicidal and murderous, with a wide range of levels in between. In other words, people often use their power of thought against themselves to create for themselves an experience at a lower level of consciousness than the peace, love, and wisdom that always exist deep within them as their innate spiritual essence. Yet, when the mind clears or quiets down from this unhealthy or unconstructive thinking, their innate health/essence automatically appears, along with feelings such as peace, love, oneness with the moment, gratitude, joyfulness, compassion, and wisdom because that health/essence never went anywhere in the first place.

Whatever people think becomes the experience they get within their consciousness. This means it is never the outside world—no situation, no circumstance, no person—that can cause people to feel or act a certain way; it is always people’s own creative interpretation and the meaning they make from the use of the power of thought entering consciousness, all powered up by the energy of “Mind.” The problems for which people seek psychotherapy appear to all be the result of people feeling or acting out of the “reality” they see at low levels of consciousness. Each level looks and feels very real at the time, but it is only “real” at that level of consciousness, and the particular level through which one sees the world can change at any moment with the next thought. The system is inexorable; there are no exceptions. The only experience human beings can ever have is their own thinking coming into their consciousness at that level and being experienced as “reality.” Yet consciousness also allows people to recognize they are using the creative power of thought to construct their psychological lives from within and to view this process from an impersonal or objective stance.

Using Thought Effectively

Mind, consciousness, and the power to create thought are all constant and neutral forces. *The only variable in this equation of generic human psychological functioning is how people use the principle of Thought to create varying thought content and how they relate to the thought content they have created.* Like all human abilities, the better people understand thought and how to use it in their best interest, the better it will serve them. The understanding of these principles helps people realize how their creative power of thought can

be used in either a healthy, responsive, constructive way or an unhealthy, unresponsive, destructive way.

Simply put, only two ways of being are possible for all people at any given time. Either they are operating from wisdom, peace of mind, well-being, and love, which naturally “appear” whenever their minds are quiet or clear, or their inner health is being overridden by thinking that is not serving them well, *and they believe the content of that thinking as real or “the truth.”* The three principles demonstrate how every person can access and operate from health and Divine wisdom *throughout their lives*, not only when praying or meditating, because this is their natural state, a state that comes from “Mind” through pure consciousness uncontaminated by personal thought. Although the products of misusing thought (e.g., distorted perceptions, painful feelings) can fuel unhealthy coping behavior, this thinking is problematic for people only when they “buy into” the thought content it produces and believe it is right or “the truth.” However, when people understand how thought works and are able to distinguish healthy thinking from unhealthy thinking, their unhealthy thinking episodes lose their power.

Feelings: A Thought Quality Barometer

This understanding proposes that people have a built-in self-monitoring system—a reliable way of knowing whether they are using the ability of thought in their best interest or against themselves. Accordingly, people’s feelings serve as a reliable indicator of the quality of their thinking. In the same way that physical pain signals a physical malfunction, painful feelings signal unhealthy or low-quality thinking and the potential for psychological dysfunction. The greater people’s emotional pain, the further they have drifted away from a quiet mind and responsive thought process. This means that, when properly using the signal of an unhealthy feeling to realize their thoughts are not serving them well in that moment, people can get back on track, so to speak, and access their natural state of health whenever their minds clear and their personal thinking calms down. Our attempt to depict how the principles of Mind, Consciousness, and Thought work together to create psychological experience is presented in Figure 1.

EVIDENCE IN SUPPORT OF A SPIRITUAL BASIS OF THE THREE PRINCIPLES

Banks (1998) contended that if any spiritual philosophy or spiritual intervention were deeply explored, at its essence would be Mind, Consciousness, and Thought. Some may contain only parts of this trinity; others may be more inclusive. J. Pransky (2003) examined how some spiritual teachings,

