

Alleviating Stress in Clergy Wives: The Development and  
Formative Evaluation of a Psychoeducational Group Intervention

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Abstract

The study addressed the problem that, although researchers have clearly identified areas of stress for clergy wives and suggested the use of counseling services, they have not identified effective counseling interventions. *Clergy wives* referred to non-clergy women married to Protestant clergymen. The study included (a) the development of Clergy Wife Wings (CWW), a 5-session psychoeducational group plan for 6 to 10 clergy wives, to alleviate ministry-related stress and (b) the formative evaluation of the plan in its first implementation. Conclusions drawn suggested that CWW showed good potential as an intervention in helping clergy wives to move towards alleviation of stress but needed revisions and additional implementation and evaluation. Recommendations provided a detailed list of specific revisions.

CWW had an outcome goal for participants of decreasing ministry-related stress, particularly in three targeted stress domains: role expectations and time demands, clergy family boundary intrusiveness, and lack of social support. As presented in the literature review, the theoretical foundations in stress came from the multimodal-transactional model of stress and its treatment (Palmer, S. & Dryden, W., 1995) and from REBT. The literature review also contained, after a summary of the history of clergy wives, an overview of the plan, with references supporting the components. The plan included pre and post-group testing with two clergy-wife stress assessment instruments -- adaptations

of the Clergy Family Life Inventory (Blanton, P., Morris, L, & Anderson, D., 1990) and of the Normative Stress Scale for Clergy Wives (Huebner, 1998).

The formative evaluation of the group plan, in its first implementation, identified themes concerning effectiveness, strengths, weaknesses, and suggestions for improvement. These themes emerged from the qualitative analysis of various documents completed by the 9 participants, the group facilitator, and a group observer. Qualitative findings suggested effectiveness of Clergy Wife Wings through themes of participant perceptions and of reported changes in their thinking and behavior related to stress. Quantitative findings, however, from the pre and post-group measures on the clergy-wife stress instruments did not suggest effectiveness, except for a significant decrease in stress related to two of 35 stressor statements. Discussion included possible reasons for the disparity between findings.

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my mother, Betty Lou Bailey, the first clergy wife I ever knew. I am grateful for her part in providing me a childhood of love and security, and I am grateful for her example as a clergy wife. I thank God for her support of me personally and of my graduate studies.

I also dedicate this study to my husband, Don. Because of him, I have had the privilege of being a clergy wife. I thank God for his continual love, encouragement, and help, especially during my journey as a doctoral student.

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I acknowledge Priscilla Blanton for her cooperation in the use of the Clergy Family Life Inventory and Anne Huebner for her cooperation in the use of the Normative Stress Scale for Clergy Wives.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Not only do work-related stressors comprise the leading source of stress in the United States for individuals (American Institute of Stress, 2003), work-related stressors also impact the families of individuals. Stress stemming from a job can and does interfere with a satisfying balance between family life and work (Porter, 1983). Some types of employment particularly affect family members. For example, many wives of men who hold status positions in social organizations, such as physicians, high level executives, military officers, politicians, or clergy, experience heavy strains and demands (Huebner, 1999; McCubbin & Patterson, 1983; Weinberg, 1984). Repercussions can stem from high role expectations of the wife related to the husband's job, the unusually strong impact the job has on the wife and on the family's home life, and the high profile of the husband's career. Illustrating the reality of this job-related stress in wives, many studies focused on stress experienced by wives of clergymen (Blanton, 1992; Blanton, Morris, & Anderson, 1990; Fox, 1997; Hackley, 1990; Huebner, 1999; Hunt, 1978; Lee, 1995; Morris & Blanton, 1994; Richmond, Rayburn, & Rogers, 1985; Watson, 1990).

Stereotypes abound concerning the wife of a Protestant clergyman. According to Dell (1993), "traditional minister's wife" (p. 27) refers to a Christian woman in her first and only marriage to a clergyman. Sharing his dedication to the work of the church, she does not have employment outside the home and may work 20 to 40 hours a week for the church as a volunteer, hence the notion of the package deal — two for the price of one salary. Today some traditional clergy wives, as described, continue to exist although clearly many, if not most, clergy wives have created very different roles. Still, congregations seem to expect and to want married male pastors. In fact, the salaries of married Protestant clergymen exceed single clergymen with

the same level of experience (Chang & Perl, 1999). Evidently being married provides professional benefit for clergymen.

### Spouse of Focus

The spouse of focus, *clergy wife* here refers to a non-clergy woman married to a clergyman. This study did not include three relatively new groups of clergy spouses: female clergy who are married to clergymen, male clergy who are married to clergywomen, and lay men who are married to clergywomen. Although these groups consist of important and growing segments of the population of clergy spouses, the study excluded them for several reasons. First, dual-clergy couples comprise a distinct population with unique challenges. Clergy persons who also have spouses in the ministry, warrant separate investigation. Second, personal observation and existing societal patterns suggest that non-clergy husbands of clergywomen may have experiences, perspectives, and issues different from clergy wives. Also little research exists related to these men. Without additional research, one must not assume that the findings in the literature about ministers' wives translate to husbands of female ministers.

### Problem

Many studies have focused on clergy wives, as defined in this study, and revealed a great deal about them, especially regarding stress. In a review of research findings through 1989, Blanton (1992) identified five common domains of external stress in clergy families – role expectations and time demands, family boundary intrusiveness, lack of social support, mobility, and the husband's financial compensation. As expanded in the next chapter, research since 1990 has continued to indicate that clergy wives experience stress related to these domains – role expectations and time demands (D. L. Allen, 1992; P. A. R. Allen, 1998; Cox, 2001; Hack, 1993; Lucas, 1992; Morris & Blanton, 1998; Pettitt, 1998), family boundary intrusiveness (Morris &



Blanton, 1998; Pettitt, 1998; Fox, 1997), and lack of social support (Bare, 1998; Fox, 1997; Lucas, 1992; Morris & Blanton, 1998). Although research related to clergy wife stress in the domain of mobility (Frame, 1998; Morris & Blanton, 1998; Watson, 1990) and the domain of the husband's financial compensation (Brunette-Hill, 1999; Cox, 2001) also showed continued stress, the findings had some mixed results and particularly suggested a decline in financial stress.

Researchers also suggested the development of and use of counseling services and other support systems for clergy wives (Hack, 1993; Hackley, 1990; Presnell, 1977; Watts, 1982), but researchers have not studied specific counseling interventions. Rather than learning more about their sources of stress, the time has come to study ways to try to alleviate that stress. This study then specifically addressed the following problem: Although researchers have clearly identified areas of stress for clergy wives and suggested the use of counseling services, they have not identified effective counseling interventions.

### Purpose and Rationale

In response to this problem, the purpose of this study was (a) to develop a psychoeducational group plan to alleviate ministry-related stress in clergy wives and (b) to evaluate formatively the plan in its initial implementation. Explanations follow concerning the specifics of the two-pronged purpose.

### *Psychoeducational Group Intervention*

The study concentrated on alleviating ministry-related stress that a clergy wife experiences as an individual and did not focus on clergy marriage. Although the level of marital satisfaction certainly impacts stress in clergy wives, stress can exist for clergy wives despite a happy marriage. Of course, individual stress counseling offers one treatment approach, but a

pastor's wife may especially benefit from the unique shared experience and perspectives of other women married to ministers. Participation in a group, in itself, may help to address a lack of social support, one of the main stressors identified by clergy wives. A group experience may help to normalize clergy wife experiences and also may provide a launching platform for supportive friendships. In addition, a group counseling format offers the advantages of reaching more women, of cost-effectiveness, and of counselor time-effectiveness.

The group intervention chosen to alleviate clergy wife stress had a psychoeducational format. Differing from a psychotherapy group that emphasizes interactions between group members, a psychoeducational group introduces a particular population to basic knowledge and helpful techniques related to a shared problem (Earley, 2000). According to Etnin (1992), a psychoeducational group provides an effective venue for a counselor to communicate various concepts and treatment notions at one time to persons with similar concerns and difficulties. A psychoeducational group has a psychological theme of focus and an educational function and includes planned sessions, activities, mini-lectures, and a set number of sessions. Researchers (Corey, 1996; Ellis, Gordon, Neenan, & Palmer, 1997) identified a structured, theme-oriented group as a good tool for helping people to manage stress.

#### *Formative Evaluation*

The second component of this study included the formative evaluation of the group plan in its first implementation. According to Patton (1997), formative evaluation, an improvement-oriented type of program evaluation, evaluates whether a new intervention seems effective in moving participants towards the intended goal. Formative evaluation also identifies strengths and weaknesses of the intervention and focuses on possible improvements. Particularly useful in an intervention's development, formative evaluation openly utilizes input from those involved in

early implementation – in this case, clients and facilitator. As a formalized way to study carefully a new program’s potential and ways to improve the program before finalization, formative evaluation provides the advantage of feedback from real-life utilization. The word *implementation* means putting “into effect according to a definite plan or procedure” (*Random House Webster’s College Dictionary*, 2001). A counseling intervention such as a psychoeducational group has a definite plan and can particularly benefit from evaluation in its implementation. Although basically a qualitative approach, formative evaluation can also utilize quantitative measures. Analysis from quantitative data cannot, however, lead to quantitative generalizations because formative evaluation does not meet the required standards of quantitative research.

In review, the purpose of this study was to (a) to develop a psychoeducational group plan to alleviate ministry-related stress in clergy wives and (b) to evaluate formatively the plan in its initial implementation.

#### Intervention Developed: Clergy Wife Wings

In the first component of the study, I developed a group plan, entitled Clergy Wife Wings, to alleviate clergy-wife stress. The overall goal of Clergy Wife Wings was that each participant would experience a decrease in ministry-related stress. The three outcome objectives narrowed the focus of the intervention as follows: to decrease stress related to clergy wife role expectations and time demands, to decrease stress related to clergy family boundary intrusiveness, and to decrease stress related to a lack of social support.

#### *Overview of Clergy Wife Wings Plan*

The Clergy Wife Wings intervention, as first conceived, consisted of a psychoeducational group with five weekly two-hour sessions for approximately eight clergy wife participants. The plan

included a goal and outcome objectives for participants; activity goals based on theoretical foundations; activities and strategies designed to meet those goals; session outlines, weekly assignments, and handouts (Appendices A-Z, AA-CC); use of two clergy-wife stress assessment instruments (Appendices DD and EE); forms for weekly, informal self-assessment of stress (Appendices C, J, P, U, X); and forms for the recruitment, application process, and selection of group members (Appendices FF-JJ).

As mentioned, the plan included the use of two assessment tools to measure and evaluate ministry-related stress in clergy wives (Appendices EE and FF). The instrumentation section later in this chapter identifies and describes these two tools. These quantitative assessments provided intervention-oriented evaluation -- built-in evaluative techniques to support and reinforce the intervention (Patton, 1997). These appraisals helped participants to assess and analyze their own ministry-related stress and to measure their progress in alleviating stress. Patton praises the inclusion of intervention-oriented evaluation from the early stages of an intervention's development, not only to assist the participants, but also as a built-in venue to evaluate the intervention's effectiveness.

### *Theoretical Foundations of Clergy Wife Wings*

Theoretically, Clergy Wife Wings draws from Palmer and Dryden's (1995) multimodal-transactional model of stress. Palmer and Dryden utilized Lazarus' view of stress as a state which a person experiences when one perceives a situation as threatening and straining one's ability to cope. They also applied Lazarus' seven modalities of personality as a framework for categories of stress response symptoms: behavioral, affective, sensory, imagery, cognitive, interpersonal, and drugs/biological. In their approach to the alleviation and prevention of stress, Palmer and Dryden recommended the use of multimodal techniques, with an emphasis on the cognitive

modality. The activity objectives for Clergy Wife Wings reflected this multimodal approach. Palmer and Dryden (1995) highlighted rational-emotive behavioral therapy (REBT) as one stress treatment option. REBT, which also utilizes a multimodal approach with a heavy emphasis on the cognitive realm, provides specific techniques for Clergy Wife Wings. With a strong educational focus, REBT particularly fits a psychoeducational group setting (Ellis and Dryden, 1997). In addition, researchers have found REBT in a group setting effective in the treatment of stress (Corey, 1996; Ellis et.al., 1997).

Reflecting the transactional focus on relationships of Palmer and Dryden's (1995) stress model, the educational component of Clergy Wife Wings utilized concepts from family systems for conceptualizing the relational environment in which clergy wives live. Systemic thinking helps in considering the complex relationships within and between a clergy family and a church congregation. These ideas include the Bowenian concepts of triangles, boundaries, and differentiation of self (Bowen, 1985) and the structural family therapy concepts of enmeshment and disengagement (Minuchin & Fishman, 1974).

#### Formative Evaluation of Clergy Wife Wings

In the second component of its purpose, the study focused on formative evaluation of the intervention in its first implementation. To gather data for the formative evaluation, I utilized some elements built into the general Clergy Wife Wings plan and also utilized components specifically added for this study. Added components included a group observer, session and final evaluation forms completed by the participants, videotaping of sessions, and interviews of participants by the observer after the intervention.

### *Research Questions*

In the formative evaluation of the Clergy Wife Wings intervention, the study had five research questions. Whereas the first four questions had a qualitative focus, the last question had a quantitative focus. The research questions follow.

1. How effective do the group members, group leader, and group observer perceive group participation in alleviating ministry-related stress?
2. What aspects do the group members, group leader, and group observer identify as strengths of the group plan?
3. What aspects do the group members, group leader, and group observer identify as weaknesses of the group plan?
4. What suggestions do the group members, group leader, and group observer make to improve the group plan?
5. Do the results of the group plan's quantitative pre and post-testing of stress suggest that the intervention is effective in alleviating the participants' ministry-related stress?

### *Qualitative Data*

For the first four research questions, qualitative data came from the group members, from the group leader, and from the group observer. Qualitative data collection techniques included direct observation, participant observation, videotapes, group interview, individual interviews, and participant evaluation forms. The observer, a doctoral student in counselor education, provided an additional perspective, as a mental health professional not directly involved in the creation of the plan or in the facilitation of the first group. The use of a group observer helped to add objectivity to the formative evaluation, particularly important because I had the role of group

leader as well as that of the researcher. As group leader, I viewed session videotapes and kept a weekly journal. The group observer also kept a weekly journal and prepared written summaries of her own reactions, of the group interview after the last session, and of two individual interviews two weeks after the last session. Several forms helped to collect qualitative data from the group members concerning their progress in alleviating stress and, as an added component, concerning their evaluations of and suggestions for each session and of the overall Clergy Wife Wings intervention.

As the researcher, I utilized qualitative techniques to analyze the data. The research questions' focus on the intervention's effectiveness, strengths, weaknesses, and possible improvements provided a natural framework of categories for the data. I used the technique of creating categories and subcategories (Merriam, 1998) and the technique of coding (Ely, 1991). I worked to identify themes, summarize viewpoints, and note differences (Merriam). The utilization of triangulation (Best & Kahn, 1998; Ely, 1001; Merriam), peer checking (Merriam), participant participation (Merriam), and member checking (Merriam) helped to increase the study's validity.

#### *Quantitative Data*

For the fifth research question, the quantitative data, collected via the assessment instruments, the Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory (Appendix DD) and the Adapted Normative Clergy Wife Stress Scale (Appendix EE), given at the beginning and at the end of the intervention, came from the following five measures:

1. the measure of stress level on the subscale of role expectations and time demands on the Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory,

2. the measure of stress level on the subscale of family boundary intrusiveness on the Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory,
3. the measure of stress level on the subscale of lack of social support on the Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory,
4. the measure of overall stress level on the Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory, and
5. the measures of stress level on each of the 12 stressor statements listed on the Adapted Normative Stress Scale for Clergy Wives and each of the 27 stressor statements on the Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory.

Quantitative results and analyses provided data for answering the fifth research question. Even if analyses yielded results of statistical significance, they could not lead to generalizations beyond the first implementation.

#### Instrumentation

To provide quantitative measures of ministry-related stress, participants completed two instruments at the beginning and the end of the five-week intervention – the Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory (Appendix DD), an adaptation of the Clergy Family Life Inventory (Blanton et al., 1990); and the Adapted Normative Stress Scale for Clergy Wives (Appendix EE), an adaptation of the Normative Stress Scale for Clergy Wives (Huebner, 1999). With permission from the creators of the instruments, I made the changes for use in the study.

The original Clergy Family Life Inventory (Blanton et al, 1990), a 28-item, 4-point Likert-scale questionnaire, measures ministry-related stress experienced by families of clergymen, in the five external stressor domains of (a) role expectations and time demands, (b) family boundary intrusiveness, (c) lack of social support, (d) mobility, and (e) the husband's financial compensation. For the Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory used in this study, I



eliminated one item and changed some wording to narrow the focus to clergy wives. Blanton et al. gave permission for this adaptation.

The original Normative Stress Scale for Clergy Wives (Huebner, 1999) measures stress level related to clergy-wife role ambiguity and role strain by assessing frequency of recent experiences of 12 clergy-wife stressors. The Adapted Normative Stress Scale for Clergy Wives (Appendix EE) asks, with a 4-point Likert scale, how stressful the clergy wife experiences each of the 12 items. Huebner gave permission for this adaptation.

### Significance of the Study

This study began the process of identifying an effective counseling intervention with the population of clergy wives. Ultimately, the greatest significance lies in the possible improvement in the quality of life for women married to clergymen. In turn, resulting improvements may occur in the quality of life for their families. Their pastor husbands may experience less conflict at home and, as a result, possibly also experience increased effectiveness and personal satisfaction in their work.

If deemed promising, replications of the group intervention, in more rigorous studies, may support its effectiveness. Eventually perhaps an effective, research-based group intervention will emerge that denominations and pastoral counseling centers can utilize in providing counseling support to clergy spouses. Counselors may find that some of the techniques and information in this group plan may work well with an individual clergy wife, individual clergy, a clergy marriage, a clergy child, or a clergy family. Possibly adaptations to the plan could provide ideas for counseling women whose husbands belong to other professions that tend to subsume the wife's identity.

The study also provided additional research in the general study of stress reduction. It may lay important groundwork in the use of the multimodal-transactional model of stress and the multimodal treatment of stress in a psychoeducational group setting. As a variation, the study added, within this theoretical framework, the dimension of spirituality as an arena of stress-relieving techniques. It also added to the research literature about the use of REBT techniques in a group setting to relieve stress and with women who value organized religion and spirituality.

#### Limitations of the Study

As the development of a new intervention and as formative evaluation, this study's emphasis lay in creating and improving the intervention and not in generalizing results as traditional quantitative research. The study included no attempt to randomize clergy wife participation, to have a representative sample, or to utilize a control group. The study followed the original design of Clergy Wife Wings in not controlling for extraneous variables beyond the use of some clinical judgment and the narrowing of the population to non-clergy women married to full-time parish clergymen. Response sets (Isaac & Michael, 1981) may have limited the study. For example, clergy wives may have responded on the pre or post-testing in ways they perceived as appropriate or expected. The Hawthorne effect (Isaac & Michael) may also have impacted some results because participants may have expected a decrease in their stress level. Because I had the roles of both researcher and group facilitator, the possibility of researcher bias (Isaac & Michael) existed in evaluating the group, despite the use of a group observer as a peer checker. In addition, my own experiences as a clergy wife, although helpful in many ways for this study, may have created biases.

#### Definition of Terms

Some of the terms in this study have great usage in everyday life, which could result in confusion. Other terms, of less general use, may also need clarification. The specific definitions of terms, as utilized in this research, follow.

#### *Terms Related to Stress Domains in Clergy Wives*

The definitions for these six terms came directly from Blanton et al. (1990). The methodology for this study included use of an adaptation of a stress assessment tool designed by Blanton et al. to measure stress in clergy families in five domains. As a result, their definitions of the terms apply throughout the study. These domains involve the following terms.

##### *Family Boundary Intrusiveness*

Family boundary intrusiveness refers to “the extent to which the separation of the clergy family from the church congregation is not clearly marked and respected” (Blanton et al., 1990).

##### *Husband’s Compensation*

Husband’s compensation consists of the clergyman’s “pay package, including monetary salary and other benefits, such as housing, medical insurance, retirement, vacation, and day off from one’s ministerial duties” (Blanton et al., 1990).

##### *Mobility*

Mobility refers to “the various aspects related to the relocation process, including the physical process of moving, as well as the decision-making process and the emotional and physical adjustments involved in dealing with the changes and losses experienced in moving” (Blanton et al., 1990).

### *Role Expectations*

Role expectations “involve perceptions of the standards or parameters for appropriate role enactment defined both by the self as well as significant others in the social context (i.e. family and congregation)” (Blanton et al., 1990). In this study, *self* refers to the clergy wife.

### *Social Support*

Social support refers to “the availability of friendships and attachment relationships in one’s social context. This domain includes both the quantity of available relationships and the quality of those relationships in regard to the kinds of needs one is able to have met” (Blanton et al., 1990).

### *Time Demands*

Time demands consist of “obligations involving the use of time resources to address the needs of both family and congregational members” (Blanton et al, 1990).

### *Other Terms*

#### *Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory*

The Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory (Appendix DD), that I based on the Clergy Family Life Inventory (Blanton et al, 1990), assesses stress in clergy wives in the same five domains as the original instrument.

#### *Adapted Normative Stress Scale for Clergy Wives*

The Adapted Normative Stress Scale for Clergy Wives (Appendix EE), that I based on the Normative Stress Scale for Clergy Wives (Huebner, 1999), assesses a clergy wife’s perception of stress, with a 4-point Likert scale, concerning each of 12 stressors related to the role of clergy wife.

### *BASIC IB*

BASIC IB, an acronym used in this study, represents BASIC I.D.

### *BASIC I.D.*

BASIC I.D., an acronym, represents the seven modalities used by Palmer and Dryden (1995) to categorize stress response symptoms and to categorize methods of stress treatment. The modalities consist of the following: behavioral, affective, sensory, imagery, cognitive, interpersonal, and drugs/biology. Lazarus first used the BASIC I.D. framework for aspects of personality.

### *Clergy Family Life Inventory*

The Clergy Family Life Inventory (Blanton et al., 1990) assesses, in clergymen and their wives, clergy family stress level from external stressors in five domains: (a) role expectations and time demands, (b) family boundary intrusiveness, (c) lack of social support, (d) mobility, and (e) the husband's compensation.

### *Clergy Wife*

Clergy wife refers to a non-clergy woman married to a Protestant clergyman

### *Coping*

Coping refers to "any attempt to deal with stress" (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2000, p. 450).

### *Formative Evaluation*

Formative evaluation focuses on collecting data from all those involved in an implementation of an intervention, "usually during the start-up or pilot phase of a project, to improve implementation, solve unanticipated problems, and make sure that participants are progressing toward desired outcomes" (Patton, 1997, p. 69). Formative evaluation often looks at

indicators of effectiveness, at strengths and weaknesses, and at possible ways to improve an intervention.

### *Intervention-Oriented Evaluation*

Intervention-oriented evaluation consists of data collection and assessment included in an intervention as an integral, rather than a separate, component to support and strengthen the intervention (Patton, 1997).

### *Multimodal-Transactional Model of Stress*

The multimodal-transactional model of stress, developed by Palmer and Dryden (1995), frames stress within a five-stage model that emphasizes one's cognitive appraisal of external situations in combination with one's internal beliefs and one's coping resources. The model presents seven categories of stress response symptoms: behavioral, affective, sensory, imagery, cognitive, interpersonal, and drugs/behavioral.

### *Normative Stress Scale for Clergy Wives*

The Normative Stress Scale for Clergy Wives (Huebner, 1999) measures stress level related to clergy wife role strain and ambiguity by frequency of recent occurrence of 12 stressors.

### *Parish*

A parish refers to a local church or a group of local churches served by one pastor or by a staff that includes at least one pastor.

### *Pastoral Counseling*

Pastoral counseling refers to a unique form of counseling or psychotherapy which, to facilitate healing and growth, welcomes the utilization of spiritual resources as well as psychological understanding and techniques. Pastoral counselors, certified mental health

professionals, have had in-depth religious and/or theological training (American Association of Pastoral Counselors, 2003).

### *Psychoeducational Group*

A psychoeducational group provides counseling in a short-term, theme-centered format to educate and to facilitate adaptation in participants who share a common problem or issue (Ettin, 1992).

### *REBT*

Rational-emotive behavioral therapy, originally developed by Ellis, emphasizes cognitive work to change irrational thinking -- unhelpful thoughts and assumptions that result in emotional upset or self-defeating actions. In more recent years, REBT has included more emphasis on behavior and feelings (Ellis et al., 1997; Nielsen, Johnson, & Ellis, 2001).

### *Stress*

Stress refers to a state that occurs when one perceives an event or situation as straining one's coping capacities and threatening one's well-being. The state of stress can take the form of physical, mental, or emotional strain or tension (Lazarus, 1993).

## Summary of Chapter 1 and Overview

Chapter 1 introduced the topic of work-related stress in families and the population of clergy wives. It included summaries of clergy wife stressors identified by research and of the need for a counseling intervention study. The chapter contained the problem statement, the study's two-part purpose, and the rationale for the purpose. Concerning the first component of the purpose, chapter 1 gave an overview of the Clergy Wife Wings group plan and of its theoretical foundations. For the formative evaluation component, the chapter included the research questions and explanations concerning quantitative and qualitative data. Next an

instrumentation section provided an overview of the two clergy-wife stress assessment tools utilized both in the general group plan and in the formative evaluation in this study. The chapter addressed the significance and limitations of the study and included definitions of terms.

Chapter 2 follows with a review of the literature related to the study. Chapter 3 contains the proposed methodology for both prongs of the purpose – the group plan developed for Clergy Wife Wings and the formative evaluation of that plan in its initial implementation. Chapter 4 includes the results of the formative evaluation, and chapter 5 includes discussion of the findings, implications, and recommendations.



## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter includes a review of literature related to the proposed study and an overview of and rationale for components of the group intervention, Clergy Wife Wings. A theoretical discussion of stress incorporates the multimodal-transactional model of stress, the multimodal treatment approach, and REBT. A section on work-related stress, particularly in wives of men in certain careers, places clergy wife stress in a broader perspective. Next a synopsis of the history of protestant clergy wives provides background information. A literature review summarizes research related to clergy wives. First, it includes research findings related to stress in clergy wives – clergy wife stress in general, clergy wife stress in five external domains, and coping in clergy wives. Second, an overview summarizes other recent research findings about the population of clergy wives. Third, a report of research studies on interventions and of recommendations by researchers confirms the need for this study.

The remainder of the chapter focuses on Clergy Wife Wings, the counseling intervention designed in this study. It provides the rationale for the selection of a psychoeducational group design and for the goal and outcome objectives of Clergy Wife Wings. A theoretical section grounds Clergy Wife Wings in the multimodal-transactional model of stress, the multimodal treatment of stress, and REBT. Additional aspects discussed about the group intervention include spirituality, family system concepts, and the use of intervention-oriented evaluation. Finally, an overview of the plan for Clergy Wife Wings contains the group format and some logistics, a list of activity goals, and a list of activities and strategies cross referenced to the goals they each address.

## Theoretical Foundations of Stress and its Treatment

According to Lazarus (1993), the word *stress* refers to a state that occurs when one perceives an event, situation, or condition as threatening one's well-being and straining one's coping capacities. In human beings, the state of stress can manifest itself in the form of physical, cognitive, and emotional symptoms. In the study of stress, confusion has existed among theorists and researchers because some have viewed stress as an event or situation that strains or threatens. Here, as in Lazarus' approach, those situations or events are viewed as potential stressors or potential triggers, not as stress itself. In this study, stress results from a person's perception and consists of the resulting state that person experiences.

### *Multimodal-Transactional Model of Stress*

The study utilizes the theoretical framework of Palmer and Dryden's (1995) multimodal-transactional model of stress. Palmer and Dryden reported that their model combines the transactional models of stress suggested by Cox and by Cox and Mackay and the multimodal model of personality by Lazarus. The word *transactional* in this theory relates to the inter-relationship between the internal and external worlds of individuals in experiencing stress. The word *multimodal* relates to the inclusion of Lazarus's seven modalities of personality as a framework for possible stress responses. Lazarus' seven personality modalities, known by the acronym BASIC I.D., include behavior, affect, sensation, imagery, cognition, interpersonal, and drugs/biology (Palmer and Dryden). In the multimodal-transactional model of stress, the BASIC I.D. framework provides a holistic structure for classifying stress responses.

### *Five Stages*

The multimodal-transactional model of stress (Palmer & Dryden, 1995) consists of five stages. (See Appendix E for a chart of the model.) Stage 1 includes three components: (a) some

external pressure, event, or condition; (b) internal pressures from one's belief system; and (c) one's coping resources. Generally the stress process begins at point (a) when the individual externally experiences a potential trigger. The individual already has an internal belief system that may have subsumed social, cultural, or family beliefs. The individual also has coping resources that may or may not provide effective methods. Stage 2 includes the cognitive appraisal of the external situation as interpreted through the filters of one's internal beliefs and one's coping resources. Sometimes the stress process stops here, perhaps because the person believes she has the resources to cope with the situation. The process of stress, however, may continue to the next stage, perhaps because of an interpretation based on her belief system. For example, if the individual believes that she must always perform well at work, an external event, such as an insignificant deadline, may assume great importance (Palmer and Dryden). In reality, the concept of *must always* is an internal and not an external pressure; the individual does not have to hold rigidly on to this belief. With the cognitive appraisal through this belief filter, she moves to the next stage. Stage 3 consists of the stress response – symptoms in some or all of the seven modalities of BASIC I.D. A discussion of possible symptoms in the modalities follows this overview of the model's stages.

According to Palmer and Dryden (1995), as the individual attempts to cope, amidst inner beliefs, with the original external stressor and now also with the stress symptoms, stage 4 in effect loops back to the three components of stage 1 and then again to another cognitive appraisal in stage 2. Perhaps by then the external stressor no longer exists. Perhaps the person decides that the situation no longer presents a threat, or perhaps she decides that now she can and does cope effectively with the situation -- thus ending the stress process. On the other hand, the person may still interpret the trigger or even the stress symptoms as threatening and something with which

she cannot cope, thus continuing the stress response. Additionally, her attempts to cope may be ineffective in stopping the stress response. At the final stage 5, the individual may eventually end the stress response -- possibly after a number of loops in the process -- or may remain somewhat stressed with residual symptoms. In the latter situation, when a person does not fully recover from stress responses and then continues to encounter additional triggers, chronic stress can occur. With chronic stress, when a person already has some symptoms of stress, external events become more and more likely to trigger additional stress.

### *Multimodal Symptoms of Stress*

Back in stage 3 of the stress model, Palmer and Dryden (1995) categorized stress responses in the seven categories of BASIC I.D. An individual appraising a situation as stressful can respond with symptoms in one or more of these categories. The following list gives a few examples of stress responses in each modality (See Appendix F for longer list): (a) behavior modality -- teeth grinding, alcohol abuse, not eating, compulsive behavior; (b) affective modality -- fear, anxiety, depression, anger, guilt, embarrassment; (c) sensation modality -- aches or pains, tension, clammy hands, dry mouth, nausea, palpitations; (d) imagery modality: flashbacks, images of helplessness or of failure, nightmares; (e) cognition modality: all or nothing thinking, self or other-damning statements, ruminating; (f) interpersonal modality -- passive aggression, unassertiveness, manipulative tendencies, suspiciousness, irritability; and (g) drugs/biological modality -- physiological changes in the flight or fight mechanism, effects of drug abuse, effects of poor nutrition. The sensory modality, the least obvious of the modalities, consists of physical sensations that the person experiences in a stress response. The interpersonal modality involves symptoms in interactions with others.

At times for this study, I change the name of the last category from *drugs/biology* to just *biology*. This change does not exclude the effects of drug use on the body but simply includes those effects under the biology category. Drug abuse presents an example of a stress response that one can classify in more than one category – as a behavioral response and also as a biological response because the abuse affects the body biologically. Such symptomatic links between modalities can occur in many ways (Palmer and Dryden, 1995).

As mentioned above under biological stress symptoms identified by Palmer and Dryden (1995), the body may respond with its automatic mechanism to facilitate the individual to flee or to fight. Palmer and Dryden indicate that in stage 2 of the multimodal stress model, if a person perceives the external potential stressor as threatening or as a situation with which she cannot cope, then that internal message of danger may trigger the sympathetic nervous system to prepare the body for action. The sympathetic nervous system and the parasympathetic nervous system make up the autonomic nervous system (ANS), which controls automatically the heart, lungs, stomach, blood vessels, and glands. In a stressful situation, the sympathetic nervous system can set off chemical reactions that rapidly marshal the body's resources to flee or to fight. Heart rate increases, respiration rate increases, perspiration increases, blood pressure increases, gastrointestinal activity reduces, sugar and fat levels increase, erection and vaginal lubrication is inhibited, the bladder becomes relaxed, pupils dilate, mental activity increases, and strength in skeletal muscles increases (Palmer & Dryden).

According to Palmer and Dryden (1995), many of the stress symptoms in the sensory modality result from these physiological changes, such as butterflies in the stomach, indigestion, cold sweat, and palpitations. When a human being experiences a truly dangerous situation, the physical changes caused by the sympathetic nervous system empower that individual to try to

escape or to overcome the danger. Eventually, as the individual perceives that the threat has passed, then the ANS's parasympathetic nervous system initiates chemical reactions that help to relax the body and to restore equilibrium. Depending on the particular individual and on the perceived seriousness of the trigger, the body may respond only partially with this mechanism. Also, different individuals seem to have particular susceptibility to different symptoms in the sensation modality.

In modern American society, individuals seldom actually need to flee or to fight, and the physiological aspects of the stress response can present difficult challenges. Sometimes the symptoms themselves alarm and incapacitate the individual, such as in a panic attack. For individuals who chronically experience stress, the effects of the sympathetic nervous system, which so effectively prepare the body to respond quickly to physical danger, can become a serious physical liability. Possible ramifications from long-term biological stress symptoms include hypertension and its possible consequences, lowering of the body's immune system and a resulting susceptibility to disease, headaches, persistent fatigue, digestive difficulties, dizzy spells, sexual dysfunction, and sleep disturbance (Palmer & Dryden, 1995).