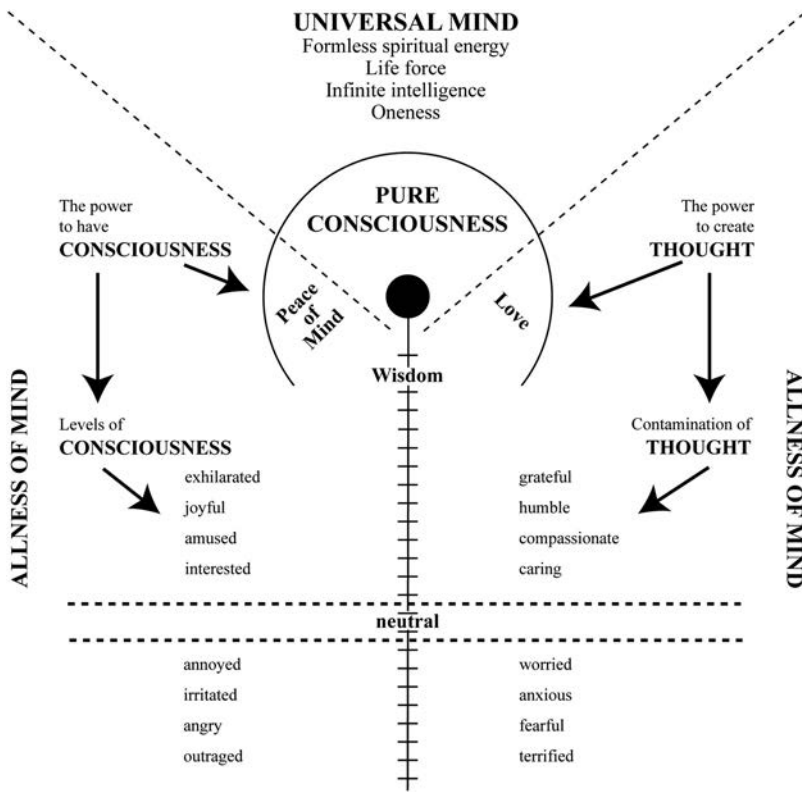


FIGURE 1 Universal Mind, the formless, spiritual energy behind all life, the Infinite Intelligence, pure Oneness funnels into our being as pure consciousness (our soul, our spiritual essence). This pure consciousness has the qualities of peace, love, and wisdom. In this pure state, we have natural mindfulness and are completely one with the moment. Universal Mind gives us the power to have Consciousness and the power to create Thought. The thoughts we create with that power enter into our consciousness and, depending on the quality of that thinking, contaminate it to varying degrees, giving us an infinite variety of levels of consciousness that gradually descend from as close to pure consciousness as we can get in human form to the dregs of rage, terror, depression, and hate created by us, from our own ability to think up a personal reality. All levels are also part of the Allness of Mind, because Mind is behind and IS All things. Thus, Mind is All things, and therefore it must also be One, and as One, it is the purest part of itself.

from the ancient to modern, reflect Banks’s (1998) contention. Buddhism, for example, speaks of Master Mind. Vipassana meditation says that the mind is everywhere, in every atom. Hart (1987) stated, “The whole body contains the mind” (p. 29). In his book, *Conversations With God*, Walsch (1995) allegedly wrote from the voice of God, stating:

All of life is a vibration. That which you call life . . . is pure energy. That energy is vibrating constantly, always. It is moving in waves. The

waves vibrate at different speeds, producing different degrees of density, or light. This in turn produces what you'd call different 'effects' in the physical world—actually, different physical objects. Yet, while the objects are different and discrete, the energy, which produces them, is exactly the same. (p.178)

Siddha Yoga teaches that life is spirit. The Upanishads tell us that mind is united with the vital force, from the inner Consciousness originates *prana*, and with the help of the mind it moves in the body and carries out its functions, as stated in the *Pratyabhijnabrdayam*:

When universal Consciousness . . . descends from its lofty status as pure Consciousness and assumes the form of different objects it becomes . . . individual consciousness, or mind, contracting itself in accordance with the objects perceived. So, the mind is nothing but Consciousness in a contracted form. That Consciousness is one with the Self, so the mind is simply that aspect of the Self, which has taken the form of outer objects. (Muktananda, 1992, p.27)

“Vipassana” means “insight” in the ancient Pali language of India and is the essence of the teachings of Buddha and the source of experience of the truths of which he spoke (Hart, 1987). Vipassana describes insight as “a sudden intuition” or knowing of truth and says that real wisdom brings about a change in one’s life by changing the very nature of the mind. Vipassana meditation asserts that every thought, every emotion, every mental action is accompanied by a corresponding sensation within the body. Hart (1987) stated:

Emotion is energy in motion. When you move energy, you create effect. If you move enough energy, you create matter . . . It is the secret of all life. Thought is pure energy. Every thought you have, have ever had, and ever will have is creative. (p. 91)