#### *Summary of Multimodal-Transactional Model of Stress*

The multimodal-transactional model breaks down stress into five stages (Palmer and Dryden, 1995). Stage 1 consists of an external potential trigger, existing inner beliefs, and existing coping resources. Stage 2 consists of the cognitive appraisal of the trigger, in light of those beliefs and coping resources, as stressful. Stage 3 includes the individual's stress response that consists of many possible combinations of many possible symptoms from various BASIC I.D. modalities. Stage 4 loops back to stage 1 with more attempts to cope effectively with the stressor and with the conflicting inner beliefs and proceeds to stage 2 again with more cognitive

appraisal. Stage 5 consists of the eventual feedback to the individual – cessation of the stress symptoms or residual stress symptoms.

### *Multimodal Treatment Model*

In addition to their model of stress, Palmer and Dryden created a multimodal treatment model to alleviate stress (Palmer, 1996; Palmer & Dryden, 1995). To deal with symptoms of stress, they suggested a careful assessment of the individual's specific symptoms and then a plan that includes interventions that specifically address the relevant symptom categories. For example, if a person under stress struggles with flashbacks, a symptom in the imagery modality, then use of imagery intervention techniques, such as creating positive imagery, may provide a particularly effective approach. They also suggested the routine incorporation of interventions in more than one modality – such as positive self talk in the cognitive modality and physical exercise in the behavioral and biological modalities -- to take into account the holistic nature of human beings.

In addition to treating symptoms of stress, Palmer and Dryden (1995) emphasized the crucial need to focus on stopping the stress response from occurring in the first place – an approach to alleviate and to prevent stress. Palmer and Dryden suggested that while one cannot prevent external pressures, cognitive work can help to minimize perception of stress. Cognitive work can focus on the individual's internal beliefs, found in stage 1, which may interfere with his or her ability to cope effectively. According to Palmer and Dryden, mustabatory beliefs, such as *musts* and *shoulds*, commonly interfere with coping statements. Cognitive work can also focus on stage 2's process of cognitive appraisal when an individual assesses the potential stressor, internal beliefs, and coping resources of stage 1. Palmer and Dryden also suggested that

interventions to prevent stress can focus on improving and expanding the individual's coping resources, which may be cognitive or within other modalities.

### *Use of REBT as Treatment*

With their cognitive emphasis in the prevention of stress and with the cognitive realm as one of the treatment modalities, Palmer and Dryden (1995; 1996) highlighted REBT, which also emphasizes cognitive work, as one counseling approach in the treatment of stress. In fact, Dryden has been a leader in the REBT field. As a Fellow of the Albert Ellis Institute of Rational-Emotive Behavior Therapy, Dryden participated in the writing or editing of several books and articles on REBT (Dryden, 1995; Dryden & Yankura, 1995; Ellis & Dryden, 1997). Palmer also collaborated with Ellis and others in writing a book about an REBT approach to stress counseling (Ellis, Gordon, Neenan, & Palmer, 1997).

REBT fits well with the multimodal-transactional theory of stress (Palmer & Dryden, 1995; 1996). In an article about REBT and stress, Abrams and Ellis (1996) expressed a view of stress similar to that of Palmer and Dryden: "Stress does not exist in itself. Stress is like good or evil: it exists only in its perceptions and reactions of the beholder (or the stessee)" (p. 62). Although rational (cognitive) techniques predominate in REBT, this approach also utilizes emotive and behavioral techniques, as the acronym REBT suggests. In his recent writings, Ellis (2001) especially emphasized the importance of feelings and behavior. REBT's three categories of rational, emotive, and behavioral do not precisely correspond with the seven modalities in Palmer and Dryden's treatment model, but considerable overlap exists. Additional discussion concerning this overlap occurs later in this chapter.

### *ABC Model of Stress*



In REBT, the ABC model of emotional disturbance provides a framework that one can apply to stress (Ellis et al., 1997) and that somewhat resembles the first three stages of the multimodal-transactional model, but lacks detailed classification of stress symptoms. In a simpler format, it emphasizes problematic underlying beliefs and thoughts (Ellis et al.) that impact the second stage of cognitive appraisal. According to Abrams and Ellis (1996), “irrational beliefs and self-defeating styles are the essential origins of stress.” Ellis (Ellis & Dryden, 1995) presented a view of stress from a three-step process. Step A occurs: the potential activator or stressor. Step B occurs: the person’s irrational belief or thought about A. Step C occurs: self-defeating consequent emotion or behavior – the stress response. One can easily misunderstand the concept of irrationality in step B because it does not precisely mean illogical. According to Nielsen, Johnson, and Ellis (2001), “first, a belief is irrational if it creates self-defeating upset. Second, beliefs are likely to be irrational if they include an absolute evaluation, usually a demand that people and conditions absolutely must be better than they actually are” (p. 8). In this approach to stress, irrational beliefs usually come in the form of inflexible, absolutistic, dogmatic notions that contain words such as *ought*, *must*, *should*, *have to* and *got to*. Irrational beliefs also often draw conclusions such as “I can’t stand it,” “It is awful,” or “I am totally worthless” (Palmer and Dryden, 1995, p. 46).

As discussed, Palmer and Dryden (1995) identified many possible symptoms of stress by utilizing the classification system of seven modalities. With the ABC model in REBT, Abrams and Ellis (1996) also recognized that stress reactions in step C vary greatly and noted that physical consequences can emerge from the physiology of the flight-or-fight mechanism. In addition, they indicated that “the individual’s particular reaction to stress tends to be

constitutional” (p.63). Some people, for instance, seem more prone to a gastrointestinal stress response or perhaps to cognitive ruminating or to irritability with other people.

### *ABCDE Technique*

In the treatment and management of stress, Ellis et al. (1997) suggested multimodal techniques to manage stress but emphasized cognitive approaches. Cognitive techniques include the use of the ABCDE technique (Ellis & Dryden, 1997), the lynchpin of REBT. This technique first focuses on step C, the uncomfortable consequences, and then on step A, identifying the activating event, and on step B, identifying the underlying faulty belief or thought used in interpreting the event. Step D involves the disputation of that faulty belief or thought; step E involves the use of a more effective thought or belief in its place that would stop the stress process before it leads to the consequence in C. REBT also includes many other cognitive techniques.

Criticism exists of the ABC stress model and the ABCDE technique from REBT because this approach may seem to minimize or oversimplify the possible seriousness of the activating event and to blame the person experiencing the stress. Abrams and Ellis (1996), however, mentioned that some universally difficult experiences, such as the death of a loved one or rape, normally result in stress reactions and not as the result of faulty interpretation. Yet, they suggested that even in some extremely serious circumstances, if the person experiences long-term stress as a result, the ABC model and the ABCDE technique can provide helpful tools in alleviating that stress

### *Other REBT Techniques*

Although a predominantly cognitive approach, Dryden (1995) refers to REBT as multimodal. In addition to cognitive techniques -- such as the cornerstone ABCDE,

psychoeducational methods, rational coping self-statements, reframing, semantic corrections and precision, disputing irrational beliefs, and imagery (Dryden) -- REBT also utilizes emotive and behavioral techniques. Emotive techniques include identification of feelings, humor, and shame attacking exercises (Dryden). Behavioral techniques include role-playing, homework, in vivo desensitization, relaxation methods, medication, reinforcement, and penalization (Dryden). Within Palmer and Dryden's framework, techniques supported in REBT relate to all seven of the BASIC I.D. categories.

### *Summary of Theoretical Foundation*

In summary, this study utilizes the concept that stress occurs as a result of an individual's perception and interpretation. Palmer and Dryden's multimodal-transactional model of stress and their multimodal treatment model present the overarching theoretical foundation for this study. Within that framework, REBT provides specific techniques, with its emphasis on the cognitive realm, to alleviate stress symptoms and to prevent stress.

### *Work-Related Stress*

According to the American Institute of Stress (2003), many studies confirmed occupational pressure and fears as the leading source of stress for American adults. In reviewing stress research, Porter (1983) found a great deal of evidence that work-related stressors also interfere with a satisfying equilibrium between work and family life. Stress researchers also focused on the negative influences of external stressors, which can be work-related, that create long-term demands on the family (Lavee, McCubbin, & Olson, 1987). Professional family types, in which the husband has a career such as a physician, military officer, high-level executive, politician, or clergy, are subject to occupationally related stressors that place heavy strains and

demands on them. As a result, the emotional growth of family members can become inhibited and interfamily relationships can suffer (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983).

Many wives of men who hold status positions in social organizations, such as those listed above, experience heavy strains and demands (Huebner, 1999; McCubbin & Patterson, 1983; Weinberg, 1984). In studying chronic stress in these wives “who persistently deal with high expectations related to their husbands’ occupational positions,” Huebner (p. 55) found that their normative stress – stress related to social roles – has been underestimated in stress assessment. Research has provided ample evidence that stressors related to clergymen’s work particularly impact their wives. Before the review of research about the nature of these stressors, a historical overview follows of clergy wives.

#### History of Protestant Clergy Wives

Wives of clergymen in the Judeo-Christian tradition have a long history. In Old Testament times, expectations existed that all Hebrew men, including priests, marry (Peterson, 1988). The ideal marriage was a monogamous one (Freedman, 1992). The wife of a priest had the societal responsibility of all Hebrew wives to bear male children, but particularly to perpetuate the lineage of the priestly tribe of Levi. During Jesus’ time, Jewish religious leaders also married. According to Freedman, Jesus accepted marriage as a customary institution in Jewish life although neither the New Testament nor apocryphal writings indicate that Jesus was married. Expecting the imminent coming of Jesus, the Apostle Paul recommended sexual abstinence for everyone. Although he considered celibacy preferable, he recommended marriage for those experiencing great sexual temptation. According to Paul, “It is better to marry than to burn” (I Cor. 7:9).

In the early three centuries of the Christian church, clergy often married. Slowly arguments supporting celibacy came to prevail, and in the 4th century, Pope Siricuis banned sex for both unmarried and married priests (Barstow, 1983). Remaining single and abstinent from sex became the expected norm in the priesthood although some clergy still married. In 1074, Pope Gregory VII forbade all married clergy to say mass. Gregory's edict stated,

If there are any priests, deacons, or subdeacons who are married, by the power of omnipotent God and the authority of St. Peter we forbid them to enter a church until they repent and mend their ways. But if any remain with their wives, no one shall dare hear them when they officiate in the church, because their benediction is turned into a curse, and their prayer into a sin. (Corpus Juris Canonici, Dist. LXXXI, C. 15, trans. ThM, No. 62, p. 135) (Petrey, 1962, p. 236)

One can only wonder about the impact of these words on married clergymen and their wives. Today upon entering the Roman Catholic priesthood, a single man takes a vow to remain unmarried and to be sexually abstinent. Obviously the tension between full-time ministry and marriage continues.

As clergymen broke away from the Catholic Church in the Protestant Reformation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, they changed the tradition of and requirement of celibacy for clergy. Katherine von Boram, the wife of reformer Martin Luther, had duties as a clergy wife that included looking after guests at any hour; managing finances; and being a mother, nurse, and domestic manager (Bainton, 1971). During the early decades of Protestantism, the clergy wife role required spirituality, economics, hospitality, and nursing. Some early Protestant clergy wives experienced discrimination and disapproval from the community. The first Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer, who broke from Rome by sanctioning Henry VIII's divorce, tried to keep his

marriage to Margaret a secret. The king objected to ecclesiastical marriages, and Margaret even hid while traveling, in a box with breathing holes in the lid. Eventually her husband Thomas officially banished her (Shepherd, 2001).

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century in the British colonies of New England, a clergy wife had a role of honor and social status but not a role of involvement in her husband's work (Bainton, 1974). Sweet (1983) states that during the 18<sup>th</sup> century and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries in America, expectations of a clergy wife included that of a "helpmeet" and a "clergyman's one-person all-inclusive support system and ... a suffering servant who never made a scintilla of demand on her husband's vocation" (p. 76). Some women, such as Sarah Edwards, the wife of Jonathan Edwards, dared to do more. In 1742, Sarah led the way for women to participate more fully in the church (Hackley, 1990).

According to Hackley (1990), in 18<sup>th</sup>-century England, Susanna Annesley Wesley, wife of Anglican priest Samuel, also took an unusually active role in religious activities, especially when her husband traveled away from home. He reacted negatively when, during such an absence, she dared to start a Sunday evening family service which grew to a public service attracting 200 people. John Wesley, one of Susanna and Samuel's 19 children, became an Anglican priest who attempted to reform the church by preaching beyond the church walls. As a clergy son particularly impacted by the discipline, faith, and courage of his mother Susanna, John Wesley's style and method of ministry became the foundation of today's United Methodist Church.

The relationship between John Wesley and his wife provides an example of the tension between ministry and marriage. Letters written by Wesley and his wife, Mary (Molly)Vazeille, reveal marital discord (Collins, 1993). Evidently Molly struggled because John frequently

traveled in his ministry, even at times when Molly experienced illness. Also he grew emotionally close to women he advised spiritually. Molly felt neglected and became dissatisfied, jealous, and sometimes deceitful. John and Molly eventually separated but never divorced. John's actions suggested that, for him, ministry took priority over marriage. Collins wrote that "John Wesley should have never married" because he "was already married to the Lord" (p. 18).

According to Alleman (1987), in the 1800's and through the 1950's, most books and articles about American clergy wives contained self-help material, with traditional, "idealistic" (p. 12) advice written by and for clergy wives. These years represented the zenith for the "traditional clergy wife" (Dell, 1993). Eaton (1851) wrote that a clergy wife should have the following qualifications: "have good common sense" (p. 14), "have correct knowledge of the doctrines of Christianity" (p. 16), "be a student of the Bible" (p. 18), "have ardent piety ... uniform piety ... cheerful piety ... and benevolent piety" (pp. 20-28), and "should love the itinerancy" (p. 28), the Methodist system of assigning and moving clergymen.

Amidst such expectations, clergy wives encountered stressful situations. Eaton (1851) discussed trials arising from mobility, from the "mixed state of society" (p. 69), from "penuriousness [extreme stinginess] in the church" (p. 75), and from "unreasonable expectations" (p. 83). The book *Life in the Itinerancy* (Anonymous, 1856) includes accounts of "triumphs and trials" (p. iii) in the life of Mrs. Stanley, a clergy wife. As a new bride, Mrs. Stanley quickly faced challenging expectations when she heard, from a difficult parishioner,

bitter complaints against the former preachers' wives, all of showing, in some or other of the departments of life. They had been extravagant, or proud, or fault-finding or neglectful to visit the poor, or something else had greatly impaired [sic] their usefulness. She now hoped for better things. (pp. 54-55)

In the early 1960's, Denton (1961) and Douglas (1961, 1965) separately conducted the first empirical research that focused on clergy wives. They discovered a trend among some of these women away from the traditional clergy wife role, with more emphasis on themselves as individuals. Nevertheless, vestiges of the traditional role continued and somewhat continue today. While some stressors and complications of being a clergy wife lessened, others emerged in the latter 20<sup>th</sup> century and early 21<sup>st</sup> century amidst changing roles of women in our society.

### Research Findings about Clergy Wives

Summaries follow of research related to clergy wives. The summarized findings focus, first, on clergy wife stress; second, on other related aspects of this population; and third, on interventions. Throughout this chapter, unless noted as multid denominational, the studies cited focus on clergy wives in a single denomination. For denominational identification when not given, one may consult the cited reference's title or the reference itself. To give a richer, more personalized presentation of the population, occasional quotations from qualitative research give voice to individual clergy wives.

### *Research about Clergy Wife Stress*

A surprising amount of research has provided information about stress in women married to clergymen. The following literature review focuses on clergy wife stress -- in general, in five external domains, and in how these women cope.

#### *Clergy Wife Stress in General*

The role of clergy wife negatively impacts many clergy wives. They often experience clergy wife role strain, role confusion, role ambiguity, role conflict, or role overload (Cox, 2001; Downs, 1982; Hack, 1993; Hackley, 1990; Huebner, 1999; Mickey & Ashmore, 1991; Mickey, Wilson, & Ashmore, 1991; Pettitt, 1998; Presnell, 1977; Slack, 1979). Hack found role confusion



to be negatively related to clergy wife role satisfaction. Pettitt found role overload to be a variable affecting marital satisfaction. The following illustrate some of the questions that clergy wives may ponder about her role: As a pastor's wife, must she be a spiritual leader and a paragon of virtue? How much should she be involved in the ministry of her husband? Does she consider her role as a minister's wife a special calling? As a mother, how does she portray the role of a clergy family to her children? Does her own personality or appearance seem at odds with what she thinks others perceive as appropriate for a clergy wife? How does her or others' view of the role of a clergy wife interfere with her roles of self, wife, mother, employee, or homemaker? Do her personal needs and the needs of her marriage, children, or extended family clash with the needs and expectations of the congregation?

In comparing denominations, Mickey et al. (1991) found clergymen from mainline and liberal denominations more likely than clergymen from conservative denominations to report that their wives had difficulty with clergy wife role confusion and role conflict. These clergymen reported that they and their wives also tended to view the husband's ministry as a service-oriented profession whereas the conservative denomination pastors reported that they and their wives viewed ministry as a spiritual calling. Unfortunately Mickey et al. did not gather data directly from clergy wives – a glaring weakness in their study. They concluded from data gathered from ministers, however, that clergy wives who share a sense of spiritual calling with their husbands have more contentment in their roles as pastors' spouses. On the other hand, they concluded that clergy wives who view their husbands mainly as professionals are more likely to reflect ambivalence and resentment towards their role as clergy spouses. Rogers' (2000) qualitative study of pastors' wives also suggested that those who felt a personal calling to

Christian service and to support their husbands' ministries seemed to be more satisfied in their role as a clergy wife.

Role redefinition and role ambiguity can be another source of stress for clergy wives (Blanton, 1992; Herin, 1981; Niswander, 1982). According to Herin, roles and role expectations are in a state of flux in today's society. Definitions of *pastor*, *preacher*, *preacher's wife*, *parsonage family*, *husband*, *wife*, *mother*, and *father* are no longer either fixed or one-dimensional. Ministers, spouses and churches need guidance and support as they grapple with new styles of family life and unfamiliar patterns of relationship. (p. 4)

Blanton quoted these words, written in 1981 by Herin, as applicable in 1992, and they continue to apply now, ten years later. Traditional roles and values related to gender, marriage, parenting, home, employment, and church continue to resonate amidst an environment of change, with accompanying confusion and uncertainty. In a qualitative study of Episcopal clergy wives, Reed (1989) identified "a vocation to spiritual growth, to marriage, and to service within the church," coupled with "conflict and contradiction as they struggle to be authentic women and to create marriages bases on mutuality ... " (p. viii).

#### *External Stressor Domains*

In 1992, Blanton reviewed and summarized research findings related to external stressors in families of clergymen. Blanton organized the material around external family stressors found in the research through 1989 to be common in clergy families. The five stressor domains identified external to the family included (a) expectations and time demands, (b) family boundary intrusiveness, (c) lack of social support, (d) mobility, and (e) the husband's financial compensation. Blanton's external stressor outline provides a framework in which to summarize

research findings about clergy wives and specific sources of stress. When related, the summary also includes research findings concerning some internal stressors.

*Role expectations and time demands.* According to Blanton (1992), employer expectations for the clergy wife can come from the congregation or from the denominational leadership. Also the clergy wife's own perceptions of such role expectations, accurate or not, can have an important impact. Many studies, from a variety of perspectives, showed that clergy wives do experience stress from role expectations (D. L. Allen, 1992; P. A. R. Allen, 1998; Hack, 1993; Hackley, 1990; Hunt, 1978; Lee & Balswick, 1989; Lanham, 1990; Mace & Mace, 1982; Mattis, 1977; Pettitt, 1998; Presnell, 1977; Putnam, 1990; Slack, 1979; Valeriano, 1981). Hunt learned that clergymen and their wives identified as their greatest problem or concern, the "demands by our congregation." Both D. L. Allen and Putnam found a significant negative linear relationship between perceived church expectations and clergy wife marital satisfaction. Hack discovered perceived role expectations to be negatively related to clergy wife role satisfaction. In another study, a clergy wife said

My biggest complaint: When a surgeon cannot come to work, nobody expects the wife to do the surgery or consultation. People expect a minister's wife to do the job of the husband when he is not there—counseling, prayer meetings, ... The list can go on and on. I think you can see my point. I have not had the training my husband had to do these things, but people expect them. (Lanham, p. 101)

Another clergy wife lamented that, on controversial issues, the congregation wanted her to be a "holy noodlehead" (John Mark Ministries, 2001).

Pettitt (1998) identified *social desirability*, defined as the "perceived need of the spouse to always be seen positively by the congregation and community" (p. 4), as a variable affecting

marital satisfaction. In a multid denominational study of 321 clergy and spouses by Mace and Mace (1982), 59% of the clergy wives cited unreasonable expectations of the congregation and the community as a disadvantage of being married to a pastor. Other researchers also identified negative impacts on clergy wives related to the perceived pressure to be an exemplary role model (Hackley, 1990; Lee and Balswick, 1989; Lucas, 1992; Mattis, 1977; Presnell, 1977).

In two qualitative studies of women divorced from ministers, common themes involved expectations they had experienced as clergy wives. The participants in one study had experienced poorly defined clergy wife roles and also expectations to serve as a church volunteer and not to work outside the home (P. A. R. Allen, 1998). In the second study (Slack, 1979), divorced clergy wives identified pressures to fulfill an expected role model as the top stress factor that contributed to the divorce.

Researchers also identified as a stressor for clergy wives, time demands related to their husbands' ministry. Clergy wives, in a multid denominational study (Fox, 1997), identified time-demands as a negative stressor impacting marital satisfaction, parental satisfactions, and life satisfaction. These time burdens related to her or to her husband. One clergy wife claimed as her worst source of stress, "the 'church' pushing out family time" (Holling, 1992, p. 87). In Brunette-Hill's (1999) study, 44% of clergy wife participants identified the husband's work schedule as a major problem, and 17% identified a lack of time for herself. Divorced clergy wives listed the minister's lack of time commitment to her and to the family as a stress factor that contributed to the divorce (Slack, 1979).

*Family boundary intrusiveness.* Family boundary intrusiveness, a blurring of the boundaries between the minister's church work and his family, has historically created problems for clergy families. In his early multid denominational study, Douglas (1965) found that 30 % of

clergy wife participants named a goldfish bowl existence as the most difficult component of their family situation. Later Valeriano (1981) found continued fishbowl difficulties in a survey of 166 clergy wives. Roehlkepartain (1993) referred to this lack of privacy for clergy families as “living in a stained-glass fishbowl” (p. 7). Pettitt (1998) found that lack of privacy affects marital satisfaction in clergy wives. Hack (1993) identified lack of privacy as the only variable with a negative valence in predicting clergy wife role satisfaction. Across six denominations, Fox (1997) identified intrusiveness as the most influential predictor, albeit negative, of marital satisfaction in clergy wives. From the same six-denominational data, Morris and Blanton (1998) identified intrusiveness as negatively affecting clergy wives’ competence in family functioning. Baker and Scott (1992) found greater impact of a clergy husband’s employment on the family as one of the negative factors in global well-being for clergy wives.

Conflict and criticism in the church can also present boundary challenges for clergy wives. As a church participant, she may be acutely aware of and directly experience criticism and conflicts. Mickey and Ashmore (1991) found that clergymen from 11 denominations believed that church conflict often created stress in their wives. Criticism and conflict in a church may become very personal to a clergy wife because her husband is the pastor and because she may frequently face the unhappy congregational members. A male Lutheran pastor said, “When discontentment is expressed by members in the congregation, it is very difficult on the spouse. ‘Can’t they see what they are doing to your enthusiasm?’ my wife said to me more than once” (Mickey & Ashmore, p. 121). A United Methodist pastor observed, “My spouse is concerned about members’ criticism, whether or not criticism is deserved” (Mickey & Ashmore, p. 133). Some clergy wives also experience family intrusiveness in the form of a personal sense of lack of control and powerlessness related to conflict in the church (Mickey & Ashmore; Cox, 2001).

In many churches, clergy compensation includes housing, called a parsonage or manse. According to Brunette-Hill (1999), from its establishment, the parsonage system has produced conflict for clergy families and congregations. Blanton (1992) suggests that the parsonage system may contribute to boundary problems experienced by some clergy families. Blanton illustrates Arnott's (1971) concept of strain between the clergy family's public and private lives with clergy family stories of parishioners walking into their parsonage uninvited. Although the provision of housing gives clergy families considerable advantages, such as ease in moving to and from a community, convenience, and fewer financial obligations, church-owned housing can become awkward. Issues related to maintenance, modernization, repairs, location, replacement, family upkeep of the house, personal tastes, personal standards, family size, and family privacy can become problematic for the clergy family and for the church. Some clergymen and clergy wives yearn to buy a home or to live in a less conspicuous place. As clergy and spouses age, stress from the parsonage system can also come from a lack of equity and from having to relocate upon retirement. In a formal analysis of self-help books for clergy wives, the theme of "parsonage living has complications" (Bare, 1998, p. 121) appears consistently, including those books written recently. Yet, Brunett-Hill's findings suggest that housing is becoming less a source of stress for clergy wives, perhaps because increasingly clergy families live in their own homes. In some denominations and regions of the country, however, that choice seldom exists.

Blanton (1992) listed a clergy wife's sense of identity as a possible source of internal stress in some clergy families. Personal identity and self-actualization can be problematic for clergy wives (Baker and Scott, 1992; Hunt, 1978; Reed, 1989; Weinberg, 1984; Wimberly, 1979). Weinberg discussed absorption as "the degree to which a wife perceives herself to be implicated in her husband's work" (p. iii). Lanham (1990) defined *derived identity* as the "sense

of self that is overly influenced by and dependent upon relationships with significant others” (p. 23). Lanham found a strong negative relationship in clergy wives between derived sense of identity and self-esteem. According to this study, a clergy wife whose sense of identity depends upon the ministry of her husband often also has low self-esteem. Although as women, clergy wives may be naturally more sensitive to marriage and family relationships (Hunt; 1978; Lee & Balswick, 1989), a clergy wife’s identity that overly depends upon her clergyman husband may indicate that the boundaries have become blurred between herself and him. One can consider this boundary blurring as a type of family intrusiveness from within. Nevertheless, Brunette-Hill (1999) found diminished sense of identity, which can be viewed as derived identity, to be less a problem now than for clergy wives in the 1960’s.

*Lack of social support.* A lack of social support continues to challenge clergy wives. Clergy wives across six denominations identified lack of social support as affecting their competence in family functioning (Morris & Blanton, 1998) and as affecting their life satisfaction (Fox, 1997). Lucas (1992) identified dissatisfaction with social support as a predictor of depressive symptomatology in clergy wives. A theme identified in a qualitative study (Cox, 2001) centered on a longing in pastors’ wives to have another pastor’s wife with whom to talk, especially one sympathetic and more experienced.

Many clergy wives, across denominational lines, tend to experience loneliness or a sense of isolation, with various impacts (Bare, 1998; Brackin, 2001; Hack, 1993; Mickey et al., 1991; Presnell, 1977; Putnam, 1990; Slack, 1979; Warner & Carter, 1984; Valeriano, 1981; Watts, 1982). Bare found, as a consistent theme identified in clergy wife handbooks (self-help books), that “having many friends is a benefit of the ministry, but ministry can be lonely in the midst of people” (p. 136). Warner and Carter found both male ministers and their wives in a small

Presbyterian denomination significantly more lonely than male and female lay members in the same denomination. Although this problem may at times relate to the clergy marriage, loneliness and a sense of isolation often exist beyond the marital relationship. Brackin found that clergy wives exhibited higher levels of loneliness than expected for their level of marital satisfaction.

In some clergy wives, loneliness, a sense of isolation, or a poor support system can negatively impact their marriage. According to Slack (1979), women divorced from United Methodist ministers cited loneliness and lack of a support system among the stress factors that contributed to the divorce. Baker and Scott (1992) reported, in a study of Lutheran clergy wives, loneliness as one of the variables accounting for lower scores of well-being. Feelings of isolation and loneliness experienced as clergy wives emerged as a theme in a qualitative study (P. A. R. Allen, 1998) of women divorced from clergymen. One of these divorced women remembered her experience as follows.

At the time, because of the ministry, I felt that I could not tell friends, family, anyone connected with the church; I kept it all to myself and hoped that God would heal our marriage without anyone else ever knowing our problems. (p. 73)

Putnam (1990) identified loneliness in clergy wives as a variable with a negative relationship to marital satisfaction.

*Mobility.* Recent research concerning stress from mobility had mixed findings. Clergymen and wives from six denominations identified mobility-related stress as impacting their competence in family functioning (Morris & Blanton, 1998). A theme of stress from frequent relocation emerged in women divorced from clergymen (P. A. R. Allen, 1998) and in wives of evangelical pastors (Cox, 2001). Yet, D. L. Allen (1992) found that moving did not negatively affect marital satisfaction in clergy wives. D. L. Allen suggested that many clergymen



and their wives adjust well to frequent moves, despite the stress, perhaps benefiting from a ready-made welcoming committee in the form of a congregation. Yet, mobility, which strains numerous contemporary families, also stresses clergy families. The challenge of moving emerged as another consistent theme across almost 40 years of writing by clergy wives for clergy wives (Bare, 1998).

Although many clergy families experience mobility, it exists uniquely in some denominations. For example, in the United Methodist Church (UMC), a bishop of a geographic conference appoints clergy to a parish. Although the ministers and the churches may have some input, ultimately the bishop and his or her cabinet of administrative clergy decide who goes where. As in the military, UMC clergy typically go where sent. Such an approach differs from denominational systems in which a local church calls a minister, who then decides whether or not to accept that offer.

Reflecting this characteristic of Methodism, recent studies focused on mobility in UMC clergy families. UMC clergy wives who had just relocated reported more stress than their pastor husbands (Frame, 1998; Watson, 1990). Younger spouses, spouses with children in the home, and spouses employed outside the home reported more stress related to mobility (Watson). In identifying the greatest source of stress in her marriage, one UMC clergy wife replied, “Disagreement over moving. I refused to consider giving up my job to accommodate the cabinet” (Holling, 1992, p. 89). Qualitative data identified grief, powerlessness, and loneliness related to mobility (Frame).

*Husband's compensation.* Earlier studies identified the pastor husband's compensation as an external stressor in clergy families. In 1992, Baker and Scott reported that the clergy spouse's annual income impacted life satisfaction. In a qualitative study (Cox, 2001), clergy

wives discussed the financial stress that results when a pastor leaves a church under duress, before he has another one to serve. Although Brunette-Hill (1999) reported that 40% of participant clergy wives identified lack of finances as an issue, she also noted this concern seems to be less than in previous studies. Recent studies have not fully supported financial concerns as a particularly strong stressor identified by clergy wives. In a six-denomination study, Morris and Blanton (1998) identified clergy pay as a predictor of family functioning for clergymen but not for clergy wives. Other studies also found that finances did not significantly affect marital satisfaction in clergy wives (D. L. Allen, 1992; Pettitt, 1998).

#### *Findings about Coping in Clergy Wives*

Because coping consists of ways that people try to contend with stress, a summary follows of research findings related to coping in clergy wives. Across denominations, spirituality plays an important role in the sense of well being and coping resources of many clergy wives (D. L. Allen, 1992; Bare, 1998; Brackin, 2001; Cox, 2001; Frame, 1998; Holling, 1992; Lanham, 1990; Mickey & Ashmore, 1991; Watson, 1990; Pettitt, 1998; Reeher, 1994). Frame found that lower stress and greater coping resources predict a stronger sense of well-being in this population. Hsieh and Rugg (1983) identified thirteen coping strategies used by ministers' wives in conservative denominations to adapt to their husband's work. In addition to specific marital, family, and spiritual activities, these strategies included developing self as a person and talking with others in a similar situation.

#### *Other Findings about Clergy Wives*

The summaries above presented clergy wife research findings, from the 1960's to the present, relevant to stress. To give recent research findings about clergy wives in other areas, the studies cited in the following summary date from 1990 through 2002. Four topics provide

structure for this review: education and employment, marriage, depression, and clergy wife rewards. In describing the population of interest more fully, the summary helps to give a richer, more complete portrait of clergy wives as a group. This information provides additional data for consideration in counseling clergy wives and in designing an appropriate intervention for alleviating clergy wife stress.

### *Education and Employment*

Consistently research has shown that, as a group, clergy wives have a high level of education (Brunette-Hill, 1999). In an 11-denominational study (Morris & Blanton, 1998), 52% of the clergy wife participants had four years of college or more. According to the United States Census Bureau (2000), 23.1 % of the general female population in 1999 reached this educational attainment. In another study, 75% of the participant clergy wives had at least a four-year degree (Brunette-Hill).

Since 1990, several researchers have investigated the area of employment in clergy wives. Findings differ concerning percentages of clergy wives who work outside the home, but no question exists that clergy wives have followed the pattern of other American women in that increasing numbers have employment. An 11-denomination study (Morris & Blanton, 1998) found that 76% of clergy wives work outside the home. This study also showed that 88% of these employed women work in traditionally female, service-oriented jobs as teachers, secretaries, nurses, social workers, and business and sales clerks. An earlier 11-denomination study (Mickey et al., 1991) revealed that 48% of clergy spouses in conservative denominations and 64% of clergy spouses in mainline and liberal denominations work outside the home. Chang and Perl (1999) found no difference in the salaries of those married pastors whose wives work fulltime outside the home and those whose wives do not.

Two researchers (Holling, 1992; Tarver, 1995) found that clergy wives in a conservative denomination who work outside the home have lower marital satisfaction than do fulltime homemakers. Yet Benda and DeBlasio (1993) found that dual-earner clergy marriages have a higher level of marital adjustment for clergy and spouses. Lanham (1990) found self-esteem significantly higher in clergy wives working in professional jobs than in clergy wives who work as fulltime homemakers or in nonprofessional jobs. Lanham also found higher self-esteem in wives who experience occupational congruence; that is, her work-status matches her first choice of role concerning employment. Baker and Scott (1992) found that employed clergy wife participants had greater scores of well-being than unemployed clergy wife participants.

### *Marriage*

According to Holling (1992), clergy marriages do not seem particularly unusual. For example, as the incidence of divorce has risen in all American marriages, so has the incidence of divorce in clergy marriages. Although this review has already included findings from some studies involving marital satisfaction, a summary follows of recent research findings about marital satisfaction in clergy wives. This study does not focus specifically on clergy marriage, but summarizing research about clergy wives and marriage provides helpful information, particularly because this special population's identification comes from their husbands' clergy status.

Variables shown since 1990 to relate negatively to marital satisfaction in clergy wives include church expectations (Pettitt, 1998; Putnam, 1990), loneliness (Putnam), time demands (Fox, 1997; Holling, 1992), mobility (P. A. R. Allen, 1998), perceived stress from work and from family (Benda & DiBlasio, 1993), and finances (Holling). Variables with a positive relationship with marital satisfaction include dual daily devotions (Putnam), time together

(Putnam, 1990), and openness to professional counseling and therapy (Pettitt). Tarver (1995) found that clergymen and wives agree in their respective evaluations of their marriage.

Serious problems in some clergy marriages exist. As in other marriages, cases of physical and emotional abuse of the wife by the husband do occur but with little documentation (P. A. R. Allen, 1998; Stamp, 1999). In a 1991 national survey of protestant, married clergymen in 23 denominations, Thoburn and Balswick (1998) found that 15.5% admitted engaging in extramarital sexual behavior – 9.6% in intimate sexual contact excluding intercourse, 5.9 % including sexual intercourse. Much publicity has emerged recently concerning sexual misconduct with congregants not only by Catholic priests but also by Protestant clergymen. Eleven percent of the married Protestant clergymen in Thoburn and Balswick's study reported extramarital sexualized behavior with church members, church staff, or counselees. I could find no research focusing on infidelity in wives of Protestant clergymen. Legg and Legg (1995), family therapists who work with families of clergymen found guilty of sexual misbehavior, called the wife “a primary victim of his ... betrayal” (p. 140). They identified in these wives common themes of betrayal, loss of status and role, economic issues, illness, blame, and other repercussions for family.

Despite severe difficulties in some clergy marriages, research has shown many clergy marriages to be sound. In general, Brackin (2001) found a high level of marital satisfaction among clergy wives. Holling (1992) identified three themes in open-ended questions to both clergymen and wives about areas of strength in their marriage: commitment, communication, and commonality. One participant reported, “Our marriage is a partnership—the house, taking care of the children, planning a vacation—whatever; it is something we do together. We are there for each other when needed, friends as well as lovers. Fidelity is never questioned” (p. 81).

### *Depression*

Researchers also studied depression among clergy wives, with mixed results. As part of the general female population, these women are at greater risk for depression than men (American Psychiatric Association, 2001). In a Lutheran study, Baker and Scott (1992) found clergy wives less depressed than non-clergy wives. These researchers also found that clergy wife participants with high depression scores also reported high levels of impact from their husband's employment, reported less support for their identity, and tended not to work outside the home. Brackin (2001) found depression levels in clergy wives no higher than in the general female population. On the other hand, Lucas (1992) found a slightly higher level of depressive symptoms in clergy wives than in the general female population, although with basically a normal distribution. Lucas also found that dissatisfaction with social support, higher level of stress, and number of teenage children contributed to prediction of more depressive symptoms. In Lucas's study, unexpectedly "the traditional role as housewife with lower education corresponded with less symptomatology while in the larger population this combination corresponded with more symptomatology" (p. 102).

### *Clergy Wife Rewards*

Brunette-Hill (1999) found that 60% of pastors' wives in 1990 identified the greatest joys and opportunities as a clergy wife in non-church centered rewards. In particular, they identified knowing a wide range of people, personal growth and fulfillment, and having a place of respect. Forty percent cited church-related rewards, mainly being of service to others and learning more about the faith. Brunette-Hill noted a decrease from Douglas' 1965 study in which 66% reported the greatest joys and opportunities in church-centered rewards. In a multidenominational study (Mickey & Ashmore, 1991), 43% of the clergymen in conservative denominations and 35% in

liberal and mainline denominations identified the opportunity for spouses to be involved in their ministry as an advantage of church work. Hack (1993) found that level of education, social support, spiritual well-being, and marital satisfaction related positively to clergy wife role satisfaction.

*Research on and Recommendations for Interventions with Clergy Wives*

Many researchers who identified stressors among clergy wives and clergy families emphasized the need for intervention programs and services (P. A. R. Allen, 1998; Blanton, 1992; Boulter, 1985; Downs, 1982; Fox, 1997; Frame, 1998; Hack, 1993; Hackley, 1990; Miller, 1984; Pennington, 1988; Presnell, 1977; Reeher, 1994; Watson, 1990; Watts, 1982). I could locate only a few studies, however, on prevention or interventions. Reeher developed and pilot tested a denominationally-sponsored family retreat to help UMC clergy families deal with mobility-related stress at the time of relocation. Watts developed but did not test a denominational plan for providing a psychosocial support system for Seventh-Day Adventist clergy wives. Miller, a UM pastor, designed and piloted One-One, a one-to-one ministry plan to help a woman in remarriage to a clergyman to deal with stress. As a preventative intervention, Downs developed a weekend retreat for seminary students and spouses to try to prepare them for role conflict in the parish.

Some researchers specifically recommended counseling or therapy as interventions to alleviate stress in clergy family members (P. A. R. Allen, 1998; Blanton, 1992; Boulton, 1985; Dell, 1993; Fox, 1997; Frame, 1998; Presnell, 1977; Rayburn, 1985; Richmond, Rayburn, & Rogers, 1985). Also Blanton suggested the creation or expansion of pastoral counseling centers sponsored by denominations to work with clergy family members. In recent years, many denominations have demonstrated concern for clergy families by providing counseling centers.

Clergymen and their wives, however, across six denominations, do not perceive support services provided by their denomination as adequate (Morris & Blanton, 1995). In 1985, Boulton found the counseling services for clergy family members provided by the Iowa United Methodist Office of Pastoral Care and Counseling very effective but limited by its single location. In a qualitative study of 15 women divorced from Church of God ministers, eight had requested but never received counseling through the denomination (P. A. R. Allen). In short, researchers have recommended counseling as a way to help clergy wives, particularly in alleviating stress, but counseling has been unavailable, under utilized, or under studied.

Rayburn (1985), an advocate for counseling as an intervention with clergy wives suggested that

the most effective approach to working in therapy with clergy wives is to enable them to be more aware of the devastating effects of their isolation from other church members, of the unhealthy situation of their symbiotic relationship with their husbands, and or not being themselves. Often they are ‘invisible women,’ not receiving credit for their own contributions apart from their husbands’ work. (p. 807)

#### Counseling Intervention Designed In This Study

Research has shown clearly that clergy wives experience stress related to the ministry of their husbands. Researchers have also noted the lack of interventions in this area and have recommended the use of counseling to alleviate that stress. As a result, in this study, I designed a counseling intervention entitled Clergy Wife Wings.

#### *Psychoeducational Group Design*

Because others so often identify the personal identity of a clergy wife with her husband and his ministry, she may particularly benefit from a counseling approach that focuses on her, rather than



on her marriage. Although some clergy wives and their pastor husbands may need marriage counseling, this study focuses on a counseling intervention to help pastors' wives with stress they particularly experience as individuals. Even with a sound marriage, a woman can still experience considerable stress as a clergy wife. Obviously the marital relationship affects the wife's level of stress, and vice versa. This study, however, focuses on issues that lie in the realm of the wife's life as an individual within a clergy family system.

The intervention designed in this study consists of a group for clergy wives. Although individual counseling may provide a helpful option, a pastor's wife may especially profit from the unique shared experience and perspectives of other women married to ministers. Also a group experience, in itself, may help address one of the main stressors identified by clergy wives, that of a lack of social support. In addition, supportive friendships may emerge from the group experience. A group intervention also offers the advantages of cost-effectiveness and time-effectiveness for counseling institutions and of reaching more women at one time. In a study by Frame (1998), clergy wife participants expressed a need for clergy spousal support groups and counselor led groups. Hsieh and Rugg (1983) identified developing self as a person and talking with others in a similar situation as coping strategies used successfully by some ministers' wives. A group intervention offers clergy wives a structured way to utilize these two strategies.

To alleviate stress in clergy wives, Clergy Wife Wings has a psychoeducational format. As a short-term intervention, a psychoeducational group focuses on outside issues rather than on interactions between members (Earley, 2000). A psychoeducational group contains educational components, an organized curriculum for each session, often sharing and support, and often homework assignments (Earley). According to Brown (1998), the group designer of a psychoeducational group usually develops the main goal for the group members. Brown

recommended a simple, achievable overarching goal. Psychoeducational groups employ a variety of techniques, such as mini-lectures by the leader, handouts, discussion, role plays, and other activities. Brown suggested that mini-lectures preferably last 10 to 15 minutes and no more than 20 minutes.

Corey (1996) identified a structured, theme-oriented group – such as a psychoeducational group -- as a good tool for helping people to manage stress. According to Ettin (1992), a psychoeducational group offers a practitioner who has a specialized interest and expertise an effective venue to communicate various concepts and treatment notions to a particular population with shared problems. Whereas a psychotherapy group may suggest the presence of pathology in group members, a psychoeducational group can introduce a particular population to basic knowledge and helpful techniques related to a specific problem (Earley). Clergy wives may experience stress related to being married to a pastor, but that stress does not necessarily mean that they have serious psychological difficulties.

As an intervention, Clergy Wife Wings can, within the structure of a supportive group, help to normalize experiences and to provide strategies to reduce stress. According to Yalom (1998), group work can provide eleven therapeutic factors. Yalom's group factors that may particularly benefit ministers' wives in the psychoeducational group format include: instillation of hope, universality, imparting information, altruism, imitative behavior, interpersonal learning, and group cohesiveness. Because research showed that clergy wives struggle with stress from time demands, they may respond well to the short-term nature of a psychoeducational group. With financial stress also identified as a stressor, a short-term group provides appeal as a less expensive counseling intervention. Experience as a member of a psychoeducational group may

offer a helpful, non-threatening entry into the world of therapy. After the group experience, perhaps some participants will decide to pursue personal psychotherapy.

#### *Goal and Objectives of Clergy Wife Wings*

The goal of the Clergy Wife Wings psychoeducational group is that the clergy wife participants experience a decrease in ministry-related stress. As reviewed earlier, researchers identified external stressors in five domains that impact clergy wives. Although the group intervention somewhat addresses all five areas, three domains receive particular focus: role expectations and time demands, lack of social support, and family intrusiveness. As discussed, recent research findings have targeted the fourth and fifth domains as decreasing sources of stress for clergy wives. The fourth domain of mobility represents a source of stress which increases at certain times, such as at the time of an impending move, of a recent move, or of the decision-making process concerning a possible move. This domain represents a fluctuating source of stress, possibly best addressed at critical times. In dealing with the fifth stressor domain of financial concerns, a clergy wife may find that financial counseling for her and her husband together may provide the most effective intervention. As a result, the group intervention does not emphasize mobility and finances as much as it accentuates the other three stressor domains.

Patton (1997) points out that interventions should have an outcome-based goal (or goals) and outcome-based objectives. In breaking down the overall goal for clergy wife participants to experience a decrease in ministry related stress, the Clergy Wife Wings plan includes three more specific outcome objectives: (a) to decrease stress related to clergy wife role expectations and time demands; (b) to decrease stress related to clergy family boundary intrusiveness, and (c) to decrease stress related to a lack of social support.

### *Theoretical Base of Clergy Wife Wings*

The theoretical base of Clergy Wife Wings draws from Palmer and Dryden's (1995) multimodal-transactional model of stress and their multimodal model for the treatment and management of stress. In addition, the intervention approach of the group also draws from REBT. Some of the content included in the educational component of the group plan also draws from family systems – particularly Bowenian and structural.

#### *Multimodal-Transactional Model of Stress*

The multimodal-transactional model of stress (Palmer & Dryden, 1995), with its five stages and seven modalities of stress responses, provides the framework for Clergy Wife Wings in understanding and viewing stress. The transactional part of this model emphasizes the interaction between an individual's external and internal world in perceiving stress. The external world of a clergy wife presents many potential stressors, as illustrated by previously cited research. The Clergy Wife Wings group plan emphasizes possible internal changes --changes that a clergy wife can make in her self -- that may help her to interpret external potential stressors differently and to cope more effectively.

As part of the educational component of Clergy Wife Wings, the leader presents a mini-lecture and related handouts (Appendices E and F) on the multimodal-transactional model of stress. Although the major emphasis of the group lies in lessening the perception of stress, the group plan also includes a handout (Appendix G ) on multimodal ways to deal with stress symptoms.

As in Palmer and Dryden's approach, the techniques in Clergy Wife Wings accentuate the cognitive modality. The group intervention, however, also reflects the multimodal thrust of Palmer and Dryden's models of stress and of treatment (1995, 1996). The group plan includes

strategies, activities, or educational content that utilize all seven of the theory's modalities – behavioral, affective, sensory, imagery, cognitive, interpersonal, and biological. For example, not only does the educational nature of the group obviously target the cognitive realm, the intervention of a small group in itself utilizes the interpersonal realm. More examples follow later of how the plan focuses on other modalities.

### *REBT*

The Clergy Wife Wings group plan also draws from REBT. As discussed earlier, Palmer and Dryden (1995) highlighted REBT as one treatment approach to alleviate stress. Because Palmer and Dryden's multimodal model of treatment offers so many possible techniques, the use of REBT helps to narrow the focus of Clergy Wife Wings. According to Ellis and Dryden (1997), REBT "distinctly uses an educational ... model" (p. 162). Also, researchers have found that REBT works well in alleviating stress not only in individual settings but also in group counseling settings (Corey, 1996; Ellis et al., 1997). As a result, an REBT approach particularly suits psychoeducational group work. In Clergy Wife Wings, the group leader utilizes REBT concepts and techniques in its three realms – rational, emotional, and behavioral. These three areas correspond to the cognitive, affective, and behavioral modalities of the multimodal-transactional model and also encompass the other modalities.

First, in the rational realm, because stress results from perception of threats to one's well-being, cognitive work can offer a clergy wife ways to think differently about and to cope more effectively with stress-causing situations. Ellis' ABCDE approach (Ellis & Dryden, 1997; Ellis et al., 1997) provides a framework to do so. In particular, REBT's focus on underlying assumptions and on a change in language and thinking to avoid awfulizing and counterproductive *shoulds*, *oughts*, and *musts* can help a clergy wife struggling with role expectations, time demands, and

family boundary intrusiveness. Cognitive work may help her to identify and to change unrealistic expectations of herself. For example, a clergy wife may have the internal belief that she must *never* offend a church member. With such a belief, she may interpret an external event, such as a conflict with a parishioner, as something awful that she cannot stand. Reframing and normalizing also may help her to think differently. A clergy wife who has a need to control or who feels overly responsible for the church may benefit from cognitive restructuring; church work is her husband's actual job, not hers. Cognitive work may also help a clergy wife to accept situations over which she has no control or are not hers to control.

Second, although Ellis did not originally emphasize feelings in his counseling approach, more recently REBT has included more focus on the affective realm (Corey, 1996; Ellis, 2001). The consequence at "C" in the ABC framework often consists of an uncomfortable feeling; so identification, expression, and acceptance of one's feelings plays an important role in REBT. Because a clergy wife participant may lack social support or may have a sense of impropriety about having negative feelings, she may be uncomfortable, inexperienced, or hesitant in claiming her own feelings, such as anger, resentment, and jealousy. Although the nature of a short-term psychoeducational group does not allow for deep processing of feelings, the group plan still, in a safe venue, encourages some expression of feelings and emphasizes the importance of expressing feelings in reducing stress. The Clergy Wife Wings plan focuses on the affective realm in the following ways: the group ground rule to accept others' feelings; an educational component on differentiating among thoughts, feelings and actions; a group activity that focuses on feelings; attention to affective symptoms of stress; attention to expression of feelings as a tool in alleviating symptoms, and the role of feelings in the ABCDE technique.

Ellis (1996) encouraged the use of humor to ease stress. As a cognitive tool, he used humor to teach clients' not to take themselves and stressing situations quite so seriously. Also through the affective modality – and even the biological modality – humor and laughter can provide stress-relief. The Clergy Wife Wings group plan includes and encourages humor. For example, the plan includes the singing of stress songs written by Ellis (See Appendix L), such as “I’m Just Wild about Worry” to the tune of “I’m Just Wild about Harry” (p. 96). This physical act of singing also utilizes the behavioral modality.

As a cognitive technique, Ellis also recommended the use of imagery as a tool in preventing stress and in treating symptoms of stress (Ellis, 1995). This technique obviously fits into the imagery modality of the multimodal–transactional theory. With the group’s name and with pictures, Clergy Wife Wings utilizes images of angels, to symbolize in somewhat a light-hearted way, both the stereotypical notions of clergy wives and the potential freedom to fly beyond those restrictions.

Third, the behavioral component of REBT can move a clergy wife, beyond the emotional or cognitive realms, to action to try to alleviate stress. In Clergy Wife Wings, the leader provides some information about stress-reduction behavioral techniques such as exercise, nutrition, meditation, other spiritual activities, and journaling. The plan itself also includes the behavioral techniques of homework and role plays (Ellis, 1995). For example, in a role play, a clergy wife who struggles with setting limits can practice saying “no” to a problematic church member. Some behavioral techniques suggested in REBT correspond not only with the multimodal-transactional behavioral modality but also to the sensory or biological modalities. For example, a relaxation breathing technique certainly represents a behavioral intervention, but Palmer and Dryden (1995) viewed it as a sensory technique – that is, a technique used for alleviating

physical symptoms of stress. Ultimately a breathing technique also becomes biological “by decreasing the activity of the sympathetic nervous system and subsequently increasing the activity of the parasympathetic nervous system” (Dryden, p. 113).

*Spirituality within the Multimodal-Transactional Model and REBT*

In their two books on stress counseling, Palmer and Dryden (1995, 1996) did not specifically address spirituality. They did not mention spiritual symptoms of stress or mention spiritual interventions, except to list meditation as a sensory intervention that can alleviate physical symptoms of stress. Common sense suggests, however, that spirituality plays an important role in the lives of many clergy wives. As reported previously, researchers have found the use of spiritual resources as the strongest coping technique identified among clergy wives. As a result, a discussion follows of spirituality within the context of the multimodal-transactional model of stress and within REBT.

For religious persons, stress symptoms and ways to alleviate stress, as classified in Palmer and Dryden’s (1995) modality framework, can have spiritual overtones. The following give examples of stress symptoms related to spirituality that a Christian might experience in different modalities: (a) behavioral: abandoning one’s usual religious rituals, yelling at God, destroying ones religious possessions; (b) affective: aloneness, fear, guilt, unworthiness, shame, anger at God, alienation from God, rejection by God, disappointment in God; (c) imagery: burning in hell, images of judgment by religious persons, images of self as a spiritual failure, images of being alone; (d) cognitive: religious doubt, cynicism, confusion, “God has abandoned me,” “What have I done wrong?”, “Why is God letting this happen to me?” and (e) interpersonal: isolating from or clinging inappropriately to religious support system.



Not only can stress symptoms relate to spirituality, but interventions can also involve spirituality. Such interventions can exist within several of the modalities, such as, (a) behavioral: reciting the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm, kneeling to pray, praying out loud, singing hymns, going into a chapel, lighting candles, reading religious material, rituals such as communion or confession; (b) affective: expressing negative feelings to God, a sense of acceptance, support, or forgiveness by God or by a religious representative; (c) sensory: prayer, meditation; (d) imagery: picturing God or Jesus, picturing light as calming and healing power from God, stained glass windows, religious symbols; (e) cognitions: belief in God's love no matter what happens, belief in after life, scripture verses, prayer; and (f) interpersonal: helping someone else, asking others for prayers, use of prayer partner, seeking support from religious support system.

In Clergy Wife Wings, the leader does not instruct group members spiritually but does recognize the power of spirituality in many persons' lives. The leader reports on the research about clergy wives' use of spirituality in coping and demonstrates openness in discussions when a member brings up spiritual matters related to stress. To include spirituality as a possible intervention to alleviate stress, the Clergy Wife Wings plan utilizes the Serenity Prayer: "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference." Although uncertainty surrounds the authorship of the Serenity Prayer (Anonymous, 1992), the person most often named as the author, Reinhold Niebuhr, used the prayer in a famous sermon in 1943 (Quotations by author, 2004). This prayer has a cognitive emphasis on acceptance, courage, and wisdom; reciting it aloud involves a behavioral emphasis. As a portion of a longer prayer, the Serenity Prayer has a long tradition of use in supportive group settings.

Because of Ellis' self-proclaimed atheism and because REBT emphasizes changing irrational beliefs, some religious people have worried that REBT work attacks religious beliefs (Nielsen, Johnson, & Ellis, 2001). This concern has the potential to interfere with the effectiveness of Clergy Wife Wings. Although continuing to call himself a "probabilistic atheist" (Nielsen et al., p. xiii), Ellis has come to appreciate the power of religious beliefs for many of his clients – from a variety of religions. He and two Christian psychologists came together to offer support for and explanations of how REBT does not have to interfere with a client's religious beliefs. They emphasized that according to the REBT approach, a belief becomes irrational and needs changing only if it "creates self-defeating upset" (Nielsen et al., p. 8). I believe that REBT, under the theoretical umbrella of the multimodal-transactional model of stress, can provide helpful techniques for use in the Clergy Wife Wings group.

#### *Concepts from Family Systems*

Group work in family systems typically includes families or married couples. Getz (2002) successfully used, however, a family therapy perspective in working with a women's group. Individual clergy wife group members do not belong to the same family, but a relationship exists in that each member belongs to a family system with the common denominator of a clergyman husband. Their very inclusion in the group depends on that commonality. Each group member's family system intertwines with the system of a church congregation, often called a church family. Using a systemic perspective that includes the relationship and dynamics between the clergy family and the congregation offers a helpful framework for the educational component of Clergy Wife Wings. From the arena of family systems, Bowen's (1985) concepts of boundaries, triangles, triangulation, fusion, and differentiation of self provide rich subject matter for the educational component of the clergy

wife group. Minuchin's work, which became the foundation of structural family therapy, also provides content for the group. In particular, Minuchin's concepts of boundaries, enmeshment, and disengagement (Corey, 1996; Minuchin & Fishman, 1981) offer concepts relevant to clergy wife stress.

One of the targeted stress domains, family boundary intrusiveness, specifically concerns the systemic concept of boundaries. Researchers utilized family system concepts in studying and discussing boundary-related stress in clergy families (Morris & Blanton, 1994; Hulme, 1985; Lee, 1988, 1995; Lee & Balswick, 1989; Presnell, 1977; Whybrew, 1984). Lee (1995) suggested that the "unique social context of clergy life constitutes a paradigm case for reconsideration of the role of boundaries in family stress" (p. 75). In particular, Lee expands Boss' concept of family boundary ambiguity to conceptualize the intrusiveness experienced by a clergy family. Boundary ambiguity can be viewed as a state of uncertainty for a family and others concerning who belongs and who does not belong to the family system. In clergy families, an indistinct blurring of the boundaries often occurs between the family unit and the congregation.

According to Lee (1988), the concept of boundary ambiguity originally centered on stressed families with an unclear and indefinite absence of a family member, such as a military father declared missing in action. Later the concept also included the psychological absence of a physically present family member, such as an alcoholic or a workaholic parent. Lee (1995) proposed that stress in clergy families can illustrate a third type of boundary ambiguity, found at the interface between the microsystem of the clergy family and the exosystem of the congregation. Lee (1995) suggested that clergy family members can be helped directly with ambiguity-related stress by helping them to recognize boundary intrusion and to delineate clearer boundaries. As an example, Lee (1995) discussed the efforts of evangelist Billy Graham and his

wife to keep a clear delineation between professional life and private life, especially with their children. In an educational component of Clergy Wife Wings, the leader presents a mini-lecture and handout (Appendix Q) on systemic concepts related to the system of a clergy family and the congregation.

### *Intervention-Oriented Evaluation*

Following Palmer and Dryden's (1995, 1996) strong emphasis on assessment in their stress treatment approach, the group plan for Clergy Wife Wings includes individual assessment for each member of ministry-related stress. The plan does not include quantitative assessment of each individual's particular stress symptoms but rather includes two quantitative tools that assess how stressful a clergy wife finds specific ministry-related concerns. The plan also utilizes qualitative self-evaluation of stress at each session. The inclusion of the two quantitative instruments provides formal intervention-oriented evaluation – that is, built-in evaluation techniques intended to support and reinforce the intervention (Patton, 1997). This type of evaluation utilizes assessment directly and openly with clients as an intervention in itself. The next chapter includes in-depth descriptions of the two instruments, the Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory (Appendix DD) and the Adapted Normative Stress Scale for Clergy Wives (Appendix EE). Clergy Wife Wings participants can benefit from these assessments that help them to identify their stress patterns and stress levels more clearly, to establish baselines, and to recognize and monitor their progress. Although some researchers insist that evaluation must stay completely separate of intervention, I agree with Patton that the use of a built-in evaluative component can enhance achievement of intervention outcomes. In addition, built-in evaluation has the advantage of providing a built-in data collection process to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention.

### *Overview of Clergy Wife Wings*

As mentioned earlier, the goal of the group, Clergy Wife Wings, is to decrease ministry-related stress in clergy wives. The group plan calls for one leader, a psychoeducational format, and five weekly two-hour sessions for approximately eight clergy wives. Chapter 3 contains more details about the group logistics.

#### *Activity Goals*

To meet the goal and outcome objectives of Clergy Wife Wings, I designed the psychoeducational group plan using the theoretical foundations already discussed. The group activity goals (Patton, 1998) state intended participant behaviors, based on Palmer and Dryden's (1995) multimodal-transactional model of stress and on their multimodal treatment model (1995, 1996), to decrease ministry-related stress. The activity goals for Clergy Wife Wings consist of the following: (a) to assess, analyze, and monitor one's own ministry-related stress; (b) to conceptualize, generally and personally, stress and its alleviation within the framework of the multimodal-transactional model; (c) to be exposed to research findings related to clergy wives and stress; (d) to utilize methods in the cognitive modality as stress-relieving techniques; (e) to utilize methods of social support (the interpersonal modality) as stress-relieving techniques; (f) to utilize methods in the behavioral modality as stress-relieving techniques; (g) to be exposed to the use of the affective, sensory, imagery, and biological modalities as stress-relieving techniques; (h) to be exposed to the use of humor as a stress-relieving technique; and (i) to be exposed to the use of spirituality as a stress relieving technique.

The above activity goals present a framework of ways to alleviate stress – a broad category list for methods. As in Palmer and Dryden's treatment model, the activity goals include evaluation of one's stress and a multimodal approach, with an emphasis on cognitive techniques.

Goals (b) and (c), in addition to goal (d), utilize the cognitive modality. The areas of humor and spirituality, as specified in goals (h) and (i), each can relate to several modalities, including cognitive. The group's strategies and activities flesh out the categories with specifics.

### *Activities and Strategies of Clergy Wife Wings*

The list below contains the activities and strategies planned for the Clergy Wife Wings sessions and the activity goals that each is designed to address. (See Appendices A-G, I-M, O-R, T-U, W-Z, AA) for the outlines and handouts for each for the five sessions.) If particularly relevant, an activity also has listed with it related outcome objectives. In places, the list contains abbreviated versions of some of the activity goals and objectives.

1. The participants experience in Clergy Wife Wings a theme of angels in words and in images. This strategy addresses the following activity goals: (g) to be exposed to the use of the imagery modality as a stress-relieving technique, and (h) to be exposed to the use of humor as a stress-relieving technique.
2. The participants wear nametags at each session. This activity addresses the following activity goal: (e) to utilize methods of social support (interpersonal modality) as stress-relieving techniques.
3. The participants complete the Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory (Appendix DD) and the Adapted Normative Stress Scale for Clergy Wives (Appendix EE) at the beginning of Session 1 and in Session 5. These activities address the following activity goal: (a) to assess, analyze, and monitor one's own level of ministry-related stress.
4. The participants complete informal stress evaluation forms at the beginning of each session. (Appendices C, J, P, U, X) These activities meet the following activity goal: (a) to assess, analyze, and monitor one's own level of ministry-related stress.

5. Each participant selects in session 1 among clipart pictures of angels, one with which she identifies as a clergy wife. Then she utilizes the picture in introducing herself to the group. This activity helps to meet the following activity goals: (g) to be exposed to the use of the imagery modality as a stress-relieving technique, (h) to be exposed to the use of humor as a stress-relieving technique, and (e) to utilize methods of social support (interpersonal modality) as stress-relieving technique.
6. The participants in session 1 hear a mini-lecture on research findings about clergy wife stress domains, receive a related handout (Appendix D), and share related experiences. This activity addresses the following activity goals: (c) to be exposed to research findings related to clergy wives and stress, (d) to utilize methods in the cognitive modality, and (e) to utilize methods of social support (interpersonal modality). This activity also addresses all three of the outcome objectives: to decrease stress related to clergy wife role expectations and time demands, to clergy family boundary inclusiveness, and to lack of social support.
7. The participants in session 1 hear a mini-lecture on the definition of stress and on the five stages of the multimodal-transactional stress model and receive a related handout (Appendix E). This activity addresses the following activity goals: (b) to conceptualize, generally and personally, stress and its alleviation within the framework of the multimodal-transactional model, and (d) to utilize methods in the cognitive modality.
8. The participants in session 1 read over a handout listing stress symptoms (Appendix F) within the structure of the BASIC IB modalities and circle the ones they experience. This activity addresses the following activity goals: (a) to assess, analyze, and monitor one's own ministry-related stress, and (d) to utilize methods in the cognitive modality.

9. The participants receive a handout to take home (Appendix G) and peruse on multimodal ways to alleviate stress. Participants complete the following homework assignment after session 1: “Read over the following list of ways to alleviate symptom of stress. Check any techniques that you have already found helpful. Cross out techniques that you have tried but have not been helpful. Circle techniques that you may want to investigate.” This activity addresses the following activity goals: (b) to conceptualize, generally and personally, stress and its alleviation with the framework of the multimodal-transactional model, (f) to utilize methods in the behavioral modality, and (d) to utilize methods in the cognitive modality.
10. At the end of each session, willing participants recite the Serenity Prayer together. This activity helps to address the following activity goals: (i) to be exposed to the use of spirituality as a stress-relieving technique, (d) to utilize methods in the cognitive modality, (f) to utilize methods in the behavioral modality, and (e) to utilize methods of social support (the interpersonal modality).
11. At the beginning of sessions 2, 3, 4, and 5, the leader leads the participants in a brief relaxation breathing exercise. This activity addresses the following activity goals: (g) to be exposed to the use of the sensory modality, and (f) to utilize methods in the behavioral modality.
12. Participants in sessions 2, 3, 4, and 5 share related experiences from the previous week and also share questions or comments from the homework assignment. This activity addresses the following activity goal: (e) to utilize methods of social support (the interpersonal modality). Depending on the topic of discussion, the activity may also address other activity goals and specific outcome objectives.



13. After hearing in session 2 a brief overview of research findings on clergy wife stress related to role expectations and time demands, the participants then discuss the findings and share their experiences. These activities address the following activity goals: (c) to be exposed to research findings related to clergy wives and stress, (d) to utilize methods in the cognitive modality, and (e) to utilize methods of social support (the interpersonal modality). These activities also particularly address the following outcome goal: to decrease stress related to clergy wife role expectations and time demands.
14. The participants hear a mini-lecture in session 2 on thoughts, feelings, and actions and on the ABCDE technique and receive related handouts (Appendices K and M). Then the participants practice the ABCDE technique in dyads. This activity helps to meet the following activity goals: (d) to utilize methods in the cognitive modality, (f) to utilize methods in the behavioral modality, (e) to utilize methods of social support, and (g) to be exposed to the use of the affective modality.
15. The participants in session 2 sing together the REBT songs by Ellis, “I’m Just Wild about Worry” and “Beautiful Hang Up” (Appendix L). This activity addresses the following activity goals: (h) to be exposed to the use of humor, (d) to utilize methods in the cognitive modality, (e) to utilize methods in the behavioral modality, and (f) to utilize methods of social support.
16. The participants, in session 2, receive several copies of an ABCDE worksheet (Appendix M) to take home and complete the following homework assignment after session 2: “During the week when you experience stress, fill out one of these forms at least through C. Bring them back next week. Be ready to ask questions and to share successes and failures.” This activity

addresses the following activity goals: (e) to utilize methods in behavioral modality, and (d) to utilize methods in the cognitive modality.

17. After hearing, in session 3, a brief overview of research findings on clergy wife stress related to family boundary intrusiveness, the participants then discuss the findings and share their experiences. This activity addresses the following activity goals: (c) to be exposed to research findings related to clergy wives and stress, (d) to utilize methods in the cognitive modality, and (e) to utilize methods of social support. This activity also particularly addresses the following outcome objective: to decrease stress related to clergy family boundary intrusiveness.
18. Participants hear a mini-lecture presented by the leader and receive related handout (Appendix Q) on family system concepts that relate to clergy families, particularly boundaries. This activity addresses the following activity goal: (b) to utilize methods in the cognitive modality. This activity also address particularly the following outcome objective: to decrease stress related to clergy family boundary intrusiveness.
19. Each participant draws diagrams or pictures on handout provided (Appendix R) to represent the system containing her clergy family and congregation. This activity addresses the following activity goals: (g) to be exposed to the use of the imagery modality, and (d) to utilize methods in the cognitive modality, and (e) to utilize methods in the cognitive modality. This activity also addresses particularly the following outcome objective: to decrease stress related to clergy family boundary intrusiveness.
20. Willing participants, in session 3, take part in role-plays concerning setting limits. This activity addresses the following activity objective: (f) to utilize methods in the behavioral

modality. The activity also addresses the following outcome objective: to decrease stress related to clergy family boundary intrusiveness.