A Course in Miracles asserts, “Out of the Oneness of God comes a split of itself, or at least the illusion of a split, which is an individual Soul, within which is the purest of Consciousness” (Wapnick & Wapnick, 1995, p. 17). It further asserts, when we lose sight of our Divine Consciousness, we enter an ego state where the perceiver and perceived “seem to exist as separate ‘realities’” (p. 17). Our consciousness then descends to having a concept of “a limited false self that is separate and uncertain, seeming to experience an opposite to the true ‘Self’ as God created it” (p. 17). A Course in Miracles teaches, “This new mode of being asks us to become aware of the thoughts of our wrong minds, and to ask for help in switching to a correction that already exists in our right minds. In order to accomplish this, we must get

our ego selves out of the way and let go . . .” (p. 17). It further proposes that people have a choice in thinking themselves separate and special or in thinking that they are directly connected to and are a part of God, and that this choice rests within their minds.

The spiritual understanding of Unity explains that people create their life experience using thought; people have health and divinity within them; and people can access this inner health through prayer and meditation (Vahle, 2002). Filmore (2010), cofounder of Unity stated, “Science tells us there is a universal life that animates and sustains all forms and shapes of the universe . . . but science has not yet comprehended the dynamic directive power of man’s thought” (pp. 9–10). Filmore continued, “As the animating life of all things God is a unit, but as the mind that drives this life He is diverse. Every man is king of his own mental domain, and his subjects are his thoughts” (p. 19).

What Sydney Banks uncovered and contributed was how these spiritual facts of Mind, Consciousness, and Thought work together to create everyone’s personal experience. Perhaps some would dispute Banks’s notion of how these principles work together as theory, except that they would have to be using these very principles to dispute it. J. Pransky (2003) concluded, “The point is that no matter what the spiritual teaching . . . it always seems to boil down to Mind, Consciousness and Thought. The trick lies in seeing how they all work together, which is how they can be of most use to us” (pp. 280–281).

THE THREE-PRINCIPLES INTERVENTION VERSUS COGNITIVE AND OTHER INTERVENTIONS

The primary difference between traditional forms of psychotherapy and three-principles psychotherapy is that with traditional therapies, the feelings and problems people experience are considered real things that one can be helped to deal with constructively in many varying ways, depending on the therapy. In three-principles therapy, the feelings and problems are considered to be essentially illusions or mirages created by one’s power of Thought and are made to appear and feel “real” by the power of Consciousness. The solution is to see these feelings and problems for the self-creations they truly are via new insight arising from wisdom, thereby raising their level of consciousness.

A helpful way to illustrate the nature and uniqueness of the three-principles intervention is to contrast the approach of a principles-based practitioner with that of a cognitive therapist in treating a client with an acute anxiety or depressive disorder related to a difficult life event. Generally speaking, a cognitive or rational-emotive therapist would view a painful event, as well as the client’s symptoms, as facts about which the client must

learn to think differently, more rationally or more positively. She would view the event as the appropriate focus of treatment, and the client's fearful or depressive reaction to the event as a signal of proper therapeutic direction. She would then focus on the content of the client's thinking about the event. Then she would attempt to recondition the content of the client's thinking, without considering the subtle variations in her client's thinking that arise from an ever-changing state of mind or feeling state.

A principles-based practitioner would view the event in and of itself as having no special importance to the therapy process. Uncomfortable emotional reactions to the event would be seen not as a statement about the importance of the event, but rather a statement about the client's present level of understanding of the role of thought in creating this experience. The two main issues for a principles-based therapist are to help the client have insights regarding (a) thought recognition, meaning helping clients have personal insights where they truly see thought as the *only* "reality" they and others can ever know, the *only* experience they and others can ever have, either seeing this in the moment or recognizing it after the fact as a self-corrective function; and (b) innate health via a clear mind, meaning where clients realize at a deep level that people have all the mental health, self-esteem, peace of mind, joy, and wisdom they seek or need already within them, and they directly access this health whenever their minds clear, calm, or quiet down from personal, habitual, or low-mood thinking (Kelley, Pransky, & Lambert, 2013a). Such insights are more likely to occur when a client feels at ease, and his or her mind relaxes, calms down, or clears. The discussion moves in the direction of the *ability of thought* as a creative power and the idea that transcending any event is built into a quiet mind, a responsive thought process, and the innate health/resilience it unleashes.