21. The participants complete the following homework assignment after session 3: “Continue to experiment with the ABCDE technique to identify and change unhelpful thinking and/or be proactive in setting boundaries. Be ready next week to share successes and failures and to ask questions.” This activity addresses the following activity objectives: (f) to utilize methods in the behavioral modality, and (d) to utilize methods in the cognitive modality. The activity may also address any of the three outcome objectives: to decrease stress related to clergy family boundary intrusiveness, to clergy family boundary intrusiveness, or to a lack of social support.
22. In session 4, after hearing a brief overview of research findings on clergy wife stress related to lack of social support, the participants then discuss the findings, share their experiences, identify associated feelings, and problem solve about remedies. This activity addresses the following activity goals: (b) to be exposed to research findings related to clergy wives and stress, (d) to utilize methods of social support, and (g) to be exposed to the use of the affective modality. The activity also addresses the following outcome objective: to decrease stress related to a lack of social support.
23. The participants complete the following homework assignment after session 4: “Continue to experiment with the ABCDE technique to identify and change unhelpful thinking and/or be proactive in setting boundaries or in establishing social support. Be ready next week to share successes and failures and to ask questions.” This activity addresses the following activity goals: (f) to utilize methods of the behavioral modality, (d) to utilize methods of the cognitive modality, and (e) to utilize methods of social support. This activity can address any of the

three outlook objectives: to decrease stress related to role expectations and time demands, to clergy family boundary intrusiveness, or to a lack of social support.

24. Each participant in session 5 writes some irrational (unhelpful) thoughts (Appendix Y) that she has identified as contributing to her stress as a clergy wife. Willing participants will share thoughts. This activity helps to meet the following activity goals: (d) to utilize methods of the cognitive modality, (e) to utilize methods of social support, and (f) to utilize methods of the behavioral modality.
25. Participants in session 5 identify, in writing and in discussion, what they have learned and whether they have made progress in alleviating stress. These activities help to meet the following activity goal: (a) to assess, analyze, and monitor one's own level of ministry-related stress.
26. Participants in session 5 receive their wings – a certificate of completion. This activity addresses the following activity goals: (a) to be exposed to the use of the imagery ... modality, and (d) to utilize methods of the behavioral modality.

### Summary of Chapter 2

This chapter presented Palmer and Dryden's multimodal-transactional model of stress and their multi-modal treatment model. It also included a summary of REBT as an appropriate approach to utilize within Palmer and Dryden's models. The REBT summary emphasized the ABC model of stress and the ABCDE technique. The chapter connected this study to the field of work-related stress and provided historical background on clergy wives. Summaries of research findings about clergy wives included a focus on stress in five external domains. The literature review supported the need for a counseling intervention. Clergy Wife Wings, the intervention group designed in this study, targets alleviating clergy wife stress in three of those domains:

expectations and time demands, family boundary intrusiveness, and lack of social support. The multimodal-transactional models of stress and of treatment and REBT provide the theoretical underpinnings for the group. Explanations concerning aspects of the intervention addressed the psychoeducational group design, spirituality, family systems concepts, and intervention-oriented evaluation. The chapter contained an overview of the group format, a list of activity goals, and a list of the activities and strategies.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter on methodology restates the study's purpose and the research questions. In addressing the methodology of the first component of the purpose, the chapter presents an overview of the psychoeducational group plan. The overview includes the group goal; outcome objectives; theoretical foundation; activity goals; group format and leader, participants, and intervention-oriented evaluation. It concludes with a summary of the plans for each session. The chapter next addresses the second component of the study – the formative evaluation of the initial implementation of the group intervention. This part of the chapter covers formative evaluation, qualitative and quantitative data, instrumentation, qualitative and quantitative data analyses, and limitations.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was (a) to develop a psychoeducational group plan to alleviate ministry-related stress in clergy wives, and (b) to evaluate formatively the plan in its initial implementation. As reflected in this chapter, the study consisted of two components: (a) the plan developed for the intervention, Clergy Wife Wings, and (b) the formative evaluation of Clergy Wife Wings in its first implementation.

#### Research Questions

In the formative evaluation of the Clergy Wife Wings intervention in its initial implementation, the study had the following research questions.

1. How effective do the group members, group leader, and group observer perceive group participation in alleviating ministry-related stress?

2. What aspects do the group members, group leader, and group observer identify as strengths of the group plan?
3. What aspects do the group members, group leader, and group observer identify as weaknesses of the group plan?
4. What suggestions do the group members, group leader, and group observer make to improve the group plan?
5. Do the results of the group plan's quantitative pre and post-testing of stress suggest that the intervention is effective in alleviating the participants' ministry-related stress?

#### The Clergy Wife Wings Group Plan

The following overview includes summaries and explanations of the Clergy Wife Wings general group plan, developed in the first part of the study. Some additional elements, not in the general plan, facilitated the formative evaluation of Clergy Wife Wings as an intervention in its first implementation. A later section in the chapter on the study's second component identifies and addresses those added elements.

#### *Goals, Objectives, and Theoretical Foundations*

The outcome goal of a Clergy Wife Wings psychoeducational group is that the participants will experience a decrease in ministry-related stress. More specifically, the following outcome objectives exist for the group participants: (a) to reduce stress related to clergy wife role expectations and time demands, (b) to reduce stress related to clergy family boundary intrusiveness, and (c) to reduce stress related to a lack of social support. The plan utilizes the theoretical framework of the multimodal-transactional model of stress (Palmer and Dryden, 1995) and draws from Palmer and Dryden's (1995, 1996) multimodal model for the treatment of stress and from REBT (Abrams & Ellis, 1996).

As presented and explained in chapter 2, the activity goals consist of intended participant behaviors, suggested by the theoretical foundations of Clergy Wife Wings, to help participants to decrease ministry-related stress. I designed the activities and strategies of the group plan to help members accomplish the following activity goals: (a) to assess, analyze, and monitor one's own ministry-related stress; (b) to conceptualize, generally and personally, stress and its alleviation within the framework of the multimodal-transactional model; (c) to be exposed to research findings related to clergy wives and stress; (d) to utilize methods in the cognitive modality as stress-relieving techniques; (e) to utilize methods of social support (the interpersonal modality) as stress-relieving techniques; (f) to utilize methods in the behavioral modality as stress-relieving techniques; (g) to be exposed to the use of the affective, sensory, imagery, and biological modalities as stress-relieving techniques; (h) to be exposed to the use of humor as a stress-relieving technique; and (i) to be exposed to the use of spirituality as a stress relieving technique.

The above activity goals reflect a framework of categories for ways to alleviate stress. The group's activities and strategies were designed to help group participants achieve these goals. For example, the use of the cognitive ABCDE technique from REBT consists of a strategy to help group members with goal (d) -- "to utilize methods in the cognitive modality as stress-relieving techniques." As in Palmer and Dryden's multimodal treatment model, the activity goals include evaluation of one's stress and a multimodal approach, with an emphasis on cognitive techniques. Not only does activity goal (d) utilize the cognitive modality, but goals (b) and (c) do also. Humor and spirituality in goals (h) and (i) utilize cognitive and other modalities.

#### *Group Format and Leader*

The Clergy Wife Wings psychoeducational group intervention includes five weekly sessions for approximately eight clergy wives. Each session lasts two hours. The plan calls for a



female group facilitator -- a mental health professional trained in group counseling and comfortable with pastoral counseling. If possible, the leader has experience with the lives of pastors and their families.

### *Participants*

A Clergy Wife Wings group participant must be female, non-clergy, and the wife of a full-time, Protestant, parish clergyman. To be eligible, a clergy wife must express interest in reducing personal stress that she experiences as a clergy wife. The leader informs each potential participant about the group by telephone, email, or mail and sends each interested clergy wife a packet containing the following: (a) a flyer about the group (Appendix FF), (b) informed consent form (Appendix GG), (c) an application form (Appendix HH), (d) an applicant preferences form (Appendix II), and (e) a stamped return envelope. To apply, a clergy wife must complete and submit both the application and the applicant preferences form. The application contains a disclaimer that, as a psychoeducational group, Clergy Wife Wings is not designed as a therapy group or to treat mental illness, such as clinical depression or generalized anxiety disorder.

The applicant preferences form (Appendix II) provides information that the leader uses in an effort to select a compatible group. The four informal questions provide data without probing into the particulars of the applicant's belief system. The form contains four Likert-style questions, in which an applicant rates herself on how conservative or liberal her Christian beliefs are, on how comfortable she would be in a group with women of differing Christian beliefs, and on how comfortable she would be in a Clergy Wife Wings group based on psychological, educational, and counseling concepts. Based on the completed forms, the leader uses clinical judgment to select participants in an effort to create a group with reasonable potential for compatibility. The leader tries to avoid including in a group, participants with extreme

differences in religious orientation (question 1) and with low comfort levels (questions 2, 3, and 4). Extreme belief differences have the potential to impact negatively comfort level, open communication, and acceptance among the group members.

The leader sends a second packet to each accepted group member and also notifies those applicants not selected. The acceptance packet contains (a) a demographic form (Appendix JJ), (b) a second informed consent form (Appendix GG), (c) a map to the site of the group sessions, (d) any other details about the sessions, and (e) a stamped return envelope. The consent form addresses risks and benefits, extent of anonymity and confidentiality, videotaping of the five sessions (a formative evaluation element explained later in the chapter), and freedom to withdraw. The applicant returns the completed demographic form and one signed consent form.

#### *Intervention-Oriented Evaluation of Stress*

As discussed in chapter two, the Clergy Wife Wings plan includes intervention-oriented evaluation to help each group member to evaluate her own stress and to assess her own progress towards alleviating ministry-related stress. This evaluation, built into the group plan, includes qualitative self-evaluations of clergy-wife stress and quantitative assessments. Qualitatively, the group plan includes informal self-evaluations of stress weekly by each member and at the conclusion of Clergy Wife Wings (Appendices C, J, P, U, X, and Z). These qualitative evaluations help a participant to monitor her own progress in alleviating stress.

At the beginning of the first session and at the end of the last session, group members complete the Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory (Appendix DD) and the Adapted Normative Stress Scale for Clergy Wives (Appendix EE). After scoring the initial tests, the leader goes over the results with each member before or after the second session. Both instruments assess ministry-related stress in clergy wives. The instrumentation section later in the chapter provides

detailed information about these two instruments. After the final session, the leader mails each participant the results of her pre and post testing.

Not only do these two quantitative stress assessment tools assist in the intervention process itself, they also provide a basis for evaluating the effectiveness of the Clergy Wife Wings. In this study of the first implementation of the group plan, these tools and the qualitative self-evaluations of clergy-wife stress levels provide data for the formative evaluation component – discussed later in the chapter. Inclusion of the two clergy-wife stress instruments also lays the groundwork for possible future, more rigorous studies of the effectiveness of Clergy Wife Wings.

### *Overview of Sessions*

The group leader utilizes an outline, including handouts, for each of the five sessions (Appendices A-Z, AA-CC). Before each session, the leader makes copies of the outline and handouts to give each group participant at appropriate times during the session. Chapter 2 contains a listing of the strategies and activities, with identification of the applicable activity objectives. The following summaries of the five sessions do not include formative evaluation components unique to the first implementation.

#### *Session One (Appendices A - G)*

As a group member arrives to session one, entitled “Leave Your Halo at the Door,” she selects an angel clipart picture with which she most identifies as a clergy wife. Then she completes the two quantitative assessment tools of clergy wife stress and the weekly informal stress assessment form. An introduction activity centers on the angel pictures selected. The leader discusses the group ground rules. The leader presents an overview of research about clergy wives and stress in five domains (handout) and presents the focus and goal of Clergy Wife

Wings. A metaphor activity follows in which each member thinks of and shares a metaphor for her life as a clergy wife. The leader presents a mini-lecture on stress, including definition and the multimodal-transactional stress model (handout) and consideration of spirituality. In an activity, group members identify personal stress symptoms (handout). The leader distributes a handout for group members to peruse at home listing ways to alleviate symptoms of stress. The session ends with an assignment and the Serenity Prayer.

*Session Two (Appendices I - N)*

Session two, “But I Don’t Sing or Play the Piano,” focuses on reducing clergy wife stress in the domain of role expectations and time demands by utilizing the cognitive ABCDE technique from REBT. As the members arrive, each fills out the weekly stress evaluation form. The session begins with a relaxation breathing technique, followed by group sharing about the previous week. The leader introduces the domain of role expectations and time demands and presents a quick overview of research findings related to stress and this domain. The leader presents a mini-lecture on the ABC’s of REBT (handout); group members practice the ABCDE technique in dyads. The group sings the song, “I’m Just Wild about Worry” (handout). The session ends with an assignment and the Serenity Prayer.

*Session Three (Appendices O - R)*

Session three, “Living in a Stained Glass Fish Bowl,” focuses on decreasing stress in the domain of clergy family boundary intrusiveness. The session begins with a relaxation breathing exercises, followed by group sharing concerning the previous week. The leader presents an overview of research findings related to family boundary intrusiveness. Group members give examples from their own experience and discuss what they can and cannot change in this domain. The leader presents a mini-lecture on viewing a clergy family from a family systems

approach and on related systemic concepts, particularly regarding boundaries. Each member draws a diagram of the system of her family and church congregation. The leader presents ways to alleviate stress in this domain: use of the cognitive ABCDE technique, plus behavioral and environmental changes. Members participate in a role play activity about setting limits. The session ends with an assignment and the Serenity Prayer.

*Session Four (Appendices T - U)*

Session four, “Lonely Amidst Many People” focuses on decreasing stress in the domain of lack of social support. As the members arrive, each completes a weekly stress evaluation form. The session begins with a relaxation breathing technique, followed by group sharing concerning the previous week. The leader presents an overview of research concerning clergy-wife stress in the domain of lack of social support and the use of social support as a stress-reducing technique. Members share related personal experiences and identify associated feelings. Group members problem solve about ways to alleviate stress in the social support domain. The group reviews the ABCDE technique by applying it to examples, from any domain, given by group members. The session ends with an assignment and the Serenity Prayer.

*Session Five (Appendices W – Z, AA - CC)*

The last session, “Pick Up Your Wings As You Leave on Your Journey,” focuses on tying together the previous four sessions, on group members’ identifying what they have learned, on measuring their progress in alleviating stress, and on preparing the group members to leave the group. As the members arrive, each completes a weekly stress evaluation form. The session begins with the relaxation breathing exercise, followed by group sharing concerning the previous week. The group practices the ABCDE technique with examples suggested by the group and the leader. Each group member writes down irrational (unhelpful) thoughts that she has identified in

herself (handout); willing members share some of these thoughts and how to change them. The group members complete a form evaluating their progress in the group (handout) and discuss that progress. Group members take the Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory (Appendix DD) and the Adapted Normative Clergy Wife Stress Scale (Appendix EE). The leader conducts a “wings ceremony” and presents each participant with a Clergy Wife Wings certificate (handout). The session formally closes with the Serenity Prayer.

#### Formative Evaluation of the Group Plan

The second component of the study focused on the formative evaluation of the Clergy Wife Wings group plan in its initial implementation. An explanation follows of formative evaluation and its use in this study. Other aspects discussed concerning the formative evaluation component include the group leader, group observer, videotaping, qualitative and quantitative elements, instrumentation, quantitative and qualitative analysis, and limitations of the study.

#### *Formative Evaluation*

Formative evaluation, the methodological approach used in the research part of the study, falls under the umbrella of program evaluation. Three categories of program evaluation exist: improvement-oriented, judgment-oriented, and knowledge-oriented (Patton, 1997). Formative evaluation has an improvement orientation to find out how to make a program or intervention better. As a methodology, formative evaluation particularly works well in the pilot phase of a new program or intervention (Patton, 1997; Anderson, 1998; Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). Gall et al. defined *formative evaluation* as “a type of evaluation that is done while a program is under development in order to improve its effectiveness, or to support a decision to abort further development ...” (p. 760). According to Patton, “formative evaluation typically connotes collecting data ..., usually during the start-up or pilot phase of a project, to improve

implementation, solve unanticipated problems, and make sure the participants are progressing toward desired outcomes” (p. 69).

Because this study focused on the initial implementation of a newly designed intervention, formative evaluation provided an appropriate evaluative approach. After formatively evaluating and subsequently improving an intervention or program, perhaps more than once, a researcher may deem the approach sufficiently stable and with enough potential merit to move from improvement-oriented evaluation to judgment-oriented evaluation. With such a judgment orientation, summative evaluation works to determine the overall effectiveness of a fully-developed program (Patton, 1997). In this study, the use of summative evaluation would have been a premature step. Implementation of the group plan for Clergy Wife Wings provided needed feedback to evaluate, refine, and improve the plan before possible summative evaluation in a later study. The third type of program evaluation -- knowledge-oriented evaluation -- may eventually follow after summative evaluation. In knowledge-oriented evaluation, a researcher conducts a rigorous study to focus beyond the effectiveness of an intervention in a specific setting to make generalizations about effectiveness (Patton, p. 76).

As mentioned above, formative evaluation utilizes participants in evaluating an intervention, identifies strengths and weaknesses, seeks suggestions for improvement, and looks at whether the intervention seems to be helping participants move towards the goal. The methodology of the formative evaluation in this study included these foci, reflected in the five research questions listed at the beginning of the chapter. Basically, formative evaluation utilizes a qualitative approach. If the intervention itself utilizes quantitative measures, however, quantitative data can also provide feedback about progress towards goals. As a result, this study

included both qualitative and quantitative data in evaluating formatively the group plan of Clergy Wife Wings.

*Group Leader, Group Observer, and Videotaping*

As one who met the facilitator criteria set for a Clergy Wife Wings group, I not only created the group plan but served as the group leader in its first utilization. Patton (1997) recommended in program evaluation, such as formative evaluation, the personal factor, that is “the presence of an identifiable individual or group of people who personally care about the evaluation and the findings it generates” (p. 44). In the early phase of development of a new group counseling intervention, direct involvement of the creator, who knows the proposed intervention best, benefits the developing intervention. When the creator encounters problems and successes in the plan, she can utilize the perspectives, not only from other participants, but from her own direct experience to revise the intervention plan accordingly. Eventually, to test the intervention later in the development process, the creator must turn its implementation over to other professionals, but in the earliest phase, her involvement on the front line provides a real-life laboratory in the intervention’s development.

As part of the formative evaluation component in the first implementation of Clergy Wife Wings, a female doctoral student in counselor education attended each of the five sessions, observed, and evaluated the proceedings. As a group observer, she did not participate directly in the group sessions but received the outlines and handouts. Because I served as both group leader and researcher, a potential danger existed of researcher bias. To address that possibility, the group observer provided professional objectivity and an additional professional viewpoint. Use of a group observer served as a type of peer checking (Merriam, 1998). The group observer also



conducted a group interview and two individual interviews after the conclusion of Clergy Wife Wings. A later section includes more specifics related to the group observer's tasks.

As another aspect of the formative evaluation of Clergy Wife Wings, the initial implementation included plans for the videotaping of each session, to provide a record of sessions for the leader and the group observer to utilize. The participants' signed consent form included information on the videotaping. The tapes remained confidential. I will destroy the tapes at the end of the defense of this dissertation.

### *Qualitative Data*

As appropriate for formative evaluation, the open-ended research questions focused on the effectiveness, strengths, weaknesses, and possible improvements of Clergy Wife Wings. According to Patton (1990), methods of data collection in qualitative research include three main types: direct observation, written material, and open-ended interviews. Data for the first four research questions consisted of written material from three human sources: the group members, the group observer, and me as the group leader. The written reports by the observer summarized the results of her direct observation of the sessions and of open-ended interviews that she conducted. The written reports that I wrote as the group facilitator reflected participant observation.

As the group leader, I served as one the sources of written data. I kept a weekly journal on the group sessions in a leader's notebook and focused on each session in terms of my perceptions of its effectiveness, strengths, weaknesses, and suggestions for improvement. I also included in the leader's notebook the session outlines and handouts, on which I made comments and corrections. In this capacity as a source of qualitative data, I served the role of a participant observer (Ely, 1991; Patton, 1990). In addition, after viewing the videotapes of sessions 3, 4, and

5 for additional input or clarification, I indicated that I had done so in the leader's notebook and made resulting comments. I could not successfully videotape sessions 1 and 2. My notes and journal served as a type of qualitative log (Ely, 1991). After the last session, I wrote a final summary of my impressions related to the first four research questions.

As the second human source of qualitative data, group members completed written forms that helped to communicate their reactions. Marshall and Rossman (1995) advocated the use of questionnaires and opinionnaires in gathering qualitative data. Ely (1991) supported the use of numerical ratings in qualitative research. First, the informal weekly stress evaluation forms that each participant completed to track her own progress provided indications related to the effectiveness of Clergy Wife Wings. Second, group members provided written reactions to the intervention itself on forms added for formative evaluation. They completed a session evaluation form at the end of each session (Appendices H, N, S, V, and BB) and a final group evaluation form (Appendix CC). The evaluation forms provided informal scaling measures; impressions of effectiveness, weaknesses, strengths; suggestions for improvements in the group intervention; and other comments. In addition to open-ended questions, the final group evaluation form included informal ratings and space for comments on 30 activities and strategies. Also, the participants shared their impressions of the Clergy Wife Wings intervention in a group interview, conducted much like a focus group (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990), led by the group observer at the end of the last session. Finally, two group members, selected at random from willing participants, were interviewed, via telephone by the group observer two weeks after the last session, to gather additional data about participant impressions. More details follow below regarding the group observer.

As the third human source of qualitative data, the group observer attended and watched sessions as a complete outsider (Patton, 1990). She took notes during the five sessions in a loose-leaf observer notebook, that I provided. She received each session outline and handout at the same time as the group members. She added these to the observer's notebook and made comments and suggestions on them. She, too, wrote a weekly summary of her impressions of each group session, particularly focusing on her perceptions of the session's effectiveness, strengths, and weaknesses and on any suggestions for improvement. She included quotes of comments made by participants during a session. Her notes and journal served as a qualitative log (Ely, 1991). At the end of the intervention, the observer wrote a final summary of her impressions of the five sessions and of the overall intervention, again emphasizing effectiveness, strengths, weaknesses, and suggestions for improvement.

The duties of the group observer also included interviewing group members. As mentioned above, after the conclusion of the last session, she facilitated a group discussion, similar to a focus group, about the group's reactions to the Clergy Wife Wings intervention. Her participation, rather than mine as the group interviewer, helped to reduce experimenter bias and to provide a more objective environment for participants to express their impressions. The group observer used an "interview guide approach" (Best & Kahn, 1998), in which she asked open-ended questions and follow-up questions to gather data related to the intervention's effectiveness, strengths, weaknesses, and possible improvements.

After facilitating the group discussion among the participants about Clergy Wife Wings, the observer wrote a tentative summary of the views expressed, including some quotes from the participants; in doing so, she also observed the videotape of the discussion. As a form of member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Ely, 1991) to establish credibility and substantiation, the group

observer submitted her tentative group interview summary, about two weeks after the last session, to two clergy wife participants selected at random. To get feedback on the summary, she individually interviewed these two participants by phone a few days after they received the tentative summary. In the interviews, the group observer asked each of these two group members for reactions to the summary and also for any additional thoughts about Clergy Wife Wings and suggestions for improvement. The group observer prepared a finalized written summary of the participants' reactions, gathered through group and personal interviews. This final summary included documentation of the group and individual interviews.

### *Quantitative Data*

As the researcher, I utilized data from two clergy-wife stress assessment instruments for the fifth research question about whether or not the group intervention seemed to help in alleviating clergy-wife stress. Although no generalizations could be made from this data and although the group plan faces revision after the formative evaluation, this quantitative data provided findings as to whether the initial intervention seemed to help group members to move toward the goal of decreasing ministry related stress.

The quantitative data, collected via the assessment instruments, the Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory (Appendix DD) and the Adapted Normative Clergy Wife Stress Scale (Appendix EE), given before the first session and at the last session, came from the following five measures:

1. the measure of stress level on the subscale of role expectations and time demands on the Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory,
2. the measure of stress level on the subscale of family boundary intrusiveness on the Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory,

3. the measure of stress level on the subscale of lack of social support on the Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory,
4. the measure of overall stress level on the Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory, and
5. the measures of stress level on each the 12 stressor statements listed on the Adapted Normative Stress Scale for Clergy Wives and each of the 27 stressor statements on the Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory.

#### *Instrumentation*

In any research study, instrumentation plays a critical role. As part of the general group plan, participants completed the Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory (Appendix DD) and the Adapted Normative Stress Scale for Clergy Wives (Appendix EE) before and after participation in the Clergy Wife Wings group. With permission of the creators of the instruments, I adapted the tools for use in Clergy Wife Wings with some changes in wording and in focus.

#### *Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory*

The Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory (Appendix DD) measures ministry-related stress in clergy wives in the five external stressor domains of (a) role expectations and time demands, (b) family boundary intrusiveness, (c) lack of social support, (d) mobility, and (e) the husband's compensation. The instrument contains 27 stressor items, which the clergy wife rates via a four-point Likert scale as follows: *1 – creates no stress for me; 2 – creates mild stress for me; 3 – creates moderate stress for me; 4 – creates severe stress for me*. The 27 items separate by number into the five domains as follows: (a) role expectations and time demands – 8, (b) family boundary intrusiveness – 5, (c) lack of social support -- 3, (d) mobility -- 4, and (e) the husband's financial compensation -- 7. Not only do the five domain scores and the overall stress

score shed light on areas and levels of ministry-related stress, each item also offers a statement that may reflect a specific element of stress for a clergy wife.

I adapted this instrument from the Clergy Family Life Inventory, which Blanton et al. (1990) created “to assess levels of stress ... in clergy families” (p. 2), as reported by clergymen and their wives, in the five domains listed above. After an extensive literature review, Blanton et al. based the original Clergy Family Life Inventory “items on the stressors external to the family cited most frequently across sources” (p. 2). In its earliest design, the instrument contained 56 items, which pastoral care providers for the Episcopal and the United Methodist denominations approved for content validity concerning clergy families and stress. The creators assessed for validity, reliability, and clarity in a pilot study with 14 clergymen and their wives. A factor analysis on the data from these 14 couples found 28 questions that loaded on the five domain factors. Each of these 28 questions had a factor coefficient varying from .51 to .71. The Cronbach’s alphas, ranging from .72 to .87 for the five domain subscales, demonstrated a high degree of internal consistency for each subscale. As a result of this analysis, the creators shortened the Clergy Family Life Inventory to its present 28 items.

On the original Clergy Family Life Inventory, clergymen and wives rate the items according to the following Likert response scale: *1 – creates no stress for our family; 2 – creates mild stress for our family; 3 – creates moderate stress for our family; 4 – creates severe stress for our family.* For the adaptation for clergy wives used in this study, the researcher changed the phrase “creates stress for our family” to “creates stress for me” in the four response options for each question. When necessary, the researcher also made similar changes in the wording of some items. For example, the item, “There are not enough relationships in our life where we feel we

can be ourselves” was changed to, “There are not enough relationships in my life where I feel I can be myself.” Creators Blanton et al. gave permission for these changes.

Also I omitted one item -- “We find it difficult to establish times for our marital relationship without having interruptions related to the needs of our children” (p. 60) -- because it does not assess stress related to the husband’s ministry. I also changed the directions somewhat and grouped together items related to clergy children.

#### *Adapted Normative Stress Scale for Clergy Wives*

The Adapted Normative Stress Scale for Clergy Wives (Appendix EE) assesses clergy wife stress related to role ambiguity and to role strain as a clergy wife. The adapted instrument utilizes a 4-point Likert scale to ask how stressful the clergy wife experiences 12 potential stressor items. I adapted the original Normative Stress Scale for Clergy Wives (Huebner, 1999), which consists of the same 12 items. Huebner gave permission for this adaptation. The original scale assesses chronic stress related to being a clergy wife by asking whether or not she has experienced each item in the last month. For items checked on the original instrument, the clergy wife also categorizes how often she has encountered this experience: *1 – somewhat*, *2 – moderately*, or *3 – extremely*. Huebner utilized this response format to match that of the Hassles Scale (Kanner, Coyne, Schaefer, & Lazarus, 1981), a general chronic stress assessment tool, which Huebner used to test the normative scale for concurrent validity. I find the response format awkward without an option to denote an additional option such as *0 – seldom*.

Huebner’s tool assesses clergy wife stress by assessing frequency of occurrence – of some external experiences and of some internal reactions. Because in this study, I utilize the approach that stress occurs as a result of the individual’s perception, the use of Huebner’s tool does not work easily into Clergy Wife Wings. As a result, I find the original tool confusing in

this context and believe that group participants would, too. Huebner's tool, however, utilizes 12 well-researched and documented statements of potential stressors for clergy wives. As a result, I adapted Huebner's stress scale instrument by asking, with a 4-point Likert scale, how stressful the clergy wife finds each item: 0 – minimally or not at all, 2 – somewhat, 3 – moderately, and 4 – extremely. Although an overall test score for perception of stress has not been developed or tested for Huebner's items, the individual responses provide data related to perception of stress on each item. As explained below, because of Huebner's extensive research, the 12 items provide documented statements reflective of clergy wife stress experienced from the ambiguity and strain of being a clergy wife.

The earliest version of Huebner's (1999) scale had 17 items assessing clergy wife "role ambiguity, role strain, role conflict, or role deviance derived from theory, literature, and personal interview" (p. 79). With 111 Lutheran clergy wives responding from a random sample of 208, Huebner (1999) conducted item analysis and reliability assessment. After the deletion of deviant items, 12 items remained, which addressed only role ambiguity and role strain. To assess reliability, Huebner used severity scores on the 12-item test and found an overall Cronbach coefficient alpha of .81.

For the resulting 12-item Normative Stress Scale for Clergy Wives, Huebner (1999) reported on content validity, concurrent validity, and convergent validity. First, in addition to the content validity supported by the derivation of the items, as reported above, Huebner found more support with significant correlations between each item and several selected Hassles Scale items which assessed related stress. Second, to determine concurrent validity, a type of criterion validity, (Drummond, 1996), Huebner performed standard multiple regression "using severity scores of the clergy wives' normative stress scale as the dependent variable and mental health as



the independent variable” (p. 70). The mental health score on the SF-12 Standard Health Survey (Ware, Kosinski, & Keller, 1995) provided the measure of mental health. “Regressions indicated that the clergy wives’ normative stress scale was a valid indicator of change in mental health” (p. 71). Third, Huebner provided support for convergent validity, a type of construct validity (Drummond), by reporting a significant moderate correlation between the clergy wives’ normative stress scale and the Hassles Scale, which indicated that the scale measured a similar but different form of chronic stress.

In summary, the Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory and the Adapted Normative Stress Scale for Clergy Wives provided quantitative assessment both for the Clergy Wife Wings participants and for the formative evaluation of Clergy Wife Wings as an intervention. The first quantitative assessment instrument provided an overall stress level score and a score for each of the three external stressor domains specifically targeted by the intervention. The first and the second instruments together yielded 39 measures of stress, each related to a specific stressor statement.

#### *Analysis of Qualitative Data*

In answering the four qualitative research questions, I utilized qualitative data, as described previously, collected from the group participants, the group observer, and me as the group leader. The observer’s notebook and my leader’s notebook contained journal entries and summaries that included their impressions. A notebook containing the forms completed by the group members also provided written data concerning their reactions.

As a researcher who had brought specific questions to the study (Merriam, 1998), I analyzed the written data related to the four open-ended research questions. These questions naturally created an organizing system for analysis (Ely, 1991). In analyzing the data, I

constructed subcategories (Merriam) of answers within each of the four broad categories of investigation about Clergy Wife Wings – effectiveness, strengths, weaknesses, and suggested improvements. According to Merriam, “category construction *is* data analysis” (p. 180), and categories and subcategories are, “in effect, the answers to the research question(s)” (p. 183). Data analysis also included coding, the marking of data with abbreviations for categories (Ely; Merriam). I worked to identify themes, summarize viewpoints, and note contrasting views (Merriam). I identified and utilized some quotations to provide illustration and to personalize participants (Merriam; Ely; Best & Kahn, 1998).

The qualitative part of the study included attention to internal validity, which concerns “the accuracy of data gathered and how it matches reality” (Best & Kahn, 1998). First, the inclusion of triangulation -- use of different data collection methods by different collectors from different sources -- helped to increase internal validity (Best & Kahn; Merriam; Ely, 1991). The four additional techniques of peer checking (observation by another doctoral student), of using this doctoral student as an impartial interviewer, of member checking (review by two participants of summary written by group interviewer), and of participatory modes of research also helped internal validity (Merriam).

Reliability has to do with consistency. The intervention under study had not reached a level of finalization to consider consistency beyond the first implementation. Nevertheless, the uses at each session of the same stress evaluation forms and of the same session evaluation forms provided consistence in gathering qualitative data from the group members.

#### *Analysis of Quantitative Data*

In answering the fifth and only quantitative research question, I utilized matched-samples t-tests, also called paired t-tests, to compare pre and post group findings from the two assessment

instruments. Four of the scores for each participant came from the Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory – the three stress level scores in the specified external domains and the overall stress score. Also each item on both assessment tools had a score – 27 item scores on the Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory and 12 item scores on the Adapted Normative Stress Scale for Clergy Wives. According to Howell (1997), a matched-sample t-test provides a useful statistic to compare “two sets of data from the same subjects” (p. 187). I paired each group member’s two measures, once before and once after the intervention, for each stress assessment score. The matched-sample t-test provided a test for significance on the difference between the means of before and after scores. To control for family-wise Type I error, the researcher used the Bonferroni procedure (Howell, 1997) to set the level of significance for each hypothesis test. Specifically, the level of significance for each test was .05 divided by the total number of hypothesis tests.

#### *Limitations*

As mentioned previously, the intention here of formative evaluation lay in trying out and, if deemed appropriate, in improving the original Clergy Wife Wings plan and not in generalizing quantitative results. The lack of a clergy wife control group and the lack of focus on controlling for independent variables limit generalizations. Response sets (Isaacs & Michael, 1981) may have been a limiting factor. For example, clergy wives may have responded on the pre-testing in ways they considered as appropriate or expected. Another limitation may have occurred with the Hawthorn effect (Isaacs & Michael) because participants knew they were participating in research and may have expected or wanted to report a decrease in stress level. Despite the inclusion of an impartial group observer, the possibility of experimenter bias (Isaacs & Michael) existed, particularly in the qualitative evaluation of the group. In addition, although my own

experiences as a clergy wife gave me a helpful personal background for this study and for leading the first group, my own biases may have intruded. Possible limitations existed as a result of attrition or lack of reasonably consistent group attendance.

### Summary of Chapter 3

Chapter 3 included the purpose of the study and the five research questions. In presenting the methodology of the first component of the purpose, the chapter included an overview of Clergy Wife Wings, the psychoeducational group plan developed. This overview focused on the group goal and outcome objectives; group format and leader; participants; intervention-oriented evaluation of stress; and summaries of the five sessions. Second, the chapter included the methodology of the formative evaluation of Clergy Wife Wings in its first implementation. The overview focused on formative evaluation; group components related to formative evaluation: group leader, group observer, videotaping; qualitative and quantitative elements; instrumentation; quantitative and qualitative data analyses; and limitations.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

In fulfilling the first part of the purpose of this study, I developed the psychoeducational group plan entitled Clergy Wife Wings, as described in chapters three and four, to alleviate clergy wife stress. This chapter focuses on the findings for the second part of the purpose, the formative evaluation of that plan in its first implementation. The chapter includes recruitment information, group session data, and demographic data about the first Clergy Wife Wings' group. It contains a listing of the documents analyzed and a report on the adherence to the group plan and to the formative evaluation plan. For the first four research questions, the chapter contains and elaborates on qualitative themes that emerged from the analysis of documents from the participants, the leader, and the observer. The four categories of themes about the group plan correspond to the arenas of the first four research questions – (a) effectiveness in alleviation of stress, (b) strengths, (c) weaknesses, and (d) suggestions for improvement. Results presented next focus on findings for the fifth research question from the two quantitative assessments of clergy-wife stress. A summary concludes the chapter.

#### Recruitment

For recruitment, the original pool of about 60 clergy wife names came from four sources: United Methodist administrative contacts, Presbyterian administrative contacts, counselors who referred four clergy wives, and word of mouth. After I informed these clergy wives about Clergy Wife Wings, I sent the 13 who expressed interest additional information and applications. Four of them – three Presbyterian and one Baptist -- could not participate because of scheduling conflicts.

After the remaining nine applicants submitted the initial application paperwork, I reviewed the material. Table 1 summarizes the responses on the nine completed Application Preferences Forms. Based on these results, I accepted all nine. I sent each person accepted the final paperwork required, which I collected by mail or at the first group session. If necessary, I had planned to expand the original pool of names by contacting other denominational offices, but with nine participants, I did not need to do so.

#### Session Data

The Clergy Wife Wings group met for five sessions, from 7:00 to 9:00, on the Monday evenings of October 13, 20, 27, and November 3, and 10, 2003. The group met in the Virginia Tech Counselor Education suite at the Higher Education Center of the Roanoke Valley. Also as planned, a Counselor Education doctoral candidate from Virginia Tech served as the observer. Of the nine participants, none dropped out. The number of participants attending each of the five sessions equaled, respectively, 7, 9, 8, 8, and 9.

Table 1  
*Summary of Responses on the Applicant Preferences Forms (Appendix II)*

---

1. How would you rate your personal Christian beliefs?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	very liberal	liberal	somewhat liberal	moderate	somewhat conservative	conservative	very conservative
Frequency	2	1	3	3			

Mean score = 2.7

---

2. How comfortable would you be in a group with clergy wives whose beliefs are more liberal than yours?

	1	2	3	4	5
	very uncomfortable	somewhat uncomfortable	not sure	somewhat comfortable	very comfortable
Frequency				2	7

Mean score = 4.8

---

3. How comfortable would you be in a group with clergy wives whose beliefs are more conservative than yours?

	1	2	3	4	5
	very uncomfortable	somewhat uncomfortable	not sure	somewhat comfortable	very comfortable
Frequency				5	4

Mean score = 4.4

---

4. The Clergy Wife Wings group is based on psychological/educational/counseling principles. Although the use of spirituality will be addressed and welcomed and discussed, participants will be encouraged to utilize their own spiritual beliefs and resources. How comfortable are you with this kind of approach?

	1	2	3	4	5
	very uncomfortable	somewhat uncomfortable	not sure	somewhat comfortable	very comfortable
Frequency				2	7

Mean score = 4.7

### Demographic Data about the Participants

The completed demographic forms provided details about the participants. All Caucasian, they varied in age from 28 to 61 years. Educationally, the group included one with a PhD, three with masters' degrees, three with bachelor's degrees, one with three years of college, and one with a community college degree. Five group members reported fulltime employment, three reported part-time employment, and one reported no employment. Employment areas included accounting, cemetery office work, professional counseling, public relations, radiography, public school teaching, and university teaching. None of the participants came from a clergy family of origin. The group included eight United Methodist clergy wives and one non-denominational (reported as "all-denominational") clergy wife.

The completed demographic forms also contained data about the participants' marriages. They reported lengths of marriage as follows: 1, 3, 7, 15, 22, 24, 30, 37, and 40 years. They also reported that their husbands' had served in the ministry for 3, 4, 5, 6, 15, 18, 20, 26, and 29 years. The one non-denominational clergy husband had served his current church for eight years. Of the United Methodist husbands, seven had served their current churches from one to six years, and one had served his current church for a few months. The husbands of four of the participants entered the ministry as a second career. Eight of the nine clergy wives lived in a church-owned parsonage. Table 2 contains a summary of data reported about the number and location of their children.



Table 2  
*Number and Location of Children Reported by Participants*

Participant	Number of children		Location of children		
	Biological or adopted children	Step-Children	Living at home	Living in educational setting.	Living independently
A	0				
B	0				
C	2		2		
D	2		2		
E	2				2
F	2	2		1	3
G	3				3
H	3				3
I	4		3	1	

## Documents

The data gathered for the five research questions came from the perspectives of the participants, the leader, and the observer in two categories of completed documents. First, documents came from those included in the basic Clergy Wife Wings plan, as follows:

1. Participants completed 18 Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventories (Appendix DD) – 9 pre-group and 9 post-group.
2. Participants completed 18 Adapted Normative Stress Scales for Clergy Wives (Appendix EE) – 9 pre-group and 9 post-group.
3. Participants completed 43 Weekly Informal Assessments of Stress (Appendices C, J, P, U, and X).
4. Participants completed 9 Final Informal Stress Evaluations (Appendix Z)

Second, documents came from those added specifically in this study for the formative evaluation of Clergy Wife Wings, as follows:

1. Participants completed 41 Evaluations of Session (Appendices H, N, S, V, and BB).
2. Participants completed 9 Final Group Evaluations (Appendix CC).
3. The observer completed 1 summary of the participants' discussion after the last session and of 2 interviews with participants.
4. As the leader, I completed 5 session entries in the leader's journal.
5. As the leader, I wrote notes on 1 set of session handouts.
6. As the leader, I completed 1 leader's final summary.
7. The observer completed 5 session entries in the observer's journal.
8. The observer wrote notes on 1 set of session handouts.
9. The observer completed 1 observer's final report.

### Adherence to the Group Plan

In the group leader's final summary, I reported on how much I adhered to the original Clergy Wife Wings group plan. According to this report, at times I re-arranged the order of activities during a session. Basically I followed the plan of Clergy Wife Wings, as described in chapters 2 and 3, with the exceptions of one omission and of three additions. Because of time restraints and of complications from two absences in the first session, I did not accomplish the planned task of talking with participants about their initial scores on the two formal clergy wife stress assessment instruments. In response to my own perceptions as the leader and to early feedback from the participants and the observer, I made three additions in an effort to improve the plan immediately. According to my report, I "interpreted the additions as compatible with the basic approach, philosophy, and design of Clergy Wife Wings."

First, I designed and included what I called stress buster bags in the graduation ceremony in session 5. Later in the chapter the findings for the research questions include reactions to this added activity. My journal entry indicated that, along with the planned certificate, I presented each participant with a paper bag that included small, inexpensive items representing each of the seven BASIC IB modalities of stress-relieving techniques and two items representing multi-modal techniques. These items included: (a) bubble bath salts to represent a relaxing bath as a behavioral technique, (b) a package of tissues to represent expression of feelings as an affective technique, (c) a small bottle of bubbles to represent exhaling slowly as a sensory technique, (d) small wings to represent a self-empowering picture as an imagery technique, (e) a small notebook, with an idea stated on the cover, to represent changing thoughts as a cognitive technique, (f) a list of the group's phone numbers, given with permission, to represent an interpersonal technique, and (g) a packaged, decaffeinated teabag to illustrate reducing caffeine

as a biological technique. I also included two multimodal items – (a) a Serenity Prayer card to represent prayer as a spiritual technique, and (b) comical post-it notes to represent use of humor as a technique. Also I enclosed a printed list of the items and the corresponding modalities.

Second, as another addition to the original group plan for session 5, I prepared a local resource list and gave a copy to each participant at the last session. Appendix MM shows the outline for the resource list. The resources listed included guidelines for selecting a counselor, names of local counselors, marriage enrichment resources, spiritual resources, and career planning resources. Reactions to the resource list appear later in the chapter under research questions.

Third, to improve the mini-lectures that included summaries of clergy wife research in sessions 3 and 4, I created and utilized two summary handouts for those sessions (Appendices KK and LL).

### Research Questions

Data for the five research questions came from the documents previously listed. I analyzed them for themes and findings related to the resource questions, listed below.

1. How effective do the group members, group leader, and group observer perceive group participation in alleviating ministry-related stress?
2. What aspects do the group members, group leader, and group observer identify as strengths of the group plan?
3. What aspects do the group members, group leader, and group observer identify as weaknesses of the group plan?
4. What suggestions do the group members, group leader, and group observer make to improve the group plan?

5. Do the results of the group plan's quantitative pre and post-testing of stress suggest that the intervention is effective in alleviating the participants' ministry-related stress?

Quantitative data for the fifth research question came solely from the Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory and the Adapted Normative Stress Scale for Clergy Wives completed by each participant before and after the group intervention. Qualitative data analyzed for the first four research questions originated from the other 121 documents listed. In analyzing a participant response that contained a rating marked between two numerical options of response, I elected to utilize the lower of the two options.

*Research Question 1: How effective do the group members, the group leader, and the group observer perceive group participation in alleviating ministry-related stress?*

From the document analysis, several themes emerged concerning the perceived effectiveness of the intervention in alleviating clergy wife stress: (a) perception of intervention as effective, (b) perception of increased confidence in coping, (c) statistically insignificant reduction in informal stress levels reported before and after intervention, and (d) reported changes in thinking and behavior.

*Perception of Intervention as Effective*

The examination of documents revealed, as a theme, the perception that the intervention was generally effective in alleviating stress. This theme emerged in the review of the documents completed by the participants, by me as leader, and by the observer. First, participants responded on the Final Group Evaluation Form, as summarized in Table 3, to four direct questions about the effectiveness of Clergy Wife Wings in alleviating stress. One participant wrote at the end of her Final Group Evaluation, "I [sic] have used new skills and insights with others and have seen positive actions. Thanks for including me."

Table 3  
*Summary of Participant Responses Concerning Intervention's Effectiveness  
 (Items 1 and 2 on the Participant Final Group Evaluation Form)*

---

1. How effective do you think the group was in alleviating stress as a clergy wife?

	1 – Poor	2 – Okay	3 – Good	4 – Excellent
Frequency		1	8	
Percentage		11%	89%	
Group response mean = 2.89				

---

2. How effective do you think the group was in alleviating stress in each of the following domains?

---

a. Role expectations and time demands

	1 – Poor	2 – Okay	3 – Good	4 – Excellent
Frequency		2	4	3
Percentage		23%	44%	33%

Group response mean = 3.11

---

b. Family boundary intrusiveness

	1 – Poor	2 – Okay	3 – Good	4 – Excellent
Frequency		3	6	
Percentage		33%	67%	

Group response mean = 2.67

---

c. Lack of social support

	1 – Poor	2 – Okay	3 – Good	4 – Excellent
Frequency		3	4	2
Percentage		33%	44%	23%

Group response mean = 2.89

Second, as summarized in Table 4, the participants' responses to the first question on the Final Informal Personal Stress Evaluation (Appendix Z) also communicates their perception of the intervention's effectiveness in stress alleviation.

Table 4  
*Summary of Participants' Responses to Question Concerning Alleviation of Stress  
 (Item 1 on Final Informal Personal Stress Evaluation)*

---

1. How does the stress you experience now as a clergy wife compare with the stress you experienced before Clergy Wife Wings?

	1 much less stress	2 less stress	3 about the same stress	4 more stress	5 much more stress
Frequency		6	2	1	
Percentage		67%	22%	11%	

Group response mean = 2.44

Comments written by participants on the Final Informal Personal Stress Evaluation also reveal the perception of general effectiveness. Four of the six participants who reported a decrease in stress wrote related comments. For example, one said, "It's so helpful to know that I'm not alone. That alone decreases my stress." Another wrote that she felt "less stressful knowing that other clergy families struggle with similar issues." One of two participants who selected "about the same stress" stated, "The stressors haven't changed, but I am working and experimenting with different coping skills." The second respondent said the group "has helped

raise awareness and remind me of some important techniques.” The only wife who reported “more stress” at the end of the five weeks, stated, “It seems like there have been more demands recently to make huge life changing decisions about various issues. Even though there’s been more stress it hasn’t been all consuming because of the ability to speak about it in this group.”

In the participants’ discussion, after the completion of all final written documents, the theme of general effectiveness in alleviating stress did not emerge as clearly. The group observer, who led the discussion, wrote that “when asked how effective they thought the group was, at first the answers were slow in coming.” She reported that one clergy wife did reply that “the group was good for *her* [sic] especially learning the different strategies for handling stress.” Other comments by participants in that discussion also stated they had found Clergy Wife Wings beneficial but did not specifically mention effectiveness in alleviating stress. Similar statements exist on written forms. For example, one participant wrote on the Session 5 Evaluation that participation in the group “has been a positive, helpful experience for me.”

Concerning the effectiveness of Clergy Wife Wings, I wrote in my final summary as the leader, “I believe the group was effective in moving the participants towards the goal of alleviating stress. From my perspective, the greatest success seemed to be in the domain of a lack of social support because they supported one another.” The observer stated in her session 5 journal entry, “I believe that the group did help alleviate ministry-related stress by giving the members a confidential forum to express their feelings.” In her final summary, the observer wrote, “Overall, I thought this group intervention was very helpful in teaching participants’ ways to cope with ministry-related stress.”



### *Perception of Increased Confidence in Coping*

A second theme emerged amidst participant, leader, and observer documents that the group members experienced an increased confidence in coping. As found in Table 5, the participants' answers to question 2 on the Final Informal Personal Stress Evaluation (Appendix Z) relate to this theme. Eight of nine participants (89%) reported at the end of the intervention having more or much more confidence in coping.

Table 5  
*Summary of Participants' Responses to Question Concerning Confidence in Coping  
 (Item 2 on Final Informal Personal Stress Evaluation)*

---

2. How much has Clergy Wife Wings impacted your pre-group confidence in your ability to cope with potential clergy wife stressors?

	1. Much less confident	2. Less confident	3. About the same	4. More confident	5. Much more confident
Frequency			1	7	1
Percentage			11%	78%	11%

Group response mean = 4.11

Six participant's comments on the Final Group Evaluation Form also illustrate this theme about increased confidence in coping. One participant commented, "I can be proactive – our situation is not hopeless; I have the power to make things better for myself . . . ." Another wrote, "I feel like I have the skills to cope and *am* [sic] more knowledgeable about coping mechanisms.

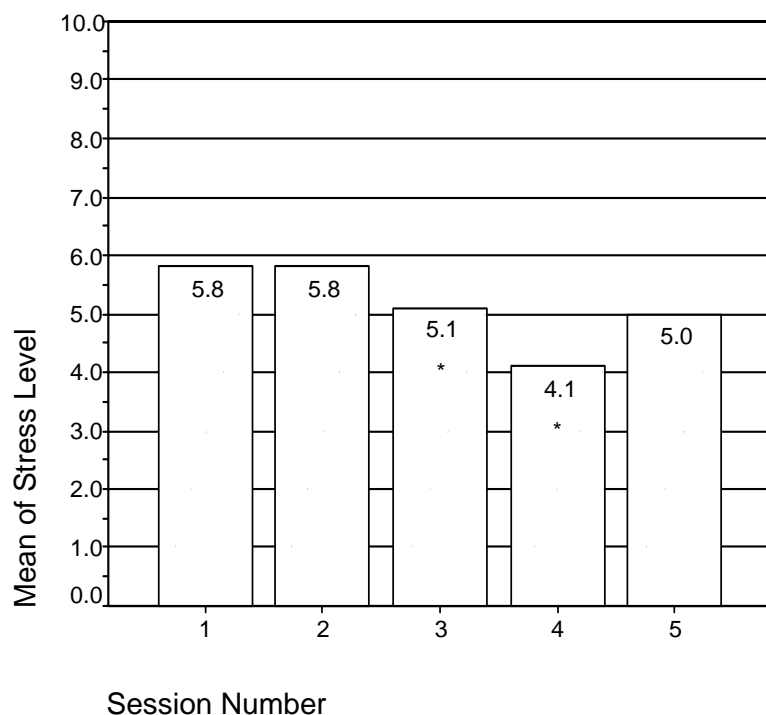
I just need to figure out what works best for me ... .” In reaction to the clergy wife problems other members shared, one wife remarked, “After hearing them and knowing they survived I know I can survive.” In comments, two wives reported that they gained greater recognition of the coping abilities they already possessed. One of these women stated, “I [sic] never really stopped to access my coping abilities. I’m good at it ... .” An additional member wrote, “I feel I have refined some necessary [sic] skills for the future.” At the final session, a group member wrote, “Thank you for empowering me to deal with stress in new ways and to recognize how I can be in control of my role as a clergy wife.”

I wrote, in my final summary as leader, that at the end of the intervention, the participants seemed more self-assured about coping with clergy-wife stressors. I stated that the participants at the last session “seemed more calm, comfortable, and confident in dealing with challenges as clergy wives.” Concerning the same session, the observer noted, “I felt this week’s session was ‘serene.’ Everyone seemed more relaxed.” As stated previously concerning the first theme, the observer in her summary, noted that she viewed the intervention as “very helpful” in teaching coping skills.

#### *Statistically Insignificant Reduction in Stress Levels Reported Before and After Intervention*

A third effectiveness theme became apparent in the analysis of leader and participant documentation but not in the observer’s documentation: The group’s self-assessed stress levels from the first to the last session did not show much of a decrease. This theme emerged particularly in the responses to item 1 on the weekly Informal Stress Assessments, in which each participant rated her current stress as a clergy wife on a scale from 1 to 10. These documents chronicled, week by week, each group member’s perception of her own stress level. Figure 1 provides a summary of this data. The member who reported the highest levels of stress in

sessions 2, 3, and 5 could not attend the fourth session and so did not complete an informal stress assessment that week.



\* 1 score missing

*Figure 1.*

#### Weekly Mean Scores of Self-Assessment of Stress Level

The group members' stress-level mean (5.0) at the last session did show a slight decrease from the first-session mean (5.8). Although these informal stress evaluations do not meet the requirements of quantitative statistical analysis, if they did, the decrease would not be at a significant level. On the last session's assessments, four participants reported stress levels 2:10, 3:10, or 4:10 lower than the stress levels they reported at the first session; three reported the same stress levels; and two reported stress levels 2:10 higher than those of the first session.

In my leader journal, I noted in the session 5 entry, “From their comments in tonight’s and other sessions, most of the group members seem to be making headway in learning about and trying ways to alleviate stress, but they have not yet necessarily experienced much, if any, decrease in stress.” I also remarked, “It is difficult to gauge progress in alleviating stress because stressors do not remain constant. For example, the member whose stress ended at the highest self-reported stress level of the group has been experiencing tremendous stressors in her family

*Reported Changes in Thinking and Behavior*

A fourth theme also surfaced in the participants’ and leader’s documents. As stated in my final summary, I wrote, “Most of the wives reported in the sessions that they tried new techniques to alleviate stress. To me, these cognitive and behavioral changes show that Clergy Wife Wings helped them to begin to learn how to alleviate stress.” My summary also included the following: “I see these changes as signs of the intervention’s effectiveness.”

In responses to open ended questions on various documents, participants wrote about their specific cognitive changes – adjustments in thoughts, increased insight, and increased awareness. On the Final Informal Personal Stress Evaluation forms, each of the nine clergy wives mentioned something about modification in her thinking. For example, one wife said, “I will use a cognitive approach ... *and try to assess* that I’m putting stress on myself, unnecessarily.” Another wrote that she felt more confident in coping because, “I can identify when I over-react and choose not to do so ...” In commenting about the personal impact of Clergy Wife Wings in dealing with stress, members wrote that the group helped them to “become more aware ... ,” to “raise awareness ...,” to “become very conscious ... ,” and to “try to recognize ... .” At the second meeting, one group member wrote that the previous session helped her because it “caused me to take a moment to stop and consider my reactions, re-

evaluate situations.” As summarized under research question 2, participants also reported using the cognitive ABCDE strategy.

In addition, participants wrote about trying out behavioral techniques to alleviate stress. As one wife stated on her final evaluation, she had learned to “work on *de-stressing*.” Four participants reported they utilized relaxation breathing, a component of Clergy Wife Wings discussed additionally under the second research question. One group member mentioned that, in an effort to worship without the internal interference she often experienced as the preacher’s wife, on one Sunday during the five-week intervention, she “went to another church instead of *her own*.” A second member reported “increased time spent in prayer and journaling.” A third clergy wife wrote that she was saying “no” more often. One of the older clergy wives wrote about reaching out to other clergy families. According to my leader report, a participant shared one week that she worked on a closer friendship with a woman outside her husband’s congregation. Although disappointed in the results, a younger wife reported telephoning a long-distance friend in an effort to work on social support. Also, to work on increasing social support, two other group members met for dinner one night before the group.

Although not a part of the planned research methods for the study, I have evidence of actions that the participants have taken, through the four months since the last session, in providing and seeking social support for one another. I have received emails sent among the participants relating joys and concerns and providing support and friendship for one another. Also I have received emails concerning monthly plans for the group to get together for dinner at a restaurant. One group member, in particular, seems to have taken a leadership role in the emailed communications and in organizing monthly dinner plans.

*Research Question 2: What aspects do the group members, group leader, and group observer identify as strengths of the group plan?*

The themes that emerged concerning identified strengths included: (a) sharing by and commonality among the clergy wives, (b) supportive group environment, (c) relaxation breathing, (d) use of humor, (e) BASIC IB stress framework, (f) ABCDE strategy, (g) family system concepts and boundary diagrams, (h) closure and reinforcement in last session, (i) stress buster bag activity and resource list in session 5, (j) participants' diversity in clergy wife experience, (k) introduction and metaphor activities in session 1, and (l) handouts. Any strength identified by one participant and not represented in the following elaboration of themes appears in Appendix NN.

Before the elaboration of these themes, I refer you to Table 6, which summarizes participants' responses to item 7 from the Final Group Evaluation Form (Appendix CC). This item provided relevant participant data concerning strengths and weaknesses of Clergy Wife Wings for research questions 2 and 3. In item 7, participants rated 30 listed activities and strategies from Clergy Wife Wings on degree of helpfulness. As shown in Table 6, they gave seven items mean ratings corresponding to "very helpful" or above. They rated twenty items at mean ratings corresponding to between "helpful" and "very helpful." The three lowest rated items received mean ratings corresponding to "slightly helpful."

Table 6  
*Frequencies and Means of Helpfulness Ratings by Participants of Activities and Strategies  
 (Item #7 of Participants' Final Group Evaluation Form)*

7. Please indicate how helpful you found each of the following components of Clergy Wife Wings.						
Ratings: 1 - not helpful 2 - slightly helpful 3 – helpful 4 - very helpful 5 - extremely helpful						
Strategy or activity	Frequency of rating scores					Group mean of ratings
	1	2	3	4	5	
1. Sharing at beginning of each session				6	3	4.33
2. Stress Buster Bags (session 5)			2	2	5	4.33
3. Resource list (handout, session 5)			3	1	4	(1 missing) 4.13
4. General use of humor		1	1	3	4	4.11
5. Drawing & sharing diagram of your system (session 3, handout)			2	5	2	4.10
6. Family system concepts & boundary diagrams (handout, session 3)			2	5	2	4.00
7. Relaxation breathing (sessions 2,3,4,5)		1	2	2	4	4.00
8. Mini-lectures in general by leader			3	4	2	3.89
9. Number of sessions			4	2	3	3.89
10. Ways to work on social support (session 4)		1	2	2	3	(1 missing) 3.88
11. Preliminary information sent to you		1	3	2	3	3.78

Table 6 (continued)						
Ratings: 1 - not helpful 2 - slightly helpful 3 – helpful 4 - very helpful 5 - extremely helpful						
Strategy or activity	Frequency of rating scores					Group mean of ratings
	1	2	3	4	5	
12. Final wings ceremony (session 5, handout)			4	3	2	3.68
13. Practicing ABCDE in pairs (session 2)			5	2	2	3.67
14. Psychoeducational format	1		2	6		3.44
15. BASIC IB framework for stress symptoms (handout, session 1, etc.)		1	2	4	1	(1 missing) 3.63
16. BASIC IB framework for ways to alleviate symptoms (handout, session 2, etc.)		1	2	4	1	(1 missing) 3.63
17. ABCDE strategy (handouts, session 2)			5	4	1	3.56
18. Handouts in general		1	3	4	1	3.56
19. Two-hour session length		1	3	4	1	3.56
20. Angel/Wings theme	2*		2	4	1	3.44
21. Clergy wife research findings		1	3	5		3.44
22. Domains of Stress (handout, session 1, etc.)		1	4	2	1	(1 missing) 3.38
23. Use of pictures on handouts		1	5	2	1	3.33



Table 6 (continued)						
Ratings: 1 - not helpful 2 - slightly helpful 3 – helpful 4 - very helpful 5 - extremely helpful						
Strategy or Activity	Frequency of Rating Scores					Group Mean of Ratings
	1	2	3	4	5	
24. Use of Serenity Prayer (each session)		2	3	3	1	3.33
25. Def & Multimodal-Transactional Model of Stress (handout, session 1. etc.)		2	3	3		(1 missing) 3.13
26. Approach to spirituality		3	3	2	1	3.11
27. Two clergy wife stress assessment tests (Appendices DD & EE, sessions 1,5)		1	5	1		(2 missing) 3.01
28. Weekly informal stress evaluations	1	3	5			2.44
29. Homework assignments		6	3			2.33
30. Stress songs (handout, session 2)	4	4	1			1.67

*Sharing by and Commonality among the Clergy Wives*

Overwhelmingly, the strength most clearly identified by the participants, observer, and leader focused on the sharing by and commonality among the group members. On the Final Group Evaluation Form, in writing about what they found most helpful, each of the nine participants made some comment about the sharing or camaraderie. Four of these participants identified as most helpful something similar to the following example: “Listening to others who were ‘in the same boat’ and hearing some of their techniques for dealing with issues was very helpful.” Other strength comments included “sharing concerns and experiences,” “just being able to be with others who understand,” and “connection of others with like issues.”

Also on the Final Group Evaluation Form, as shown in Table 6, members gave the highest rating of helpfulness, among 30 listed activities and strategies, to the activity of “sharing at the beginning of each session.” On the 41 weekly evaluations of individual sessions, 23 documents contained positive comments about sharing in the group. For instance, in session 2, one participant said, “I enjoyed the sharing and camaraderie of the group. I did not feel isolated from the group as I sometimes do at church.” This theme began to form early in the intervention, as found in the participants’ comments on the Session 1 Evaluation Form. All seven in attendance mentioned something positive about the openness of the group, such as, “people really shared where they were.”

In identifying strengths of Clergy Wife Wings, both the observer and I, as the leader, referred to the group sharing and commonality. According to the observer, the “greatest benefit to the participants was actually learning that others experienced the same frustrations and they were not alone.” She also wrote, “Being able to say aloud how being a clergy wife affected their lives may have been the most useful function of the group.” I stated in the final leader summary

that, “It was heartening as one after another of the group members spoke up about personal experiences related to clergy-wife stress. All nine participants talked -- even the initially-quiet ones. And all seemed to identify with one another’s experiences.” From viewing session tapes, I added in the leader journal that I particularly noticed “nodding of heads and knowing expressions” as participants shared.

### *Supportive Environment of Group*

Analysis of participant, observer, and leader documents also revealed a strength theme concerning the supportive environment of the group, a theme closely related to the first theme. On the Final Group Evaluation Form, five clergy wives noted something about the group atmosphere as one of the aspects they found most helpful, such as a “safe place to share” and “others supportive of me when I shared.” The response “everyone seemed comfortable sharing” typifies three comments.

The following excerpt from the observer’s first journal entry illustrates not only her appreciation for the sharing but also for the group atmosphere:

I thought that the members were quite willing to be open and share with other members. I was quite surprised at how candid some of the members were. It was as if they had been waiting to find a safe place in which to express some of their frustrations with their role(s) as clergy wives.

On the first session evaluation forms, five participants referred to the facilitator’s role as helpful in setting the supportive tone of the group. One wrote that the leader “allows us to speak freely and she makes us feel like what we say is important.” Another noted that “everyone warmed up easily with her leadership and style.” One participant differed, however, and remarked on her session 1 form that she did not respond well to the leader.

As the leader, I remarked in the final summary, “As a whole, the group appeared eventually to feel safe with one another and comfortable in talking.” Also noted in a journal entry, I particularly noticed in the viewing of session videotapes, a spirit of caring among the participants. As mentioned previously, I considered the intervention particularly effective by increasing the participants’ social support within the group itself.

### *Relaxation Breathing*

Another aspect of Clergy Wife Wings often labeled positively on the documents of the participants, leader, and observer consisted of the relaxation breathing. On the Final Group Evaluation Form, as shown in Table 6, participants as a group rated the brief relaxation breathing technique used at the beginning of each session as “very helpful.” In fact, four participants gave relaxation breathing the highest rating of “extremely helpful.” Three wives reported use of the technique outside the group. For example, one wrote, “I did the deep breathing exercise several times during the week as I felt stress levels rise.” Another commented, “I do it before bed now!”

Concerning strengths of the intervention, the observer wrote, in her final summary, that “the breathing exercise at the beginning of the group was helpful in bringing the group together and centering everyone. It helped focus them on the present.” As leader, I stated in my final report, “I was somewhat surprised but pleased at how well the group responded to the brief breathing exercise. Some of them have talked in the group about using this technique.”

### *Use of Humor*

Analysis of documentation from participants and from the leader revealed an additional strength theme related to humor. Documents from the observer, however, did not include any references to the use of humor. As shown in Table 6, on the Final Group Evaluation, participants rated the strategy, “general use of humor,” among the most helpful aspects of Clergy Wife

Wings. One wife, who rated the use of humor as “extremely helpful,” noted the use of humor as “great to lessen times of tension.” As leader, I reported that in viewing the videotapes, I especially observed, at times, easy laughter and sense of fun. I also wrote that “I think some moments in the sessions illustrated the power of laughing at ourselves as a stress reliever.” After session 1, I reported much good-natured laughter as each woman introduced herself using a selected angel cartoon and later as each shared a metaphor for her life as a clergy wife. Again after session 3, I noted the laughter around a humorous incident one participant shared resulting from expectations that her husband should know something, without telling him. I added that this funny story led to a fruitful discussion of “shoulds,” of assumptions, and of differences between men and women.

#### *BASIC IB Stress Framework*

Scrutiny of documents revealed perceptions by the observer and the leader of the BASIC IB stress framework as a strength; documented perceptions of the participants provided some support. The observer wrote in her final summary, that she considered BASIC IB as a strength. She wrote that “learning the Multi-Modal Model (BASIC IB) was particularly helpful to group members . . . .” In my final leader report, I stated that I found the BASIC IB modality framework helpful as a teaching tool and named it a strength in the teaching element of Clergy Wife Wings. In the final summary, I wrote,

As the sessions progressed, I kept referring back to the BASIC IB framework in the group. I wrote the letters up on the board several times and found it provided good scaffolding for our discussions about stress symptoms and about stress alleviation. As a former teacher, I particularly appreciated that this framework made sense to me and

seemingly to the group members. I even added an activity to the final session to re-emphasize BASIC IB.

On the Final Group Evaluation Form (Table 6), the participants rated the BASIC IB framework in two items at mean values corresponding to between “helpful” and “very helpful.” None of them, however, named in open-ended responses, BASIC IB as a strength of Clergy Wife Wings. As elaborated later under research question 3, some participants expressed a desire for more time to be spent on the BASIC IB modality framework.

#### *ABCDE Cognitive Technique*

Another strength theme emerged, with particular emphasis found in the observer’s documents and some evidence from the participants’ and leader’s documents, that focused on the ABCDE cognitive technique. The observer specifically named the use of the ABCDE technique from REBT as a strength of Clergy Wife Wings. In her final summary, she praised from session two, the leader’s initial presentation of the ABCDE technique and the related examples, handouts, and worksheets. According to her, “the combination of the REBT techniques with the discussion of role expectations and time demands was a practical way to learn the technique as well as discuss this important topic.” After the final session, I wrote as the leader, “Ellis’ cognitive ABCDE technique basically worked well. The group members definitely wrestled with underlying shoulds and oughts.”