As a client's level of understanding deepens, he or she will begin to see the problem for what it really is: *often nothing more than painful memories from the past being carried through time via thought and given meaning by the client now*. With this shift in understanding, the client will realize that painful thoughts and memories flow uneventfully through his or her mind when in a state of mental health, and this is always possible. The client is helped to realize that symptoms are actually his/her own distressing, frightening thoughts manifesting in the form of distressing, frightening experiences and that those thoughts have no life of their own beyond the moment they are created in his/her own mind. Although these thoughts may create temporary discomfort, clients who gain thought recognition come to understand and trust that *a natural psychological healing process is in operation* and that this process is a normal, nonthreatening part of healthy psychological functioning (Sedgeman, 2005).

Thus, the principles-based intervention does not focus on the recall of a client's memories or feelings. Nor does it attempt to recondition a client's dysfunctional schemas or to help clients reframe or change their thinking.

Three-principles practitioners believe once thoughts have been thought, it is already too late or too difficult to change them because thoughts, once thought, have already entered the world of form. Rather, this intervention attempts to help clients (a) realize how the “reality” they see in any situation is only what they are inadvertently making up with their own power of thought, which they do not often realize; (b) transform their relationship with their thinking by helping them see that their thoughts—and therefore what they are experiencing as “real” in the moment—are a temporary illusion that will eventually change, so there is no need to take it so seriously; (c) see how well-being and common sense naturally appear and are always available to them whenever their minds clear or their personal thinking quiets down; and (d) realize there is no event, no matter how horrid, that cannot be overcome once they are aligned with their inner health/resilience or when their thinking shifts to a higher level of consciousness. These new ways of thinking can only be realized through new insight (as opposed to cognitive restructuring), and new insight most often occurs when the mind clears.

TEACHING THREE-PRINCIPLES UNDERSTANDING

Although there are no fixed methods or techniques for teaching these principles, we offer several guideposts followed by successful three-principles practitioners: (a) being the model of the mental health one is attempting to help the client realize, (b) creating a climate for insightful learning, (c) listening deeply, and (d) drawing out three-principles understanding. The intent of this process is to help spawn new insight about one’s psychological experience.

Modeling Mental Health

Three-principles practitioners have gained this understanding themselves, have applied it to their own lives with improved results, live their own lives from this perspective, and emanate mental health.

Creating a Climate for Insightful Learning

Essentially, effective three-principles teachers help their clients’ minds relax because from a relaxed mind, people are more likely to have new insights. This begins with how they see their clients, which the clients feel in return. These practitioners realize even their most disturbed clients can access inner mental/spiritual health that always resides within them. They see this health within all their potential learners, as opposed to seeing or focusing on the external, problematic behavior. They do not view even the most troubling

or troubled people as damaged and in need of fixing with the right beliefs, skills, or techniques. Instead, they relate to them as their spiritual essence, whole and complete. They see the innocence in their learner's behavior, no matter how disturbed, because they realize their misguided behavior is aligned with how their unhealthy thinking makes their lives appear to them. They go out of their way to build rapport. All this helps relax learners' minds.

Deep Listening

Three-principles practitioners trust the health and wisdom of a quiet, clear, empty mind through which to listen. These teachers listen via something akin to intuition, which allows them to pick up and realize how their clients create their realities, how their worlds look to them, how their views may be obscuring their health, and what they may need to realize about the inside-out nature of their psychological lives. It is listening more to what the client is not saying than to the words they are using. As such, it is the opposite of "active listening" where an effort is made to pay close attention to what the client is saying. By listening with clear, quiet minds in a seemingly effortless way, these teachers are able to see more clearly how their learner's inner health has been obscured by their unhealthy thinking and what they need to realize to let go of this thinking and allow this health to surface. Essentially, they listen deeply to the spiritual energy that exists between and throughout the space between the client and practitioner, which contains all wisdom and the answers.

Drawing Out Three-Principles Understanding

Once students' minds are relaxed and teachers are listening deeply, the conditions are in place to help students realize the health within them and how they have innocently obscured it by misusing the ability of thought. Basically, this involves conveying or "unveiling" what people really already know deep within their spiritual essence. When clients grasp these understandings, they begin to see the truth about their circumstances—something of which their own minds create meaning and carry through time. When learners realize emotional disturbance is a state of mind rather than a fixed personality trait, the grip of their negative, self-defeating thinking loosens, and they are able to rebound to healthier states of mind more readily.