The participants gave a mean rating to the ABCDE strategy between “helpful” and “very helpful” on the Final Group Evaluation (Table 6). Although the clergy wives did not name the ABCDE technique in open-ended responses about strengths, three commented positively about the technique. On the Final Group Evaluation, a participant rated the ABCDE strategy as “extremely helpful” and wrote, “I will use this often. Thanks!” Another group member, when

discussing changes she would make personally as a result of the group, wrote the following on the Final Informal Stress Evaluation:

I am going to ask myself what “shoulds” are mine? What “shoulds” are coming from my husband and which are coming from the church members? I will use a cognitive approach if I can assess that I’m putting stress on myself, unnecessarily.

One less enthusiastic participant remarked on her final evaluation concerning ABCDE, “I don’t solve this way. Will try it.” As presented under research questions 3 and 4, other participants expressed an interest in spending more time on the technique.

#### *Family System Concepts and Boundary Diagrams*

The mini-lecture, in session 3, on “family system concepts and boundary [Venn] diagrams” and the subsequent activity of “drawing and sharing family system diagrams” both also received favorable evaluation from the participants, me as the leader, and the observer. The participants rated both the mini-lecture and the activity as “very helpful” (Table 6), placing them as the fifth and sixth most helpful of the 30 activities and strategies listed in the Final Informal Stress Evaluation (Table 6). One clergy wife who rated both items as “extremely helpful,” wrote of the diagram drawing activity, “very insightful when I did this!” In addition, I commented, in the leader entry after session 3, that I was pleased with how well my presentation and the diagram activity went, although I added, “On the handout the Venn diagrams proved more helpful than the triangulation diagrams.” As a strength noted in session 3, the observer wrote,

I thought the use of visual images in the circles as examples from family systems was quite useful to stimulate conversation. After breaking up into small groups to share, they seemed to want to share their partners’ drawing, as they were meaningful to them. It

seemed that they could identify with something in drawing or that it was particularly outstanding.

#### *Closure and Reinforcement in Last Session*

Three participants, the observer, and I as leader noted, as a strength, something related to closure or reinforcement at the end of the intervention. One participant wrote of what she liked about the final session, “Closure: I loved recapping the main ideas to help me to step back and see the ‘whole’ picture. I like to review how all the details fit together.” Another commented, “nice closure to the five weeks,” with a “good summary and review of time spent together and what we’ve learned.” A third found the 5<sup>th</sup> session a “great review of what we learned so far.” One group member, however, wrote about the last meeting, “Perhaps my least favorite session, perhaps because it was less exploration of new ground than a rereading of where we had been before.” The observer noted of session 5 that she “thought the list of quick reminders was excellent as a way to summarize what they learned.” Items that I added as leader to the last session related to closure. Discussion of these items as strengths follows, including a leader comment from me about closure.

#### *New Items Added by Leader to Session 5*

Both the stress buster bags and the resource list received very positive evaluations by the participants, the observer, and the leader. Description of these two activities appear earlier in the chapter in the section addressing adherence to the group plan. The participants gave the stress buster bags and the resource list the second and third highest mean ratings of helpfulness among 30 listed activities and strategies (Table 6). The observer identified the stress buster bags as a strength of Clergy Wife Wings, calling them “quite a success” and “quite creative as a way to reinforce the BASIC IB.” As leader, I wrote, “The group seemed to enjoy the stress buster bags



and to benefit from the tangible review of stress alleviation modalities. I think the bag activity provided a light-hearted but effective way to review and to help provide closure.”

#### *Participants' Diversity in Clergy Wife Experience*

A theme of strength in the diversity among the group members also emerged from the observer and somewhat from some participants and from me as leader. According to the observer, “a strength of the group was that not everyone was the same age or had similar lengths of time as clergy wives.” One participant found most helpful, “the mix of people and ideas, a variety of ages, experiences, problems, and responses.” A second group member wrote, “The mix of people and personalities was definitely a benefit.” As leader, I stated, “I believe the diversity among the clergy wives -- ages, years of marriage, whether husbands were first or second career pastors, etc – served as an advantage to the group.”

#### *Introduction and Metaphor Activities in Session 1*

The review of documents revealed that the leader, the observer, and one participant viewed very positively the introduction activity and the metaphor activity in session 1. In my final leader summary about strengths of Clergy Wife Wings, I listed these two early activities together and wrote the following:

I liked facilitating these activities because both utilized imagery -- one of the BASIC IB modalities later presented -- and because both provided opportunities for humor and fun at the beginning of the intervention. Also, the two activities seemed to be well received and pushed the group members to think outside the box about themselves as clergy wives. The introduction activity bypassed typical self-introductions and immediately focused on sharing non-threatening self-images as clergy wives. When asked to share

metaphors of themselves as clergy wives, they responded in unique ways (Table 7) that I found insightful and revealing.

Table 7

*Participants' Metaphors of Themselves as Clergy Wives (reported by the observer in her session 1 journal entry)*

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<u>Metaphors</u>	
<u>How she views her life as a clergy wife</u>	<u>How she views what the congregation wants of her as a clergy wife</u>
“a social secretary”	“a lemon pie – sweet and flaky”
“a mediator”	“the little woman”
“a sponge – taking it all in and holding it”	“June Cleaver”
“entangled in Silly String”	“vegetable soup -- everything to everybody”
“an activities director in a retirement home”	

---

In the observer's journal entry about session 1, but not mentioned in her final summary, she stated, “I thought the ice breaker was excellent of finding an angel picture with which to identify ... good sharing ... . Also the metaphor activity was a great way to get a picture of how each person would identify *herself*.” On the Final Group Evaluation, the participants could not rate the introduction activity or the metaphor activity on the Final Group Evaluation; these activities were inadvertently omitted from item 7 (Table 6). One participant wrote on the evaluation, “I liked introducing ourselves using the angel pictures.” According to my leader journal, a participant shared in session 2 that she thought all week about metaphors.

### *Handouts*

The observer, in her final summary, named the handouts given to participants as an overall strength of Clergy Wife Wings. One participant wrote at the last session that she “liked the handouts throughout the sessions.” On the Final Group Evaluation, the group members rated the handouts in general between “helpful” and “very helpful.” As leader, I remarked, “I found the typed agenda helpful in trying to keep the group on task. Although some handouts were better than others, they helped me with the mini-lectures and the group activities.”

*Research Question 3: What aspects do the group members, group leader, and group observer identify as weaknesses of the group plan?*

The analysis of documents revealed the following themes concerning weakness: (a) stress song activity, (b) too much content in the first two sessions, (c) too much negativity in some discussions, (d) some awkwardness with and differences of opinion about psychoeducational format, (e) implied emphasis on quick reduction of stress, and (f) homework assignments. The remainder of this section contains elaboration of these six themes. Any weakness identified by just one participant and not represented in the following elaboration appears in Appendix NN. Identifying no weaknesses, one group member, when asked on the Final Group Evaluation what she found least helpful, wrote, “I’m not sure that I can think of anything that was not helpful ..”

### *Stress Song Activity*

The only activity that clearly emerged as a weakness in the written perceptions of the participants, the observer, and me as leader consisted of the stress songs in session two. Participants gave the stress song activity the lowest rating of helpfulness of the 30 listed activities and strategies on the Final Group Evaluation (Table 6). As leader, I wrote in my journal entry about session 2, “Although I was hoping the stress songs would provide some

levity and yet still drive home a point, they just fell flat.” In commenting on the stress songs in her final summary, the observer wrote, “They did not seem to add much to the group knowledge.”

#### *Too Much Content Covered in the First Two Sessions*

A theme of weakness emerged from the participants’ and my leader documents concerning the inclusion of too much content in the first two sessions. In addition to introduction activities, the first session focused on the domains of clergy-wife stress, on the definition of stress, and on the multi-modal model (BASIC IB) of stress and of stress alleviation. The second session continued the focus on the multi-modal model and then centered on Ellis’ ABCDE technique and on the domain of role expectations and time demands. In one participant’s comments about what she found least helpful in Clergy Wife Wings, she referred to concepts from the first two sessions, as follows: “Some areas we went over too rapidly. I could have used more discussion here.”

As leader, I wrote in journal entries from the first two sessions that I felt rushed. In my final comments about weaknesses, I stated, “I think the first two sessions were probably too ambitious in scope. We needed more time for questions and practice.” The observer stated, in her final summary, that “some sessions had too many activities,” but she did not particularly mention the first two sessions.

#### *Excessive Negativity*

A weakness noted by two participants, the observer, and the leader focused on the negativity in some group discussions. The group member most concerned about negativity reported that she sometimes experienced the sharing in the group as discouraging. On her Final Group Evaluation Form, she wrote about what she found least helpful: “Hearing the negative

venting from the wives that went longer than maybe could have without many positive comments ... As a newlywed, I was scared of what could happen to me and my husband over the years.” She added, “I’m so thankful I explained this to everyone. I felt much better after giving my viewpoint on this.” and noted, as a group strength, that “everyone seemed ... supportive of me when I shared.” Nevertheless, when interviewed two weeks after the last session, as one of the participants selected at random, she continued to express frustration with the negative tone. One other participant expressed concern, on a weekly stress-assessment form, about the unintentional impact on this younger participant of the group’s sharing of difficulties as clergy wives.

In her entry about session 1, the observer stated, “While there was a lot of frustration expressed at their roles as clergy wives, I thought it was good that at one point *the leader* [sic] balanced the negative with the positive by asking them what was good about their role.” Two journal entries and my final report included concerns as the leader that some discussions negatively impacted the youngest participant.

#### *Disagreement and Awkwardness Related to the Psychoeducational Format*

Varying opinions surfaced about the format of Clergy Wife Wings. One participant gave the psychoeducational format a rating of “not helpful” (Table 6). She added that the psychoeducational group format had “too much control by leader” and “too tight an agenda.” Several comments on her weekly session evaluations also made clear that she wanted a less structured, more flexible group plan. She did, however, state, “The model has good potential – allow for more ‘downtime’ in general.” From the rest of the group, the psychoeducational design received positive feedback. On the Final Group Evaluation, even with one very low rating, the group gave “psychoeducational group format” a mean rating that placed it between “helpful” and

“very helpful” as a strategy (Table 6). In addition, one participant wrote “psychoeducation” as one of the aspects of the intervention she found most helpful because it had “a good combo of education and sharing.”

Both the observer and I wrote about some limitations of the psychoeducational format. In her final summary, the observer stated:

A weakness of the group plan was the lack of time to discuss issues at depth. While I realize that the format is a five-week psychoeducational group, important emotional issues were brought to the group and not always addressed. It appeared that several group members felt that their concerns were glossed over without any resolution. It might be important to reinforce at the beginning of the group that the focus is not on group therapy but on education for stress reduction and finding new coping methods. I think the group members forgot this and wanted to go deeper into issues than time allowed.

In reporting some of my own frustration in keeping with the psychoeducational format, I wrote as the leader,

Sometimes I had to stop important sharing in order to move along with the agenda. As a counselor, I was torn inside. I expected some of the clergy wives to be eager and hungry to share, but I was surprised at how quickly some shared more deeply than one would expect in a psychoeducational group. ... I inadvertently offended one participant who experienced me as controlling and insensitive when, in order to proceed, I interrupted her sharing. As later suggested to me by the observer, I worked to accomplish subsequent transitions with greater sensitivity. Yet, I know this participant continued to be frustrated with the format. She obviously wanted something different from Clergy Wife Wings. I

wonder if the preliminary information was not been clear about what to expect although others did not seem to have the same misunderstanding.

### *Homework Assignments*

A weakness theme related to homework emerged especially from participant documents, with some evidence also from me as leader. As shown in Table 6, the participants rated “homework assignments” as the second least helpful strategy among the 30 listed. The clergy wife who consistently reported the highest level of individual stress wrote that the assignments “created more stress!” In my leader’s journal, I bemoaned the lack of time to go over the assignments very much and also wondered if the group members were doing assignments at all. The observer did not mention homework in her written accounts.

### *Implied Emphasis on Quick Alleviation of Stress.*

Analysis of documents from participants and me as leader revealed a concern that the intervention may have created unrealistic expectations for quick alleviation of stress. In writing about what she found least helpful, one participant wrote, “I had a hard time evaluating my stress each week. I felt like it should decrease, but it pretty much stayed the same which was a little frustrating. (I am success-oriented.)” Perhaps related, the group members gave the Weekly Informal Stress Evaluations the second lowest mean rating of helpfulness on the Final Group Evaluation (Table 6). About the intervention, another participant felt like she “just scratched the surface and *was [sic]* not too sure where to go with what that scratching uncovered.” As leader, I wrote, “I realize much more clearly now that the process of alleviating stress takes time to learn and to develop. I am a bit uneasy that this intervention may have created unrealistic expectations.” The observer made no comment related to this theme.

*Research Question 4: What suggestions do the group members, group leader, and group observer make to improve the group plan?*

The analysis of documents revealed the following suggestion themes: (a) addition of one or two sessions, (b) increased time on the content covered in the first two sessions, (c) increased time spent for personal sharing, (d) increased emphasis on solutions and positive experiences, (e) revisions to lessen expectation of quick alleviation of stress, (f) omission of stress song activity, (g) more emphasis on starting on time, (h) inclusion of a short break in each session, (i) corrections to and some revisions of handouts, (j) revision of components related to findings from clergy-wife research, (k) review and possible revision of homework component, and (l) inclusion of two options into the group plan. Any suggestion made by a lone participant and not represented in the following elaboration of themes appears in Appendix NN. The observer reported that in the participant discussion about the intervention, “there seemed to be a consensus that they would not want anything in the agenda eliminated.” One participant, when asked for suggestions to improve the plan, wrote “none” on the Final Group Evaluation Form.

*Addition of More Sessions*

A suggestion theme emerged from the documents completed by the participants, the observer, and me as leader to increase the number of sessions. On the Final Group Evaluations, five participants (58%) suggested extending the number of sessions; three specifically mentioned six or seven sessions. In the summary of the participants’ discussion at the end of the intervention, the observer reported a suggestion consensus of six or seven sessions. The observer recommended six sessions in her final summary. I suggested in the final leader’s summary that, “two or three more sessions would be great although that might make recruitment more difficult.”



### *Increased Time on the Content Covered in First Two Sessions*

A theme of suggestion also emerged from the participants and me as leader to spend more group time on the content presented in the first two sessions. This content includes (a) the definition and multimodal-transactional model of stress, (b) the BASIC IB framework of stress symptoms and of ways to alleviate symptoms, and (c) the ABCDE strategy from REBT. Four participants made suggestions similar to the following example: “Expand the earlier material to cover more sessions so we don’t have to go so fast ... .” Another group member on her Final Group Evaluation added comments specifically suggesting more group time on the stress model and the BASIC IB framework.

In the leader’s final summary, I wrote, “If the number of sessions can be increased, I recommend expanding the first session’s agenda to cover two sessions and starting the ABCDE strategy in session 3.” In the observer’s final summary, she also acknowledged that the multimodal stress model and its BASIC-IB framework “might have been a lot to digest at first” but she added that “it was important to introduce this information as soon as possible ... *to give* them time to practice it and to ask questions in subsequent sessions.”

### *Increased Time for Personal Sharing*

A suggestion theme, found in documents from the observer, from me as leader, and from some participants focused on implementing more personal interaction among the group members. The observer proposed one more meeting because it might provide “more time for in-depth discussion of issues brought out in the group.” I also mentioned that additional sessions would allow more time for participants to share. A participant, who missed the first session, suggested one or two more sessions “just for getting comfortable with each other ... .” Other participants’ written recommendations included “more small group activities” and “opportunities

to get to know each other individually.” As mentioned previously under weaknesses, the participant who reported difficulty with the format suggested more time for participants to interact.

*Increased Emphasis on Solutions and Positive Experiences*

Two participants, the observer, and I, as leader, suggested, as an improvement, more opportunities to identify positive clergy-wife experiences and to identify solutions. One participant, quoted earlier as particularly struggling with this issue, wrote, “When we would get in a downward spiral of complaint a positive nudge to see the good things in a situation was good. I don’t think this should always be done, but perhaps more often.” As one of the two randomly-selected participants interviewed on the phone two weeks after the conclusion of Clergy Wife Wings, this same person reiterated the suggestion “that the group members talk about their good experiences of being clergy wives.” Expressing a different but related concern, a second participant recommended greater emphasis on how the more experienced clergy wives in the group had learned to handle stressors. This member also wanted to hear more about the research findings of what has worked for clergy wives in dealing with stress.

In the leader’s journal entry for session 4, I wrote the following:

I wish we had focused more on some positives of being a clergy wife, as we did in the first session. Perhaps it would be good for the leader to be intentional each week about doing so, as I did in the first session. And yet, the members have such an obvious need to express negative feelings, I would not want to stifle that either.

Concerning the first session, the observer wrote, “While there was a lot of frustration expressed at their roles as clergy wives, I thought it was good that at one point the leader balanced the

negative with the positive by asking them what was good about their role . . . .” The observer made no additional comments about negativity.

*Revisions to Lessen Expectations of Quick Alleviation of Stress*

Although not found in the specific suggestions of the participants or the observer, my final report as the leader included the suggestion of revisions to the group plan in an effort to focus less on immediate decrease in stress and more on stress alleviation as a process. Admitting that I was unclear exactly what revisions to suggest, I recommended first “a review of the group plan, especially the wording of the group goal, of the preliminary information sent for recruitment, of the handouts, and of the participant weekly informal stress evaluation” to target possibly misleading parts and then to make appropriate revisions.

*Omission of Stress Song Activity*

The observer and I, as leader, each recommended in our final summary to omit the stress song activity from the plan of session 2. None of the participants suggested dropping the songs although they rated this activity (Table 6) quite low in helpfulness.

*Increased Emphasis on Starting on Time*

The observer and I, as leader, suggested increased emphasis on importance of starting sessions on time. The observer wrote that “several meetings started quite late because several participants were late. Their lateness subtracted from the time available for the group activities.” In addition, I wrote, “I was ready to start each session immediately at 7:15, but I found it difficult to begin the relaxation breathing exercise knowing that latecomer(s) would likely interrupt, particularly when the carpool of four participants was late.” I specifically suggested that the group plan include more emphasis (a) to the leader to start on time regardless of latecomers, (b) to participants to be on time, and (c) to participants not to interrupt the breathing exercise if

tardy. The only participant comment regarding tardiness thanked me for being so understanding as the leader.

#### *Inclusion of a Short Break*

A theme in suggestions by participants focused on including a short break in each session. On the Final Group Evaluation Form, four group members added notes such as, “A break would be helpful.” One of these members also wrote, “or a chance to mingle before or after the session,” an awkward option because of the timing and location of the sessions. In our documents, neither I, as leader, nor the observer recommended a break.

#### *Some Revisions of and Corrections to Handouts*

Both the observer and I, as leader, included in our submitted notebooks, copies of all the handouts with notations about typographical corrections needed and some possible revisions. I reported that one participant in session 2 suggested specific additions to the handout, “Examples of Stress Response Symptoms: BASIC IB” (Appendix F). Another participant wrote on the Final Group Evaluation Form, suggestions on how to improve the session 1 handout, “Ways to alleviate symptoms: BASIC IB (Appendix G).” As the creator of Clergy Wife Wings, I have copies of all the documents that relate to handout improvements.

#### *Revision of Components Related to Findings from Clergy-Wife Research*

One participant, the observer, and I, as leader, made varied suggestions to revise the use of findings from studies on clergy wives. The participant recommended the inclusion of more information about research focused on solutions to clergy wife stress. In discussing her perception that some sessions had too many activities, the observer wrote in her final summary:

While research on clergy wives’ issues is important, an explanation and discussion of it might be eliminated in order to leave more time for discussion and sharing. Handouts of

references would enable the participants to follow up on their own with out discussion in the sessions. (The research information did stimulate discussion in week four so it is difficult to know whether to eliminate it or retain it.)

As leader, I suggested inclusion of a typed handout for each of four sessions that included findings of clergy-wife research. As reported before, I implemented this change successfully in the third and fourth sessions of the first implementation.

#### *Review of Homework Component*

I suggested, as leader, a review and possible revision of the homework component of the Clergy Wife Wings group plan. Neither the observer nor any participant specifically recommended changing or eliminating the homework, but as reported previously, the participants viewed the homework assignments very low in helpfulness.

#### *Inclusion of Two New Items as Options into Group Plan*

I recommended, as the leader, adding the stress buster bag activity and a local resource guide handout as optional components for the last session in the Clergy Wife Wings plan. As previously noted, I viewed these additions as successful. However, I recommended, in the final leader report, their use as optional because, “in the future, a leader may not have the time or money or inclination to prepare the bags or the resource list.” The participants – none of whom realized these components were added to the original plan -- and the observer reported strongly favorable reactions to these components but did not specifically make related suggestions.

#### *Research Question 5: Do the results of the group plan’s quantitative pre and post testing of stress suggest that the intervention is*

For this fifth research question, the data originated from the results of the assessment instruments, the Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory and the Adapted Normative Clergy Wife

Stress Scale, given to the participants at the beginning and at the end of the intervention. Because of the qualitative nature of this study and because of the small size of the group, the findings from these assessments serve only descriptive and suggestive purposes.

The data concerned five categories: (a) role expectations and time demands, (b) family boundary intrusiveness, (c) lack of social support, (d) overall clergy-wife stress, and (e) individual stressor statements. From the Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory, the 23 items completed by all 9 participants, provided data analyzed for the first four categories. The data analyzed for the last category came from both the Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory and the Adapted Normative Stress Scale for Clergy Wives.

#### *Findings in Five Categories*

In each comparison of pre and post scores, the difference was calculated as post – pre. As a result, a negative difference indicated a decrease in stress level; a positive difference indicated an increase in stress level. Because the intervention goal was to decrease stress, negative differences were suggestive that the intervention was effective. The corresponding significance levels and effect levels provided additional information as to how effective.

*Role expectations and time demands.* For each participant the subscale of role expectations and time demands on the Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory was computed as the mean score of 4 designated items (Table 8). A paired-samples *t* test of pre and post scores was conducted to evaluate whether the participants' scores showed less stress in the domain of role expectations and time demands after the intervention. The results indicated that the mean subscale score after the group ( $M = 2.14$ ) was greater than the mean subscale score ( $M = 2.33$ ) before the group, but not at a significant level ( $p = .23$ ). The standardized effect size index ( $d =$

.44) indicated small effect. These findings did not suggest effectiveness of the intervention in alleviating stress in the domain of role expectations and time demands.

Table 8  
*Descriptive Statistics for Items Clustered by Stress Domain on the Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory (Appendix DD)*

Each respondent used the following scale to indicate how stressful she experienced each item.

1. creates no stress for me
2. creates mild stress for me
3. creates moderate stress for me
4. creates severe stress for me.

Cluster of items	N = 9	Group Mean Score		Dif post-pre	SD	Sig p ≤ .05	Effect size d ≤ -.50 indicates med effect
		Pre	Post				
<b>Targeted domains</b>							
Role expectations and time demands (mean of items 1,2,10,21)		2.14	2.33	0.19	0.45	0.23	0.44
Family boundary intrusiveness (mean of items 5,6,8,11,13,14,18)		1.97	1.86	-0.11	0.33	0.35	-0.33
Lack of social support (mean of items 4,9,16)		2.52	2.52	0.00	-	-	-
Overall targeted (mean of of targeted domain means)		2.21	2.24	0.03	0.15	0.60	0.20
<b>Non-targeted domains</b>							
Mobility (items 7,15,22)		2.26	2.11	-0.15	0.40	0.27	-0.39
Finances (3,12,17,19,20,23)		2.06	1.98	-0.07	0.28	0.45	-0.27
All domains (mean of 5 domain means)		2.19	2.16	-0.03	0.18	0.65	-0.17



*Family boundary intrusiveness.* On the Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory, the family boundary intrusiveness subscale was calculated as the mean of responses on seven items (Table 8). A paired-samples  $t$  test of pre and post scores was conducted to evaluate whether the participants' scores indicated less stress in the domain of family boundary intrusiveness after the intervention. The results indicated that the mean subscale score after the group ( $M = 1.86$ ) was less than the mean subscale score ( $M = 1.97$ ) before the group, but not at a significant level ( $p = 0.35$ ). The standardized effect size index ( $d = -0.33$ ) indicated small effect. The decrease in stress level in the domain of family boundary suggested effectiveness, but its significance level and effect size did not.

*Lack of social support.* The subscale of lack of social support on the Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory was computed for each participant as the mean of the responses on three items (Table 8.) The group mean subscale in this domain equaled, after the intervention, exactly what it did before the intervention. These findings did not suggest effectiveness in the alleviation of clergy wife stress in the domain of lack of social support.

*Overall clergy-wife stress.* Two overall clergy-wife stress indicators were computed for each participant from the five domain subscales of the Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory (Table 8): (a) the mean of the subscales for the three targeted domains and (b) the mean of the subscales for all five domains. First, a paired-samples  $t$  test of pre and post targeted-domain subscore means was conducted to evaluate whether the participants' scores showed less stress overall in the targeted domains. The results indicated that the overall mean score after the group ( $M = 2.24$ ) was slightly greater than the mean overall score before the group ( $M = 2.21$ ), but not at a significant level ( $p = 0.80$ ). The standardized effect size index ( $d = 0.20$ ) indicated small

effect. These findings did not suggest effectiveness of the intervention in alleviating overall stress in the targeted domains.

Second, a paired-samples t test of all five pre and post domain subscore means was conducted to evaluate whether the participants experienced less overall clergy-wife stress at the end of the intervention. The results indicated that the overall mean score after the group ( $M = 2.16$ ) was slightly less than the mean overall score before the group ( $M = 2.19$ ), but not at a significant level ( $p = 0.67$ ). The standardized effect size index ( $d = -0.21$ ) indicated small effect. Although the decrease in overall stress level on the Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory suggested some effectiveness, the significance and effect size did not.

*Specific stressor statements.* In completing the Adapted Normative Stress Scale for Clergy Wives, each participant rated how stressful she found 12 stressor statements. On the Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory each rated 23 stressor statements, with 3 participants rating 4 additional questions concerning children. The same 4-point Likert response scale applied to both instruments. T tests were conducted and effect sizes computed to compare before and after scores for each of the items found on the tests.

On the Adapted Normative Stress Scale for Clergy Wives, the results (Appendix OO) fell into descriptive categories:

1. On 5 items, the post-group stress-level mean was less than the pre-group mean.
2. On 4 items, the post-group stress level mean equaled the pre-group mean.
3. On 3 items, the post-group stress-level mean was greater than the pre-group mean.

On the Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory items, the results for the 23 items completed by all participants (Appendix DD), fell into the descriptive categories, as follows:

1. On 15 items, the post-group stress-level mean was less than the pre-group mean.

2. On 3 items, the post-group stress level mean equaled the pre-group mean.
3. On 5 items, the post-group stress-level mean was greater than the pre-group mean.

In summary, on 20 of 35 stressor statement items, the post-group stress-level mean was less than the pre-group mean. On 7 statements no change occurred between pre and post group means. On 8 items, the post-group mean was greater than the pre-group mean.

The results of t-tests provided important information about the non-zero differences on the pre and post scores of stressor statements. The differences for only two stressor statements – each with a decrease of stress – were statistically significant and had medium effect sizes (Table 9):

1. “I lack close, supportive friends.”
2. “It is difficult to balance church and family considerations in making decisions about changing pastorates.”

The first item belongs to the targeted domain concerning lack of social support; the second belongs to the non-targeted domain of mobility.

Table 9  
*Descriptive Statistics for Individual Stressor Statements that Indicated Significant Differences and/or at least Medium Effect.*

Statements came from the Adapted Normative Stress Scale for Clergy Wives (ANSSCW, Appendix DD) and from the Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory (ACFLI, Appendix EE).

Rating scale utilized by participants in responses:

- 1 – creates no stress for me
- 2 – creates mild stress for me
- 3 – creates moderate stress for me
- 4 – creates severe stress for me

Item	N = 9	Mean score		Mean dif	SD	Effect size <i>d</i>	Sig.
		Pre	Post				
I lack close, supportive friends (#1 ANSSCW)		2.67	2.22	-0.44	0.53	-0.86*	0.03**
It is difficult to balance church and family considerations in making decisions about changing pastorates. (#22 ACFLI)		2.56	2.00	-0.56	0.73	-0.77*	0.05**

\*  $d \leq -.50$  indicates medium effect      \*\*  $p \leq .05$

On the remaining 26 items with non-zero differences, t-test results (Appendices OO and PP) showed that none of the items' pre and post-group scores differed at a significant level. Also each of the effect sizes indicated only small effect. See the end of Appendix DD for the results for the four stressor statements completed only by the participants with children living at home. Because just 3 participants fit this category, I chose not to perform a t-test on these stressor statements.

## Summary of Chapter 4

Chapter 4 contained the results of the formative evaluation of the Clergy Wife Wings plan in its first implementation. Early sections included recruitment information, group session data, and demographic data about the participants. A listing provided categories and counts of documents analyzed. An additional section reported on my adherence, as the group facilitator, to the group plan.

The chapter covered findings for the five research questions. For each of the first four research questions, the chapter included identifications of and elaborations of themes that emerged from the qualitative analysis of documents completed by the participants, me as leader, and the observer:

1. Themes relating to the intervention's effectiveness in alleviating ministry-related stress included: (a) perception of intervention as effective, (b) perception of increased confidence in coping, (c) statistically insignificant reduction in stress levels reported before and after intervention, and (d) reported changes in thinking and behavior.
2. Themes related to strengths included: (a) sharing by and commonality among the clergy wives, (b) supportive group environment, (c) relaxation breathing, (d) use of humor, (e) BASIC IB stress framework, (f) ABCDE strategy, (g) family system concepts and boundary diagrams, (h) closure and reinforcement in last session, (i) stress buster bag activity and resource list in session 5, (j) participants' diversity in clergy wife experience, (k) introduction and metaphor activities in session 1, and (l) handouts.
3. Themes relating to weaknesses included: (a) stress song activity, (b) too much content in the first two sessions, (c) too much negativity in some discussions, (d) some

awkwardness with and differences of opinion about psychoeducational format, (e) implied emphasis on quick reduction of stress, and (f) homework assignments.

4. Themes related to suggestions included: (a) addition of one or two more sessions, (b) increased time on the content covered in the first two sessions, (c) increased time spent for personal sharing, (d) increased emphasis on solutions and positive clergy-wife experiences, (e) revisions to lessen expectation of quick alleviation of stress, (f) omission of stress songs activity, (g) more emphasis on starting on time, (h) inclusion of a short break in each session, (i) some revisions of and corrections to handouts, (j) revision of components related to clergy-wife research findings, (k) review and possible revision of homework component, and (l) inclusion of two options into the group plan.

Findings for the fifth research question included the quantitative results, in five categories, of the pre and post-group administration of the Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory and of the Adapted Normative Stress Scale for Clergy Wives. These results served purposes of description and of suggestion. A few quantified results suggested that the intervention was effective in alleviating ministry-related stress; most results did not suggest effectiveness.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATION

The chapter includes, in a summary of the findings for the purpose's first element, a synopsis of the intervention developed --Clergy Wife Wings. The chapter includes a summary of findings and related discussion for each of the five research questions. Additional discussion concerns other aspects of the study. Conclusions are given concerning the formative evaluation of Clergy Wife Wings. Implications follow for counseling in general, for counseling clergy wives, for counselor education, and for research. Recommendations focus on the future use of Clergy Wife Wings, on changes to the original group plan of Clergy Wife Wings, and on future research.

#### Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative study was (a) to develop a psychoeducational group plan to alleviate ministry-related stress in clergy wives, and (b) to evaluate formatively the plan in its initial implementation.

#### Summaries

The two elements of the purpose involved two important components in the early stages of the new intervention. The developmental element resulted in a detailed group plan, supported by theory and research. The formative evaluation element yielded findings from the first implementation of that plan.

#### *Summary of the Group Plan Developed.*

As an intervention to alleviate ministry-related stress, I developed Clergy Wife Wings, a 5-session psychoeducational group for clergy wives. The intervention had the outcome goal that the participants would experience a decrease in ministry-related stress, particularly (a) to reduce

stress related to clergy wife role expectations and time demands, (b) to reduce stress related to clergy family boundary intrusiveness, and (c) to reduce stress related to a lack of social support. In creating the plan and developing its educational content, I utilized the theoretical framework of the multimodal-transactional model of stress and its treatment (Palmer and Dryden, 1995, 1996) and REBT (Abrams & Ellis, 1996).

The activity and strategy goals consisted of intended participant behaviors, suggested by the theoretical foundations of Clergy Wife Wings, to help participants to decrease ministry-related stress. I designed the activities and strategies of the group plan to help members accomplish the following activity goals: (a) to assess, analyze, and monitor one's own ministry-related stress; (b) to conceptualize, generally and personally, stress and its alleviation within the framework of the multimodal-transactional model; (c) to be exposed to research findings related to clergy wives and stress; (d) to utilize methods in the cognitive modality as stress-relieving techniques; (e) to utilize methods of social support (the interpersonal modality) as stress-relieving techniques; (f) to utilize methods in the behavioral modality as stress-relieving techniques; (g) to be exposed to stress-relieving techniques in the affective, sensory, imagery, and biological modalities as; (h) to be exposed to the use of humor as a stress-relieving technique; and (i) to be exposed to the use of spirituality as a stress relieving technique.

According to the plan, the Clergy Wife Wings sessions included mini-lectures by the leader, activities, group sharing, and assessments of clergy-wife stress level. The plan also included copies of a promotional flyer, application forms, a consent form, session outlines, handouts for participants, weekly self-assessment of stress level, and two clergy-wife stress assessment instruments.