Several excellent teachers have described their experience of teaching these principles (e.g., Carlson & Bailey, 1999; Kelley, 2004; Mills, 1995; Mills & Shuford, 2001; Neill, 2013; G. Pransky, 1990, 1998; J. Pransky, 2011a, 2011b; Spittle, 2005). J. Pransky (2003) offered a manual describing these principles and their application for the field of prevention. J. Pransky and Carpenos (2000) offered a structured principles-based middle school curriculum for preventing youth violence, abuse, and bullying.

For the earliest prevention levels, J. Pransky and Kahofer (2012) created a picture book to aid adults in helping very young children understand the creative power of thought. In addition, several Internet resources exist to assist mental health professionals in learning and teaching these principles (e.g., Three-Principles Global Community; Three-Principles Movies; Center for Sustainable Change; Center for Inside-Out Understanding).

EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE IN SUPPORT OF THE THREE-PRINCIPLES INTERVENTION

Voluminous anecdotal and considerable empirical evidence exists that appears to support the effectiveness of the three-principles intervention, previously referred to in the literature as health realization. For example, during the past three decades, these principles have been taught to thousands of residents in impoverished, often crime-ridden communities such as in South Central Los Angeles, Oakland, San Francisco, the South Bronx, Miami, Tampa, Oahu, Minneapolis, Des Moines, Charlotte, and the Mississippi Delta region. Independent evaluations of each of these interventions reported striking reductions in residents' depression, anxiety, criminality, delinquency, drug use, child abuse, domestic violence, and unemployment rates (Kelley, 2003b; Kelley, Mills, & Shuford, 2005; Mills, 2005; Mills & Spittle, 2002; J. Pransky, 2011a).

Furthermore, several clinicians have reported positive results using the three-principles intervention in mental health settings. For example, Kelley and associates (2005) concluded that a three-principles intervention with 64 youth (ages 9 to 18 years old) diagnosed with various psychiatric disorders led to reductions in anxiety, depression, thought disorders, somatic complaints, attention problems, and delinquent behavior. Marshall's (2005) efforts to teach these principles to teachers and administrators in Menomonee, WI, and St. Cloud, MN, schools resulted in reduced incidents of suspensions by 70%, reduced incidents of fights by 63%, and reduced incidents of violence by 65%. McMahan and Fidler (2003) reported that teaching these principles to mentally ill clients increased their self-esteem and reduced their psychological distress. Sedgeman and Sarwari (2006) reported positive reductions in stress and anxiety for HIV-positive patients following a three-principles intervention at the West Virginia University School of Medicine. Banerjee, Howard, Mansheim, and Beattie (2007) reported that female clients in residential principles-based substance abuse treatment showed reductions in substance abuse, anxiety, and depression, and increases in positive affect comparable to results achieved in a 12-step program. Halcon et al. (2010) reported promising results in a community-delivered three-principles intervention to reduce stress and improve coping of East African refugee women from Somalia and Ethiopia. Kelley (2011) reported that as three-principles understanding increased for 54 prisoners on probation, their stress levels

decreased and their well-being and dispositional mindfulness increased. Finally, Kelley, Pransky, and Lambert (2013a, 2013b) delineated and tested the path from three-principles exposure to improved mental health for 196 people. The multivariate analysis supported each component of this path and showed that insights regarding thought recognition and/or inner mental health via a quiet mind achieved through three-principles understanding related positively with improved emotional regulation, decreased rumination, increased nonattachment, increased flow experience, increased mindfulness, decreased psychological dysfunction, and increased flourishing mental health.

CONCLUSION

The understanding grounded in the principles of Universal Mind, Consciousness, and Thought, principles alluded to by William James, explains that mental health is innate and effortless and is produced by a natural, God-given thought process inherent in higher levels of consciousness accessed via a free and clear mind. The logic of these three spiritual principles proposes that with a shift in consciousness to higher levels via new insight, people can realize their inner mental health, recognize how to access it so it becomes a lifestyle, and see how to prevent their unhealthy thinking from infecting the present. This understanding suggests that psychological dysfunction can be avoided by people regardless of their circumstances through understanding, realizing, and recognizing in the moment how they are using the power of thought. Although more rigorous, controlled research is needed to test the logic of this understanding and the effectiveness of the intervention grounded in these principles, existing supportive evidence is compelling and appears to warrant the attention of mental health professionals.

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