*Summary of and Discussion of the Formative Evaluation Findings*

For the second part of the purpose, I implemented, as the group leader, the Clergy Wife Wings group plan for the first time, including components specifically added for its formative evaluation. Summaries and related discussions follow of the findings for each of the five research questions.

*Research Question 1: How effective do the group members, group leader, and group observer perceive group participation in alleviating ministry-related stress?*

Qualitative analysis of evaluation documents completed by the participants, the observer, and me as leader revealed four themes related to the intervention's effectiveness in alleviating ministry-related stress. Discussion follows the fourth theme.

*Perception of intervention as effective.* Eight of nine participants rated the effectiveness of the intervention in alleviating clergy-wife stress as "good" or higher on the Final Group Evaluation. They also rated as "good" (numerical results rounded) the effectiveness in alleviating stress in each of the targeted domains of stress: role expectations and time demands, clergy family boundary inclusiveness, and lack of social support. Six of nine participants also claimed "less stress," on the Final Informal Personal Stress Evaluation, as compared with the stress experienced before the intervention. The two who claimed "about the same stress" and the one who reported "more stress" added comments that suggested the intervention was helping them to learn to deal with stressors. The observer, in her written documents, indicated that she viewed the intervention as effective, as did I, in the documents written as the group leader.

*Perception of increased confidence in coping.* At the end of the intervention, eight of nine participants reported increased confidence in coping as a clergy wife on the Final Informal Personal Stress Evaluation, and six participants' comments on the Final Group Evaluation Form

illustrated this theme. The observer and I, as the leader, each noted in reports written after the last session that the participants seemed more self-confident in their ability to cope with ministry-related stressors.

*Statistically insignificant reduction in informal stress levels reported before and after intervention.* On the Weekly Informal Stress Assessments, the participants' mean rating from 1 to 10 of personal stress level decreased from 5.8 at the first session to 5.0 at the last session – suggesting effectiveness of the intervention in alleviating stress, but not at a significant level. I noted in my journal, written as the leader, that “most of the group members seem to be making headway in learning about and trying to alleviate stress, but they have not yet necessarily experienced much, if any decrease in stress.”

*Reported changes in thinking and behavior.* The clergy wives' written comments and my comments, written as leader, reported cognitive changes and behavioral changes by the wives in efforts to alleviate stress. On the Final Informal Personal Stress Evaluation forms, each of nine participants mentioned something about modification in her thinking. Other comments written by the participants and by me, told of actions that group members tried in order to alleviate stress – such as the use of relaxation breathing. In addition, I have received e-mails in the four months since the last session communicating that group members have provided and sought social support with one another -- through e-mails, phone calls, and monthly dinners.

*Discussion concerning results for research question 1.* A disparity existed between two of the effectiveness themes; the participants' perceptions of effectiveness did not match the findings of the pre and post-self assessments of stress level. Related to the first theme, participants' documents revealed that they perceived the intervention as having good effectiveness in alleviating clergy-wife stress and that they felt less stress after the intervention

than before. Related to the third theme, however, the mean of the participants' final scaled self-assessments of stress level indicated only a minimal, non-significant decrease from the pre-group mean. Perhaps in a study with many more than just 9 participants, a decrease such as the one found in mean stress-level would have statistical significance. Nonetheless, other findings in this study also pointed to a disparity between participant perceptions and pre and post-group numerical assessments of participants' individual stress levels. Not only did the final self-rating responses, on a 10-point scale, indicate a non-significant decrease in stress level, most of the findings from the two clergy-wife stress assessment instruments also did not indicate a significant decrease in stress. Reporting of and discussion of those findings appear under the quantitative research question 5.

Possible reasons for the seemingly inconsistent findings include the following:

1. Meeting for five weekly sessions perhaps did not provide an adequate length of time for participants to try out techniques and then to put helpful techniques into practice in order to experience a significant, measurable decrease in stress levels.
2. Despite my attempts, as the leader, to emphasize the definition of stress in our group as a personal state that occurs as a result of one's perceptions, participants sometimes seemed still to think of stress in terms of external factors and to report level of stress accordingly. This tendency reflects that often society as a whole and some researchers (Huebner, 1999) interpret stress level through numbers of, not reactions to, difficult events or conditions in a person's life. For example, Kaplan (1996) utilized a psychosocial definition of stress referring to social, economic, and personal circumstances perceived as threatening, demanding, or irritating.

3. Measuring and comparing a participant's stress levels at different times presented challenges because of the inability to control for the occurrence of potential stressors that could have naturally impacted the level of stress.
4. The Hawthorne effect (Isaacs & Michael, 1981) may have occurred. Some participants may have expected or wanted the intervention to be effective and so chose or wrote favorable answers to questions about the effectiveness of Clergy Wife Wings. I do not, however, have any evidence that this effect occurred. In fact, most participants seemed to take very seriously their role in the development of an intervention for clergy wives.

The progress reported by the participants -- increased confidence in coping and efforts to change thoughts and behavior -- suggested early growth towards the alleviation stress. This progress makes sense in light of the theoretical base of the intervention, Palmer and Dryden's (1995, 1996) multimodal-transactional model of stress and its alleviation. The stress model emphasizes that one's coping resources and one's confidence in those resources play a critical role when one appraises a potential stress trigger. In this model, trying new coping techniques (particularly cognitive techniques) and increasing confidence in coping are pivotal in learning how to alleviate stress. According to the model, coping skills and confidence in one's ability to cope can help in three ways: (a) to prevent stress response symptoms in the first place, (b) to alleviate stress symptoms when they occur, and (c) to avoid a chronic cycle of residual symptoms and negative appraisal. Experimenting with new techniques, experiencing success, and solidifying confidence take time. I now think of the group goal of decreasing ministry-related stress, certainly the ultimate aim of Clergy Wife Wings, as unrealistic by the end of only four weeks.

*Research Question 2: What aspects do the group members, group leader, and group observer identify as strengths of the group plan?*

Qualitative analysis of evaluation documents completed by the participants, the observer, and me as the leader revealed 12 themes related to perceived strengths of the intervention.

*Themes related to strengths.*

1. Sharing by and commonality among the clergy wives,
2. Supportive group environment.
3. Relaxation breathing.
4. Use of humor.
5. BASIC IB stress framework.
6. ABCDE strategy.
7. Family system concepts and boundary diagrams.
8. Closure and reinforcement in session 5
9. Stress buster bags and resource list in session 5
10. Participants' diversity in clergy wife experience
11. Introduction and metaphor activities in session 1
12. Handouts.

*Discussion about strength themes.* Many of the planned components of the Clergy Wife Wings plan, as listed in the activity goals, emerged as strength themes: social support within the group as reflected by the first two themes, BASIC IB stress framework (also reflected in stress buster bag activity and reinforcement in session 5), ABCDE strategy, family system concepts, use of humor to alleviate stress, use of a behavioral and sensory technique (relaxation breathing) to alleviate stress, and exposure to imagery techniques (metaphor activities).

The first two strengths, that concerned the sharing, commonality, support, and acceptance in the group, dominated in the participants' views. Whether or not they experienced or recognized a decrease in stress from a lack of social support, they clearly appreciated and benefited from the connection with one another. Studies cited in chapter 2 (Morris & Blanton, 1998; Fox, 1997; Cox, 2001) support that this need exists in many clergy wives.

Although diversity of the group emerged as a strength theme, two striking common threads also existed – Caucasian race and the United Methodist denomination. Although a few African American and Korean United Methodist clergy-wives received information about the group, none responded. I do not know the race of most of the non-Methodist clergy wives who received information. The racial make-up the group illustrates the racial segregation of many denominations and congregations.

The original group plan did not specifically call for clergy wives of a single denomination. In recruitment, I utilized a list of United Methodist and Presbyterian clergy wives and some referrals by counselors. One Baptist and two Presbyterian wives expressed interest but had times conflicts and could not participate. All nine group members had United Methodist ties. Even the one wife with a non-Methodist husband had been a United Methodist herself for years before marrying him. Perhaps my being a United Methodist clergy wife, as indicated on the flyer, may have encouraged some of the Methodist wives to apply. The possibility exists that Clergy Wife Wings may work best in a group for wives of a single denomination or particularly with a United Methodist group.

*Research Question 3: What aspects do the group members, group leader, and group observer identify as weaknesses of the group plan?*

Qualitative analysis of documents completed by the participants, the observer, and me as the leader revealed 6 themes related to perceived weaknesses of the intervention.

*Themes related to weaknesses.*

1. Stress song activity
2. Too much content in the first two sessions
3. Too much negativity in some discussions
4. Some awkwardness with and differences of opinion about psychoeducational format
5. Implied emphasis on quick reduction of stress
6. Homework assignments

*Discussion about weakness themes.* Discussion of the three weakness themes of “stress songs,” “too much content in the first two sessions” and “too much negativity in some discussions” appeared in chapter 4 in quotes from the observer, from me as the leader, and from a participant. The weakness theme, “too much emphasis on quick reduction of stress” re-iterates the earlier-stated notion that four weeks probably did not allow enough time for participants to experience a statistically significant decrease in stress.

Concerning the psychoeducational format, only one participant expressed clear dissatisfaction while others praised the format. The one who reacted negatively did so from the first session. She seemed to have different expectations and different needs beyond the scope of a psychoeducational group. Also concerning the format, the observer and I, as the leader, each noted the challenge of containing important sharing by participants within time restraints to follow the session agenda. I still believe the psychoeducational format of Clergy Wife Wings, with its combination of education and of sharing, provides a helpful framework, particularly with this population. More opportunities for sharing may be needed, but the leader must make clear

the nature of the group format and, with sensitivity and care, bring sharing to a close when necessary to continue with the agenda.

Participants reported that they did not find homework assignments particularly helpful. Some of the group members did not want the pressure of homework. As a former teacher, I am not surprised because students often do not like or want homework. As the leader, I doubted that some participants even did the assignments. For a psychoeducational group to help to alleviate stress, however, participants need to try in their daily lives what they are learning in sessions. Having specific assignments emphasizes that need and offers a structured, behavioral plan in doing so. Early (2000) reported the effectiveness of using behavioral assignments in psychoeducational groups. Possible ways to make the assignments more effective appear in the discussion about suggestions, under research question 4.

*Research Question 4: What suggestions do the group members, group leader, and group observer make to improve the group plan?*

Qualitative analysis of documents completed by the participants, the observer, me as leader revealed 12 themes of suggestions for ways to improve the intervention.

*Themes related to suggestions.*

1. Addition of one or two sessions
2. Increased time on the content covered in the first two sessions
3. Increased time spent for personal sharing
4. Increased emphasis on solutions and positive clergy-wife experiences
5. Revisions to lessen expectation of quick alleviation of stress
6. Omission of stress song activity
7. More emphasis on starting on time



8. Inclusion of short break in each session
9. Some revisions of and corrections to handouts
10. Revision of components related to previous findings from clergy-wife research
11. Review and possible revision of homework component
12. Inclusion of two new components as options in the group plan.

*Discussion about suggestion themes.* A section later in the chapter includes a list of my final recommendations for changes to the group plan. These recommendations came from contemplations of the suggestion themes above, as well as of the strength and weakness themes, and of the findings for the two other research questions. Discussion here addresses some of the suggestions identified above and some of my related recommendations.

In creating the original Clergy Wife Wings plan, I opted for 5 sessions because of concerns that more sessions might hinder recruitment. Little evidence in the analyzed documents showed a desire to eliminate topics or activities. Findings clearly indicated, however, that the plan needs more sessions. The addition of sessions would help to facilitate two of the above suggestions -- to spend more time on the foundations presented in the first two sessions and to allow more time for personal sharing. In addition, more time could be spent on practicing techniques to alleviate stress. Although the most frequent suggestions focused on adding one or two sessions, Early (2000) recommends at least 8 sessions for a psychoeducational group.

The suggestion of including in the group plan two new components -- the stress buster bag activity and the resource list -- that I added, as the leader during the first implementation, seems appropriate. For reasons quoted in chapter 4 concerning time and cost of preparation and leader inclination, adding these components as options for the last session provides a reasonable way to include them.

Possible revisions to lessen unrealistic expectations of quick alleviation of stress include:

(a) changing the output goal of the intervention, “experiencing a decrease in ministry-related stress” to a longer-term goal and including as the immediate output goal something like, “working on the process of alleviating stress, through cognitive and behavioral changes, other techniques, and increased confidence,” and (b) more effective explanations by the leader about the weekly informal self-assessments of stress and what to expect.

The original plan did not call for a session break. As the creator, I had concerns about possible hindrance to the flow and cohesion of the session and about possible difficulties getting group members to break and to gather again in the time allotted. The suggestion to include a break in each session mostly came from the participants. This need seemed to stem somewhat from (a) the night-time hours of the sessions, (b) the fact that many had worked all day, and (c) the long distance some participants drove to and from sessions. The addition of sessions might allow enough time to cover everything well and to include a 10-minute break each week. The leader would still need, however, to work to keep participants within the time limits of the break, by reminders and by consistently restarting the session at the specified time.

As discussed under the research question about weaknesses, eliminating homework does not seem wise, but some revision does. Maybe more explanation, emphasis, expectation, and encouragement by the leader at the first and subsequent sessions might help. Also, possibly having additional sessions would allow more time each week for participants to report on and to talk about the previous week’s assignment – components already in the original session agendas.

*Research Question 5: Do the results of the group plan’s quantitative pre and post-testing of stress suggest that the intervention is effective in alleviating the participants’ ministry-related stress?*

Findings for the fifth research question came from the analysis of the quantitative results of the pre and post-group administration of two assessment instruments. These results served purposes of description and of suggestion only. Findings, summarized below, concerning measures in the three domains of stress and in overall stress came solely from the Adapted Clergy Family Life. The findings, presented below, related to stressor statements also came from the Adapted Normative Stress Scale for Clergy Wives. Discussion follows the results summaries.

*Domain of role expectations and time demands.* The findings did not suggest effectiveness of the intervention in alleviating stress in this domain. After the intervention, the mean subscale for stress-level related to role expectations and time demands was greater, at an insignificant level, than the subscale before the intervention.

*Domain of clergy family boundary intrusiveness.* The findings did not suggest effectiveness of the intervention in alleviating stress in this domain. Although the mean subscale of stress-level related to role expectations and time demands was less at the end of the intervention than the mean subscale before the intervention, the decrease in stress level was not statistically significant and with only small effect.

*Domain of lack of social support.* The findings did not suggest effectiveness in alleviating stress in this domain. No change at all occurred between the mean subscale score of stress-level related to lack of social support before the invention and at the end of the intervention.

*Overall clergy-wife stress.* The findings did not suggest effectiveness in alleviating clergy-wife stress overall. The measure of overall clergy-wife stress included not only the three targeted domains listed above but also the two non-targeted domains of mobility and clergy compensation. The overall mean score of stress-level at the end of the intervention was slightly

greater than the overall mean score before the intervention. The increase was not statistically significant and of small effect.

*Individual stressor statements.* Of the 12 stressor statements on the Adapted Normative Stress Scale for Clergy Wives and the 23 stressor statements on the Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory, analyses indicated a decrease in stress level, at a significant level, with medium effect, only on the two following stressor statements:

1. "I lack close, supportive friends." (Adapted Normative Stress Scale for Clergy Wives)
2. "It is difficult to balance church and family considerations in making decisions about changing pastorates." (Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory)

*Discussion of quantitative findings.* The significant decrease in stress related to the statement, "I lack close, supportive friends." suggests some effectiveness in the targeted stress domain of lack of social support. The decrease may have resulted from the previously identified intervention strengths of (a) sharing by and commonality among the clergy wives, and (b) supportive group environment. This indication of some success in social support does not, however, explain why participants did not also report a significant decrease in stress on any items in the domain of lack of social support on the Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory.

The significant decrease in stress related to the statement, "It is difficult to balance church and family considerations in making decisions about changing pastorates." suggests some effectiveness in the non-targeted stress domain of mobility. A likely reason may lie in external events related to mobility that had an impact on one or more participants. Although mobility did not receive much attention in the group plan, discussions in the first group addressed mobility somewhat. Possibly that sharing or gleanings from information about stress alleviation, in general, played a role in the results for this statement. These explanation do not, however,

explain why participants did not report a significant stress level decrease for any other stressor items concerning mobility

Most of the quantitative findings did not suggest effectiveness of Clergy Wife Wings in alleviating ministry-related stress. These results echo the results of the participants' pre and post-scores on the Informal Self-Assessment of Stress, summarized and discussed under research question 1. Both test results here likewise differed from the perceptions of the intervention as effective. The similarity of results indicating little or no change in stress level on three measures -- these two instruments and the participants' self-assessments of stress -- strongly suggests that ministry-related stress level did not decrease significantly by the end of the intervention.

Some of the same possible reasons listed earlier, under research question 1, may also apply here for the disparity between perceptions of effectiveness and the results on the two test instruments. Three other explanations may also apply.

1. As the leader, I could not include the plan's component of meeting with group members individually to inform each of her individual pre-group scores on the two assessment instruments. This omission prevented the possible benefits of intervention-oriented evaluation (Patton, 1997) and may have negatively impacted the post-group scores of stress level.
2. The instruments designed to measure stress-levels may not have provided the best measures of what participants gained from the intervention. For example, perhaps instruments that measure coping might provide more appropriate measures of the intervention's effectiveness.
3. Difficulties may have existed with the adaptations that I made to the assessment instruments or even with the original instruments, the Clergy Family Life Inventory

and the Normative Stress Scale for Clergy Wives. Discussion follows concerning the instruments and the adaptations.

Neither of the original clergy-wife stress assessment instruments has been published or, to my knowledge, subjected to careful study beyond the research by the creators. Additional testing is needed. On the Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory, perhaps difficulties resulted from the grouping of items and language changes made to adapt the original from a stress assessment tool for both clergymen and their wives to a tool directed exclusively to clergy wives.

As mentioned in chapter 3, I recognized that the original Normative Stress Scale for Clergy Wives did not well suit the intervention because it utilized an approach to stress measurement in terms of frequency of events. Huebner (1999) designed the instrument to assess chronic stress as a clergy wife. On her instrument, a clergy wife indicates whether or not she has experienced each item in the last month and, if so, how often (somewhat, moderately, or extremely). Because a clergy wife can often not control frequency of external events, the test does not necessarily provide a measure of how much related stress she is experiencing. Herein lies a major stumbling block to any attempt to measure stress levels, particularly stress related only to certain areas of one's life. The more serious the potential stressor one experiences, the more likely one's level of stress will increase. Also usually the more potential stressors one encounters, the more likely one's overall stress level will increase. Yet, in some situations, persons learn to live with a serious potential stressor or many potential stressors without experiencing a high level of stress. For example, the wife of a politician may learn how to withstand frequent criticism of her husband without experiencing, as a result, a high level of stress. Measuring stress so as to reflect a change within the person and not necessarily in the environment presents a challenge.

On the adaptation of Huebner's instrument used in this study, the clergy wife respondent answered how stressful she had recently experienced each item (minimally or not at all, somewhat, moderately, or extremely). The adapted test results were reported only as 12 separate findings assessing stress reaction for each of the items. As explained in chapter 3, because of Huebner's extensive research, the 12 items provided documented statements reflective of clergy wife stress experienced from the ambiguity and strain of being a clergy wife. The results from the adapted instrument were not reported in this study with an overall measure of stress because I did no testing to support a new overall measure of stress -- stress as interpreted and measured differently from Huebner.

Perhaps the adapted instrument should have included, not only an indication of how stressful the clergy wife experienced each item's situation, but also an indication of the recent frequency of the situation. Both indicators would have provided helpful information. For example, a decrease in stress reported for a stressor statement may have happened in conjunction with a decrease in occurrence of the stressor. I initially considered trying to include both kinds of responses, but I thought they might confuse the participants. Also I found the response options awkward on Huebner's original instrument and did not feel comfortable in using them or in adapting them. The development of an instrument containing both kinds of responses about potential stressors would help in evaluating and explaining levels of stress reported by a clergy wife. Such an instrument might also help those taking the test to differentiate more clearly between experienced stress and occurrence of potential stressors.

#### *Conclusions from Formative Evaluation*

According to Patton (1997, p. 69), "formative evaluation typically connotes collecting data ..., usually during the start-up or pilot phase of a project, to improve implementation, solve

unanticipated problems, and make sure the participants are progressing toward desired outcomes” (p. 69). Findings in the formative evaluation of Clergy Wife Wings suggested that as a group, the participants in the first implementation of the Clergy Wife Wings plan did not, by the end of the intervention, meet the stated outcome goal of experiencing a decrease in ministry-related stress, as measured on the two stress assessment instruments and the self-assessment stress scale. Qualitative findings, however, did suggest that the intervention was effective in helping the clergy wives to begin the process of alleviating ministry-related stress. I conclude that the Clergy Wife Wings group plan has good potential as a stress-alleviation intervention with clergy wives but needs some revisions, outlined as recommendations later in the chapter, and additional testing.

#### Additional Discussion

The demographics of the first Clergy Wife Wings group illustrated some of the research findings about clergy wives presented in chapter 3. First, as a group, they were well educated. Second, most of them reported employment outside the home. Third, four wives had husbands who entered the ministry as a second career.

I found that serving as both the researcher and the group leader provided helpful perspectives in this study. As one intimately familiar with the initial group plan, I learned a great deal by actually experiencing the plan in action. My background as a teacher made these two roles seem quite natural – that of the planner of lessons and then that of the teacher utilizing the plans in the classroom. Until one tries the plans with actual students, the plans remain an exercise in the abstract. I learned so much by implementing the plans for Clergy Wife Wings, especially from the participants. As a result, I have a clearer understanding of what needs to be changed. The combination of designing the Clergy Wife Wings group plan, based on careful research,



followed by the formative evaluation of the first implementation in which I participated, has provided me with insight and experience that will help in further development of the plan.

### Implications of Results

#### *General Implications for Counseling*

The findings support that the psychoeducational group format provides a helpful counseling approach in stress-alleviation, as indicated by Corey (1996) and Ellis et al. (1997). In the formative evaluation of Clergy Wife Wings, the identification of REBT as a strength supports the contention by Palmer and Dryden (1995) and by Ellis et al. (1997) that REBT offers an appropriate treatment approach to alleviate stress. The findings also support the use of Palmer and Dryden's (1995, 1996) multimodal-transactional model of stress and of treatment as a framework in the alleviation of stress. The study also illustrates the awkwardness related to defining and measuring stress.

#### *Implications for Counseling Clergy Family Members*

Findings offer additional evidence that clergy wives do indeed experience ministry-related stress in the five external stress domains identified by Blanton (1992) – role expectations and time demands, clergy family boundary intrusiveness, lack of social support, mobility, and clergy compensation. Findings also suggest that clergy wives may particularly benefit from connecting with other clergy wives in a group. The examples of cognitive work in the first Clergy Wife Wings group give credence to the use of REBT to help clergy wives to alleviate stress.

The use of Clergy Wife Wings as an intervention and the use of some its components by counselors with individual clergy-wife clients may particularly offer helpful tools to pastoral counselors. Church denominations may help to address some clergy family problems by offering

Clergy Wife Wings groups. Some of the content and activities of Clergy Wife Wings may give ideas to counselors for working with individual clergy, with clergy children, with clergy families, and with clergy marriages.

#### *Implications for Counselor Education*

Implications for counselor education emerge from this study. First, the study obviously emphasizes the need for solid training in group work to provide counselors with important skills and concepts needed to consider and to utilize a group as a treatment venue. Second, perhaps this study can provide a helpful example in group counseling courses of the development of a psychoeducational group intervention. Third, this study illustrates that counselor education students, with backgrounds as educators, may have experience in the classroom and in lesson planning that can be helpful in the designing of a psychoeducational group. Fourth, perhaps this study can provide a helpful example in a multi-cultural counseling course of an intervention designed for a special population. Fifth, the study illustrates the importance of educating counselors about stress, its symptoms, and its alleviation. Sixth, the use of the multimodal-transactional model of stress in the study illustrates the helpfulness of a theoretical framework for counselors and clients.

#### *Implications for Research*

The findings for the study have several implications for research. First, although other researchers who have reported stress in clergy wives have recommended the use of counseling (P. A. R. Allen, 1998; Blanton, 1992; Frame, 1998), this study presents possibly the first research of an actual counseling intervention to alleviate stress in clergy wives. Second, as indicated by Patton (1990, 1997), the use of formative evaluation offers an effective research tool in the early

development of a counseling intervention. Third, the study illustrates the challenges of evaluating the effectiveness of any counseling approach, especially in group work.

### Recommendations

I make the following recommendations from my perspectives as the creator of the original plan, as the leader of the first Clergy Wife Wings group, as the researcher in the formative evaluation of the plan, as a counselor, and as a former teacher.

#### *Recommended Use of Clergy Wife Wings in the Future*

I recommend continued refinement, implementation, and evaluation of the Clergy Wife Wings group plan as an intervention to begin the process of alleviating ministry-related stress. I also recommend the eventual creation and possible publishing of a Clergy Wife Wings manual that other counselors can follow to lead a Clergy Wife Wings group.

#### *Recommended Changes to the Original Group Plan*

In response to the findings for the five research questions, I specifically recommend the following changes to the original plan for Clergy Wife Wings:

1. More emphasis on stress alleviation as a process
  - a. Rewording of the goal to include progress in working towards stress alleviation, with specifics, such as increased confidence in coping
  - b. More emphasis by the leader on stress alleviation as a process that takes time
  - c. Adaptation of the form for weekly self-assessment of stress
  - d. Possible inclusion of a follow-up assessment of stress, by mail
2. Expansion to 7 or 8 sessions, to provide for the following:
  - a. More sessions to cover the content originally covered in the first two sessions
  - b. More session time for personal sharing

- c. More session time for practicing techniques for stress alleviation
  - d. More session time to go over previous week's assignment
3. Omission of stress song activity
4. Inclusion of optional components into the group plan
  - a. Stress buster bag activity for last session.
  - b. Local resource list for last session.
  - c. Use of handouts summarizing clergy wife study findings
5. More emphasis on homework by the leader to the group -- particularly rationale and encouragement
6. More emphasis on positive experiences as clergy wives
7. Reminder to leader to watch for negative impact of discussion on specific participants, particularly younger or newer clergy wives
8. Corrections to and revisions of some handouts
9. Changes in quantitative pre and post-group assessment of clergy-wife stress
  - a. Consideration of additional changes to the adaptations of the two clergy-wife stress assessment instruments
  - b. More emphasis on using the two pre-group clergy-wife stress assessment findings as diagnostic to identify problem areas
  - c. Consideration of using other assessment instruments
10. More emphasis in plan on importance of starting each session on time
  - a. Reminder to leader to start on time, even with some participants not yet present
  - b. More reminders to participants, in written material and by the leader, about importance of being on time

- c. General instructions to participants to wait, if late, to enter group after relaxation breathing activity
11. Inclusion of a short break in each session, with prompt restarting of group by leader
  12. Recommendation that group members and leader sit in a circle of chairs
  13. Creation of a new written plan to incorporate these changes

#### *Recommended Research*

In the area of research, I recommend the following: (a) continued research in the implementation, evaluation, and improvement of Clergy Wife Wings, (b) testing of Clergy Wife Wings with other wives of non-Methodist denominations or with more diversity in denomination, (c) testing of Clergy Wife Wings with more racially diverse groups, (d) a follow-up study of the first Clergy Wife Wings groups, (d) more research concerning laymen married to clergywomen, (e) additional research to test the Normative Stress Scale for Clergy Wives, (e) additional research to test the Clergy Family Live Inventory, and (f) development and testing of a clergy-wife stress assessment instrument that measures both frequency of potential stressors and levels of experienced stress.

#### Summary of Chapter 5

To fulfill the first half of the study's purpose, I developed Clergy Wife Wings, a 5-session psychoeducational group, with an outcome goal of decreasing ministry-related stress. For the second half of the purpose, findings from the formative evaluation of the first implementation of the group plan concerned (a) the effectiveness of the intervention and (b) strengths, weaknesses, and suggestions for improvement of the intervention. Qualitative analysis of documents written by the participants, the observer, and me as the leader revealed themes as

results. Quantitative results of pre and post-testing of clergy-wife stress levels provided description and suggestion about effectiveness.

First, qualitative findings suggested effectiveness of Clergy Wife Wings in perceptions of decreased stress, perceptions of the intervention as good, in perceptions of increased confidence in coping, and in reported changes in thinking and behavior related to stress alleviation. Quantitative findings, however, from the numerical pre and post-group measures of clergy-wife stress did not suggest effectiveness, except for a significant decrease in stress related to two of 35 stressor statements. One reason given for this dichotomy centered on the possibility that the intervention's time span did not allow enough time for participants to experience a measurable, significant decrease in stress but did allow time for early progress towards that goal.

Second, qualitative findings also focused on evaluation of the specifics of the intervention itself. The 12 themes of strength ranged from the two most often cited, concerning sharing and commonality among the clergy wives and supportive environment of the group, to the cognitive technique, "ABCDE". The 6 themes of weakness included, for example, "stress songs" and "too much content in the first two sessions." The 12 themes of suggestion varied from "1 or 2 more sessions" to "inclusion of a break" to "increased time for personal sharing." Discussions addressed many of these findings.

I concluded that the Clergy Wife Wings group plan has good potential as an intervention with clergy wives for stress-management but needs some revisions and additional implementation and evaluation. Implications of the findings focused on counseling, counselor education, and research. Recommendations included a detailed list of proposed changes to the original group plan.

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## Appendix A

### Session Outline of Clergy Wife Wings

#### A Psychoeducational Group for Clergy Wives

Goal for each clergy wife participant:  
to decrease ministry-related stress.

Outcome objectives for each participant:

- (a) to decrease stress related to clergy wife role expectations and time demands,
- (b) to decrease stress related to clergy family boundary intrusiveness, and
- (c) to decrease stress related to a lack of social support

#### Session 1

“Leave Your Halo at the Door”  
Getting Acquainted and Learning about Stress

#### Session 2

“But I Don’t Sing or Play the Piano”  
Dealing with Role Expectations and Time Demands

#### Session 3

”Living in a Stained Glass Fish Bowl”  
Dealing with Clergy Family Boundary Intrusiveness

#### Session 4

“Feeling Lonely in the Midst of Many People”  
Dealing with Lack of Social Support

#### Session 5

“Pick Up Your Wings as You Leave on Your Journey”  
Summarizing, Evaluating, and Preparing to Fly

## Appendix B

Clergy Wife Wings  
Session 1

**“Leave Your Halo at the Door”  
Getting Acquainted and Learning about Stress**

- I. Gathering
  - Name tag, ID number, and binder for each member
  - Initial stress assessment
    - A. Informal Assessment
    - B. Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory
    - C. Adapted Normative Stress Scale for Clergy Wives
  - Angel picture selection
  
- II. Introductions and Orientation
  - Introductions with angel pictures
  - Group ground rules
    - A. Wear nametag
    - B. Accept and support one another.
    - C. Remember PAD -- People Are Different.
    - D. Do not give advice to a member unless asked.
    - E. Keep confidential any personal information shared in the group.
    - F. Attend each session. Call group leader if you must miss a session.
    - G. Bring your binder each week
    - H. Be on time.
  
- III. Overview of Research Findings about Clergy Wives and 5 Domains of Stress (handout)
  
- IV. Metaphor Activity
  - Think of a metaphor for your life as a clergy wife. For example:
    - “living in a stained glass fish bowl”
    - “pretending to be a holy noodlehead”
  - Sharing of metaphors
  - How would you like your metaphor to change?
  
- V. Overview of Stress
  - Mini-lecture: definition of stress and stress model (handout)
  - Discussion
  - Identifying your stress response (handout and activity)
  - Spirituality
  - Ways to relieve stress symptoms (handout to take home)

- VI. Assignment:
- A. Read over the handout that lists multimodal ways to alleviate symptoms of stress.
  - B. Check or write in any techniques that you have already found helpful.
  - C. Cross out techniques that you have tried but have not found helpful.
  - D. Circle techniques that you may want to investigate on your own.
  - E. Write in some spiritual/religious techniques for various modalities.
- VII. The Serenity Prayer
- God, please grant me the  
Serenity to *accept* the things I cannot change,  
Courage to *change* the things I can, and  
Wisdom to *know the difference*.
- VIII. Evaluation of Session 1

## Appendix C

Group Participant # \_\_\_\_\_

Weekly Informal Stress Assessment  
Session 1

1. On the scale below, please circle your overall level of stress lately as a clergy wife:

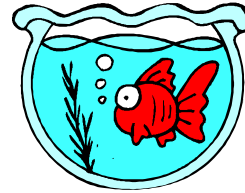
Minimally stressed \_\_\_\_\_ Extremely stressed  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. What specific concerns do you have about stress as a clergy wife?

3. What else would you like for the group leader to know?

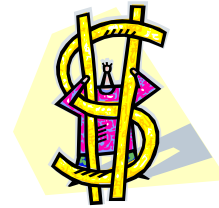
## Appendix D

## External Stressor Domains for Clergy Wives



\*1. Role Expectations & Time Demands

\*2. Family Boundary Intrusiveness



\*3. Lack of Social Support

4. Mobility

5. Clergy Compensation

Which of the above domains do you particularly experience as a stressor? Give examples.

\* A major focus of this group

Appendix E

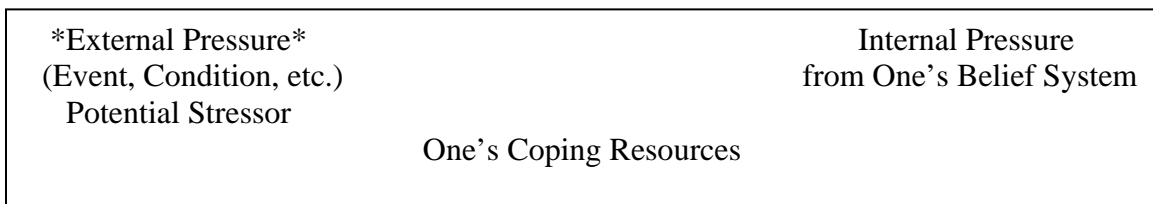
Overview of Stress

What Is Stress?

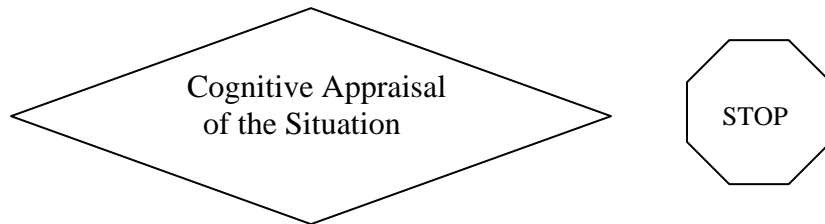
Stress is a personal, individualized state that occurs when one perceives an event, situation, or condition as straining one’s coping capacities and threatening one’s well-being (Lazarus, 1993).

Multi-Modal Transactional Model of Stress  
(Palmer and Dryden)

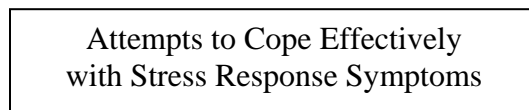
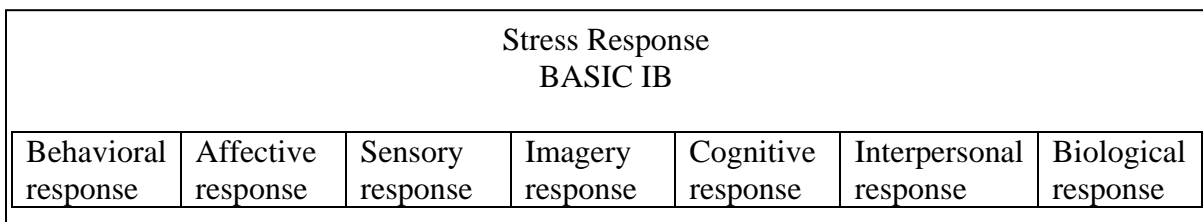
STAGE 1



STAGE 2



STAGE 3



STAGE 4

STAGE 5 – reach STOP or Stay in stress loop



## Appendix F

Examples of Stress Response Symptoms  
BASIC IB**Behavior**

alcohol/drug abuse	inability to sleep	increased absenteeism
increased nicotine/caffeine intake	too much sleep	type A behavior
loss of appetite/overeating	restlessness	compulsive behavior
teeth grinding	aggression	decreased/increased sexual activity
clenched fists	crying	eating/walking/talking faster
clenched teeth	sulking	unkempt appearance
speech/voice tremor	cursing	poor eye contact
nervous cough	poor driving	
tics, spasms	accident proneness	
	poor time management	

**Affect** (emotion/feeling)

anxiety	guilt	feeling “dissed”
anger	jealousy	(disrespected)
embarrassment	resentment	feeling “put upon”
depression	feeling overwhelmed	
hurt	disappointment	

**Sensation** (sensed physically by the individual)

aches & pains	indigestion	cold sweat
tension headache	limited sensual & sexual awareness	clammy hands
rapid heart beat	butterflies in stomach	abdominal cramps
nausea	spasms in stomach	lethargy
dry mouth	numbness	
dizziness		

**Imagery** (mental pictures)

images of:	images of:
helplessness	self and/or others dying/suicide
isolation/being alone	physical/sexual abuse
losing control	poor self-image
accidents/injury	nightmares/distressing recurring dreams
failure	visual flashbacks
humiliation/shame/embarrassment	

## **Cognition** (thoughts & thinking process)

preoccupation  
 forgetfulness  
 poor concentration  
 denial  
 ruminating (going over and over)  
 all or nothing thinking  
 “stinkin thinkin”  
 self-damning thoughts  
 “I am a failure.”  
 “I’m a terrible mother/father.”  
 “This is all my fault.”  
 other-damning statements  
 “He is a worthless person.”  
 “This is all her fault.”

awfulizing  
 “It’s awful, terrible, horrible ...”  
 “I can’t stand it.”  
 “Woe is me.”  
 musts/shoulds/have to’s  
 “Life should not be unfair.”  
 “I must be in control.”  
 “I have to fix this situation.”  
 “I must have what I want.”  
 “Others must live by my moral code  
 and rules”  
 “I must have others’ approval.”

## **Interpersonal Reaction** (in relationships)

passive  
 aggressive  
 passive aggressive  
 martyrdom  
 uncommunicative  
 withdrawn/reclusive  
 put others’ needs before own  
 timid/unassertive  
 suspicious/secretive  
 competitive  
 gossipy  
 physically abusive

manipulative  
 clinging  
 whining  
 self-focused  
 demanding  
 ignoring  
 argumentative  
 irritable  
 lose temper  
 critical  
 verbally abusive

## **Biology** (physiological)

### “Fight or Flight”

increased heart rate	diarrhea/flatulence
increased respiration rate	
increased blood pressure	
increased perspiration	
increased strength in skeletal muscles	
dilation of pupils	
increased levels of sugar & fat	
decreased gastrointestinal activity	
increased mental activity	
frequent urination	

Biological effects from other stress responses, such as from:

- drug/alcohol abuse
- overeating/undereating
- lack of sleep
- smoking

Examples of biological effects from chronic stress:

- high blood pressure & its effects
- heart problems
- lowered immune system
- dry skin
- clinical depression
- allergies/skin rash
- sexual dysfunction

## Appendix G

### Examples of Multimodal Techniques to Alleviate Stress Symptoms BASIC IB

Note: Many of these examples can be listed under more than one modality.

#### **B**ehavioral Techniques

- positive reinforcement (rewarding self)
- journaling
- changing something in one's environment
- creative writing
- painting, drawing, sculpture, ceramics, etc.
- going to one's safe, peaceful spot
- breathing slowly
- burning candles
- taking a bath, a nap, a walk
- rigorous exercise
- working in the yard
- yoga
- use of music

#### **A**ffective Techniques

- identifying one's feelings
- expressing one's feelings
- accepting one's feelings
- having feelings accepted by another

#### **S**ensory Techniques

(intentional use of spiritual & body resources to alleviate stress)

- meditative prayer
- transcendental meditation
- biofeedback
- massage by reputable therapist
- therapeutic touch
- hypnosis by reputable therapist
- self-hypnosis
- progressive relaxation (Jacobson)
- Benson relaxation response

#### **I**magery Techniques

- use of coping images
- use of positive self-images
- use of other positive images

## **Cognitive Techniques**

- normalizing
- recognizing & disputing one's unhelpful thoughts
- correcting one's misconceptions
- replacing unhelpful thoughts with more helpful thoughts
- greater self awareness
- cognitive restructuring
- cognitive reframing
- learning from self-help books, manuals, tapes, videotapes
- use of rational coping statement(s)
- constructive self-talk
- intentional work to recognize & accept what one cannot control

## **Interpersonal Techniques**

- reaching out to friend(s) for support
- asking spouse or other family member for help
- doing something for someone else
- involvement in a support group
- modeling by someone else
- roleplay/rehearsal with someone else
- training course with others in:
  - social skills
  - assertiveness
  - friendship and intimacy
  - communication skills
- psychotherapy
- marriage/family counseling

## **Biological Techniques**

- nutrition program
- exercise program
- stop smoking
- stop or limit caffeine
- weight reduction program
- physical by physician
- medication

## Appendix H

Group participant # \_\_\_\_\_

Session Evaluation Form  
Session 1

1. How would you rate the first session? (Circle one.)

Poor  
1

Okay  
2

Good  
3

Excellent  
4

2. Please briefly explain why:

3. What changes would you recommend?

4. Any other comments?

## Appendix I

## Session 2

“But I don’t sing or play the piano!”

**Dealing with Role Expectations and Time Demands**



- I. Weekly stress evaluation form
- II. Breathing exercise
- III. Sharing from the past week
- IV. This week’s domain: Role Expectations and Time Demands
  - Definition
  - Examples from the group members
  - Overview of related research
- V. REBT: Rational-Emotive-Behavioral Techniques
  - Mini-lecture: thoughts, feelings, actions; ABC’s of REBT (handout)
  - Practicing ABCDE with role expectations and time demands
  - Worry songs (handout)
- VI. Assignment (handouts)
 

During the week when you experience stress, fill out one of these forms. Try to complete at least 3 forms. Bring them back next week. Be ready to ask questions and to share successes and failures.
- VII. Serenity Prayer
- VIII. Session 2 Evaluation Form



## Appendix J

Group Participant # \_\_\_\_\_

Weekly Informal Stress Assessment  
Session 2

1. On the scale below, please circle your overall level of stress this past week as a clergy wife:

Minimally stressed \_\_\_\_\_ Extremely stressed  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. If you have noticed a big change this week in your stress level (increase or decrease), to what do you attribute that change?

3. In what ways did last week's group session impact you during the week?



Appendix K

**ABC's of REBT**  
Rational-Emotive Behavior Therapy

1. Identify a disturbed feeling or self-defeating behavior that you would like to change.

---

We will refer to the above feeling or behavior as:

**“C”:** **Condition or Consequence**

2. Think back to a recent time you experienced “C.”

What happened just before you experienced “C?”

(most likely an event but possibly your thoughts or feelings)

---

We will refer to the above “event” as:

**“A”:** **Activating Event** (or Activating Thoughts or Activating Feelings)

3. How did you get from “A” to “C?”

What was your underlying thought or belief related to “A “ that got you to “C”?

---

We will refer to the above thought or belief as:

**“B”:** **Belief or Thought** (related to “A” that resulted in “C”)  
(often may contain words such as “should,” “must,” “have to,”  
“can’t stand,” “need,” “awful,” “horrible”)

4. Now examine “B” -- that belief or thought.

Are you certain that this thought is true and correct?

In what way(s) can you dispute that thinking?

---

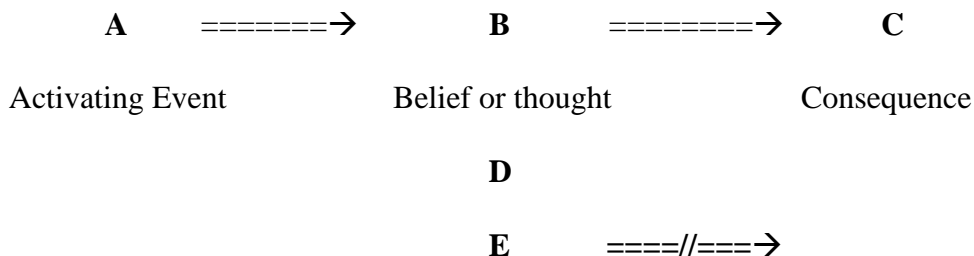
Sometimes referred to as **“D”:** **Disputation of “B”**

5. Might there be another way to think or to believe?

What different thought might not lead you to “C” ?

---

Sometimes referred to as **“E”:** **Effective thought or belief**



### Clergy Wife Example 1:

Angel is married to Rev. I. M Preacher. Frequently she is upset and even angry about church.

#### Specific example:

1. **“C” (condition or consequence)?** -- Angel came home mad and upset from a women’s circle meeting.

2. **“A” (activating event)?** -- What had happened at the circle meeting? As she thought back, she realized that she got upset when Ms. Church Member spoke out against the recent use of contemporary music in the worship service.

3. **“B” (underlying belief/thought)?** --What had she been thinking in response to “A” ?

Perhaps: “Oh, no. I can’t stand it! How dare that woman criticize anything about my husband’s worship service. He works so hard!”

(See other possible underlying thoughts or beliefs below.\*)

4. **“D” (disputation)?** -- How sound is Angel’s thinking in “B” ? What disputes do you have for her thinking.

5. **“E” (effective thought)?** -- How might she think differently?

#### 6. Then how might she react differently?

\*Alternate “B”: “Oh, no. I told Irving to go slow with change. If he had just listened to me!”

\*Alternate “B”: “I can’t stand this conflict! Now I’ll have to try to show Ms. Member extra TLC so she won’t be so dissatisfied.”

## Clergy Wife Example 2:

Angel has trouble with **anger and resentment** concerning her role as a clergy wife. Here is an example of a time when she found herself with these feelings.

### Specific example:

1. **“C” (consequence)?** -- One Sunday afternoon, Angel remembers **with resentment** that she has a message to relay to her preacher husband and then **angrily** gives him the message.

2. **“A” (activating event) ?** -- After the 11:00 worship service, Mr. Lay Leader came come up to Angel and said with irritation, “I tried to speak to your husband, but he is busy talking to everyone else. Tell him I will not be at the board meeting on Tuesday night.” After pausing a moment, he walks off in a huff.

3. **“B” (underlying belief/thought) ?** -- What had Angel been thinking?

Perhaps: “Here we go again – I have to be Little Miss Messenger. I hate this, but I must not ruffle this man’s feathers, especially because he is already mad.”

Perhaps: “Another petty church member ... I can’t stand it. Christians are not supposed to act like this. They should know better.”

Perhaps: “Poor Mr. Lay Leader feels left out. No wonder he is annoyed. I am so embarrassed by my husband. I am tired of cleaning up after his mistakes.”

Perhaps: “Oh great – like I have time to remember this, with everything else going on in my life! It’s time this church paid me for all I have to do!”

Perhaps: “These people have got to stop treating me like my husband’s secretary! Why, that man didn’t even acknowledge me as a human being!”

Perhaps: “I must remember this message. It is so important that I don’t add to my husband’s frustrations at church.”

4. **“D” (disputation)?** How sound is Angel’s thinking in “B” ?

5. **“E” (effective thought)?** Might there be another way to think?

6. **Then how might she have re-acted differently?**

### Clergy Wife Example 3:

Sweetness and her pastor husband Light are new in a parish setting. She shares her husband's concern that they make a good impression. She is often afraid of offending church members.

#### Specific example:

1. **“C” (consequence) ?** – In a conversation with her husband, Sweetness bursts into tears and laments, “But the house is a wreck!”
2. **“A” (activating event) ?** – Angel’s husband has just told her that he has learned that the older adult Sunday School class always comes to the parsonage for their Christmas party, which is this Thursday.
3. **“B” (underlying belief/thought) ?** -- What was Angel thinking?
4. **“D” (disputation)?** How sound is Angel’s thinking in “B” ? Dispute her thinking.
5. **“E” (effective thought)?** Might there be another way to think?
6. **Then how might she have re-acted differently?**

Appendix L

I'm Just Wild about Worry

Beautiful Hang Up

Lyrics omitted

## Appendix M

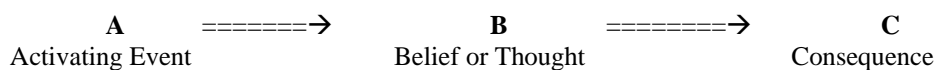
**ABCDE Worksheet**

**A disturbed feeling or self-defeating behavior related to your being a clergy wife that you would like to change:**

**Specific example:**

1. **“C” (consequence) ?** – Give an example when you experience this feeling or behavior?
  
2. **“A” (activating event) ?** – What happened before “C” that seemed to activate that response?
  
3. **“B” (underlying belief/thought) ?** -- What were you thinking?
  
4. **“D” (disputation)?** -- How sound is that thought in “B” ? Dispute your own thinking.
  
5. **“E” (effective thought)?** -- Come up with a different way to think.

**6. Then how might you have re-acted differently?**



- D** Disputation of B
- E** Effective Belief or Thought (stops path to C)

## Appendix N

Group participant # \_\_\_\_\_

Session Evaluation Form  
Session 2

1. How would you rate tonight's session? (Circle one.)

Poor  
1

Okay  
2

Good  
3

Excellent  
4

2. Please briefly explain why:

3. What changes would you recommend?

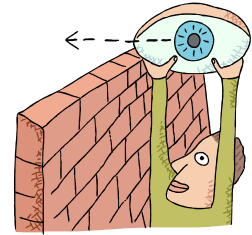
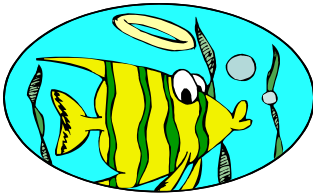
4. Any other comments?

## Appendix O

## Session 3

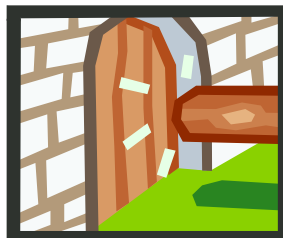
## “Living in a Stained Glass Fish Bowl”

## Dealing with Family Boundary Intrusiveness



- I. Weekly stress progress form (to be completed as participants gather)
- II. Breathing exercise
- III. Sharing from the past week, especially on REBT and on role expectations and time demands
- IV. This week's domain: Clergy Family Boundary Intrusiveness
  - Definition: “the extent to which the separation of the clergy family from the church congregation is not clearly marked and/or respected” (Blanton, Morrison, & Anderson, 1990)
  - Examples from group members
  - Overview of related research (handout)
  - Mini-lecture: Family systems concepts (handout)
  - Family system drawing activity
  - What can you do about boundary problems?
    - ABC's of REBT
    - Behavioral and environmental changes
  - Sharing in threes
  - To think about: When are you intrusive in your husband's work?
- V. Assignment
 

Continue to experiment with the ABCDE technique to identify and change unhelpful thinking and/or be proactive in setting boundaries. Be ready next week to share successes and failures and to ask questions.
- VI. The Serenity Prayer
- VII. Session 3 Evaluation Form





## Appendix P

Group Participant # \_\_\_\_\_

Weekly Informal Stress Assessment  
Session 3

1. On the scale below, please circle your overall level of stress this past week as a clergy wife:

Minimally stressed \_\_\_\_\_ Extremely stressed  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. If you have noticed a big change in your stress level (increase or decrease), to what do you attribute that change?

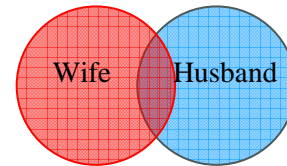
3. In what ways did last week's group session impact you during the week?

## Appendix Q

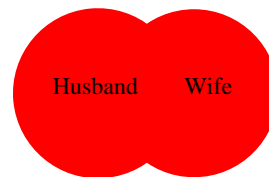
## Family Systems and Clergy Wives

**Boundaries** – emotional and physical barriers that protect and enhance the integrity of individuals and families and other systems (such as a church congregation)

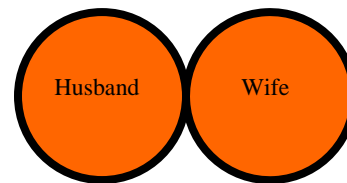
**Differentiation of Self** – healthy independence of self from others



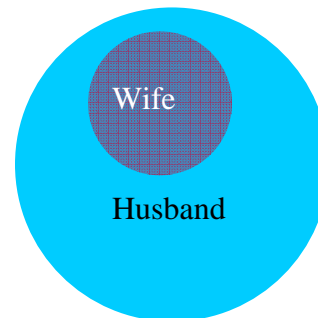
**Enmeshment** – loss of autonomy due to a blurring of psychological boundaries



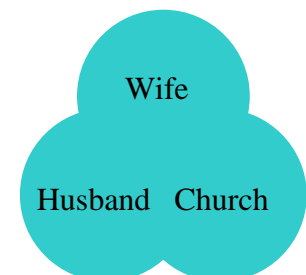
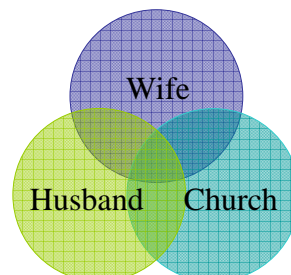
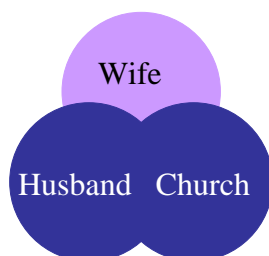
**Disengagement** – psychological isolation that results from overly rigid boundaries

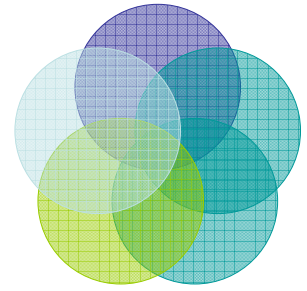
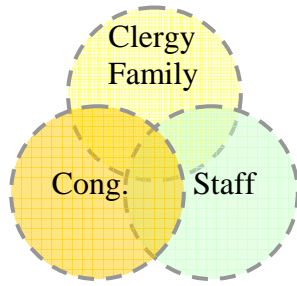
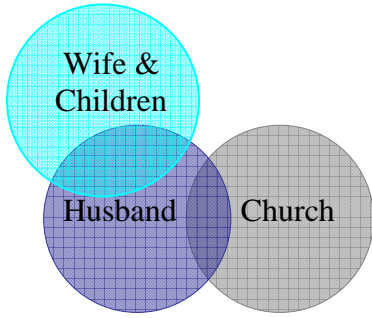


**Derived Identity** – a person's sense of identity is overly dependant on another person



## Other Boundary Examples





## Appendix R

### Your Family/Church System

In the space below, draw a diagram of the system that contains at least you, your husband, and the congregation.

## Appendix S

Group participant # \_\_\_\_\_

Session Evaluation Form  
Session 3

1. How would you rate tonight's session? (Circle one.)

Poor  
1

Okay  
2

Good  
3

Excellent  
4

2. Please briefly explain why:

3. What changes would you recommend?

4. Any other comments?

## Appendix T

## Session 4

## “Feeling Lonely in the Midst of Many People”

## Dealing with Lack of Social Support



## I. Weekly stress evaluation form

## II. Breathing exercise

## III. Announcements

- Next week is last session.
- Okay to meet next week from 7:15 to 9:45 (30 minutes longer)?
- Be thinking about what you will do in relieving stress after the group ends.
- Session 3 evaluation forms

## IV. Sharing

- Leader’s comments (cognitive, behavioral, & affective techniques)
- Experiences regarding Family Boundary Intrusiveness since last week
- Cognitive ABCDE homework sheets (not specifically discussed last week)

## V. This week’s focus: Lack of Social Support

- Definition of *social support*: the availability of friendships and attachment relationships in one’s social context. This domain includes both the quantity of available relationships and the quality of those relationships in regard to the kinds of needs one is able to have met” (Blanton, et al., 1990).
- Examples from group and identification of related feelings
- Overview of related research (handout)
- Discussion and Presentation: What can you do about it?
- Willing to share phone numbers?

## VI. Practice

## VII. Assignment

- Continue to experiment with:
  - Identifying and changing unhelpful thinking (the ABCDE technique)
  - Being proactive in setting boundaries
  - Being proactive in establishing and utilizing social support
  - Recognizing and claiming your feelings
- Be ready next week to share successes and failures and to ask questions.
- Also be ready to identify what you have learned and what you will do to deal with clergy wife stress after the group ends.

VIII. Serenity Prayer: God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.  
Amen

## IX. Session 4 Evaluation Form



## Appendix U

Group Participant # \_\_\_\_\_

Weekly Informal Stress Assessment  
Session 4

1. On the scale below, please circle your overall level of stress this past week as a clergy wife:

Minimally stressed \_\_\_\_\_ Extremely stressed  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. If you have noticed a big change in your stress level from last week (increase or decrease), to what do you attribute that change?

3. In what ways did last week's group session impact you during the week?



## Appendix V

Group participant # \_\_\_\_\_

Session Evaluation Form  
Session 4

1. How would you rate tonight's session? (Circle one.)

Poor  
1Okay  
2Good  
3Excellent  
4

2. Please briefly explain why:

3. What changes would you recommend?

4. Any other comments?

## Appendix W



## Session 5

**“Pick Up Your Wings as You Leave on Your Journey”****Summarizing, Evaluating and Preparing to Fly**

- I. Weekly stress evaluation form
- II. Breathing exercise
- III. Sharing from the past week – especially concerning social support
- V. Your “unhelpful” thoughts (handout)
- VI. What have you learned ...
  - About Stress?
  - About ways you personally use to try to alleviate stress?
  - About role expectations and time demands?
  - About family boundary intrusiveness?
  - About lack of social support?
- VII. Some quick reminders
  - Stress happens. Remember to breathe.
  - Utilize ways that help you to relieve symptoms of stress.
  - It often helps to match stress reduction modality with symptom modality.
  - It is most effective to utilize more than one modality to alleviate stress.
  - Mind your ABC’s. Work to change unhelpful underlying thoughts.
  - Be mindful of clergy family boundaries.
  - Remember that your husbands’ ministry is not your job.
  - Be proactive in seeking social support.
  - Remember to laugh. Try not to take yourself too seriously.
  - Utilize spiritual resources. Couple your efforts with prayer.
  - If stress becomes problematic, seek professional help – particularly if physical symptoms are unmanageable.
  - Work to establish more open communication with your husband. Tell him your feelings and what you need. Ask him what he needs from you. If unfamiliar, learn about using “I feel” statements and reflective listening.
  - Utilize the resources listed.

VIII. Final assessment

- Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory
- Adapted Normative Stress Scale for Clergy Wives

IX. Wings Ceremony

X. Serenity Prayer

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.

XI. Session 5 Evaluation Form

XII. Group Evaluation Form

XIII. Discussion of Clergy Wife Wings (led by Anna, the group observer)



## Appendix X

Group Participant # \_\_\_\_\_

Weekly Informal Stress Assessment  
Session 5

1. On the scale below, please circle your overall level of stress this past week as a clergy wife:

Minimally stressed \_\_\_\_\_ Extremely stressed  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. If you have noticed a big change in your stress level (increase or decrease), to what do you attribute that change?

3. In what ways, if any, did last week's session impact you during the week?

## Appendix Y

Write some irrational (unhelpful) thoughts below that you have identified as contributing to your stress as a clergy wife.



## Appendix Z

## Final Informal Personal Stress Evaluation

1. How does the stress you experience now as a clergy wife compare with the stress you experienced before Clergy Wife Wings? (Please circle answer.)

- |                        |                   |                             |                   |                        |
|------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| 1. much less<br>stress | 2. less<br>stress | 3. about the<br>same stress | 4. more<br>stress | 5. much more<br>stress |
|------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|

Comments?

2. How much has Clergy Wife Wings impacted your pre-group confidence in your ability to cope with potential clergy wife stressors? (Circle one.)

- |                           |                      |                                 |                      |                           |
|---------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. much less<br>confident | 2. less<br>confident | 3. about the same<br>confidence | 4. more<br>confident | 5. much more<br>confident |
|---------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|

Comments?

3. What changes will you make, as a result of Clergy Wife Wings, in trying to alleviate stress?

(Use the back for any answers, if needed)

Appendix AA

*CLERGY WIFE WINGS*



*Presented To*

*On the date of*

---

*Polly S. Roberts*  
*Clergy Wife Wings Group Facilitator*

## Appendix BB

Group participant # \_\_\_\_\_

Session Evaluation Form  
Session 5

1. How would you rate tonight's session? (Circle one.)

Poor  
1

Okay  
2

Good  
3

Excellent  
4

2. Please briefly explain why:

3. What changes would you recommend?

4. Any other comments?



## Appendix CC

Group Participant # \_\_\_\_\_

## Final Group Evaluation Form

Note: The focus of this form is on the Clergy Wife Wings group intervention.

1. How would you rate your experience in this group? (Circle one.)

Poor	Okay	Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4

2. How effective do you think the group was in alleviating stress as a clergy wife?

Poor	Okay	Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4

3. How effective do you think the group was in alleviating stress in each of the following domains?

## Role Expectations and Time Demands

Poor	Okay	Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4

## Family Boundary Intrusiveness

Poor	Okay	Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4

## Lack of Social Support

Poor	Okay	Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4

4. What did you find the most helpful about the group? (Use back if needed)

5. What did you find least helpful? (Use back if needed.)

6. What changes in the group plan do you recommend? (Use back if needed)

7.

- Please indicate how helpful you found each of the following components of Clergy Wife Wings by writing the number in the appropriate column.
- The word *handout* simply reminds you that a handout was part of the activity. You may wish to look back in your notebook.
- Use the last column to make any comments if you wish.

not      slightly      very      extremely  
helpful helpful helpful helpful helpful  
1      2      3      4      5

Activity or Strategy	1	2	3	4	5	Comments
						Use back if needed.
1. Preliminary information sent to you						
2. Angel/Wings theme						
3. General use of humor						
4. Handouts in general						
5. Use of pictures on handouts						
6. Clergy wife research findings						
7. Sharing at the beginning of each session						
8. Homework assignments						
9. Approach to spirituality						
10. Use of Serenity Prayer						

11. Relaxation breathing						
12. Weekly informal stress evaluations						
13. Mini-lectures by leader						
14. Number of sessions (5)						
15. Psychoeducational format						
16. Two-hour session length						
Session #1						
17. Two clergy wife stress assessment tests						
18. Domains of Stress (handout)						
19. Def & Multimodal-Transactional Model of Stress (handout)						
20. BASIC I.B. framework of stress symptoms (handout)						
21. BASIC IB framework for ways to alleviate symptoms (handout)						
Session #2						
22. Stress songs						
23. ABCDE strategy (handouts)						

24. Practicing ABCDE in pairs						
Session #3						
25. Family system concepts & Boundary Diagrams(handout)						
26. Drawing & sharing diagram of your system						
Session #4						
27. Ways to work on social support						
Session #5						
28. Resource list provided						
29. Final wings ceremony						
30. Stress Buster Bags						

Other?

Note: This appendix was changed during the first implementation of Clergy Wife Wings to reflect some additions to the plan.

Appendix DD  
Member # \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory\*

**Directions:** In the space provided before each item below, use the following scale (from 1 to 4) to indicate how stressful that situation is for you

- 1 – creates no stress for me
- 2 – creates mild stress for me
- 3 – creates moderate stress for me
- 4 – creates severe stress for me

In the items, the term “family” includes you, your husband, your children (if applicable), and any other person(s) who live with you.

Remember you are indicating the extent of stress created for you by each item. If the situation is not a part of your experience, simply enter a “1”.

How Stressful? 1, 2, 3, 4?	Item
___ 1.	I am expected to participate in most every church event even though our members are not always expected to participate.
___ 2.	My husband and I find it difficult to establish times for our marital relationship without having interruptions related to the needs of our congregation.
___ 3.	Any unexpected financial demands create havoc for our family.
___ 4.	There are not enough relationships in my life where I feel I can be myself.
___ 5.	I resent congregational influences on our family.
___ 6.	Our congregation does not accept or does not respect our family's expressions of frustration and dissatisfaction.
___ 7.	The moves our family has made have created financial concerns for us.
___ 8.	Our family does not have enough privacy.
___ 9.	I have very few people I can confide in about the really important matters in my life.
___ 10.	Our congregation feels our marriage should be a role model for them to look to in shaping their own marital relationships.
___ 11.	I feel we are caught in a tug-of-war between “church” and “family.”

___ 12.	Our financial situation requires more than the salary received from the church.
___ 13.	Our family lives in a “fishbowl.”
___ 14.	Our congregation seems to expect the needs of our family to be secondary to their needs.
___ 15.	Our family is upset when faced with the possibility of moving.
___ 16.	There are too few relationships in my life that make me feel “emotionally connected” with others
___ 17.	I am concerned about the level of retirement benefits we will have in the later years.
___ 18.	Congregation members think they have a right to know what goes on in our family.
___ 19.	Clergy salaries in our denomination simply do not provide a strong enough financial base for our family.
___ 20.	It is difficult to make it through each month without worrying whether or not our financial resources will be adequate for our needs.
___ 21.	The free time most families have are times when congregational demands interfere with our family’s time together.
___ 22.	It is difficult to balance church and family considerations in making decisions about changing pastorates.
___ 23.	Our inability to save money is a worry for me.
If you have children at home, please continue to items 24 – 28.	
___ 24.	Our congregation’s expectations for our child(ren) are unrealistically high.
___ 25.	Our child(ren) have difficulty adjusting to new people and new situations when we move.
___ 26.	Our family is expected by our congregation to be a “model family.”
___ 27.	It is difficult for us to provide the same standard of living for our children as most of their peers have.

\* This inventory is an adaptation, by Polly Roberts, of the Clergy Family Life Inventory (Blanton, Morris, & Anderson, 1990) for specific use with clergy wives. The creators of the original CFLI gave permission (2003) for this adaptation to be used. CFLI is an unpublished assessment tool.

Blanton, P., Morris, L., & Anderson, D. (1990, November). The development of an instrument to measure stress in clergy families. Unpublished paper presented at the 1990 meeting of the National Council on Family Relations, Seattle, WA.

## Appendix EE

Member # \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_**Adapted Normative Stress Scale for Clergy Wives\***

**Directions:** In the space provided before each item below, use the following scale (1 to 4) to indicate how stressful that statement is for you.

- 1 – creates no stress for me  
 2 – creates mild stress for me  
 3 – creates moderate stress for me  
 4 – creates severe stress for me

How stressful? 1, 2, 3, or 4?	
_____ 1.	I lack close, supportive friends
_____ 2.	I have concerns about what the church members expect me to be.
_____ 3.	I have concerns about what I think a pastor's wife ought to be.
_____ 4.	I have concerns about what I think a pastor's wife ought to do.
_____ 5.	I have concerns about what church members expect my husband to be.
_____ 6.	I have concerns about what church members expect my husband to do.
_____ 7.	I have concerns about my husband's over-involvement in church activities.
_____ 8.	I lack the skills for dealing with church and ministry activities.
_____ 9.	I have difficulty understanding how to support my husband in ministry.
_____ 10.	I am impacted by negative events or criticism at church.
_____ 11.	I have difficulties with church members.
_____ 12.	I have problems dealing with changes related to my husband's ministry, such as moving.

\* adapted by Polly Roberts (2003), with permission from Huebner (1999), creator of the original Normative Stress Scale for Clergy Wives (unpublished)

Huebner, A. (1999). The contribution of normative expectations to chronic stress: A focus of stress in clergy and seminary students' wives. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Marquette University.

## Appendix FF



# “Clergy Wife Wings”


**To women married to pastors:**

Do you experience stress related to any of the questions in these 3 boxes? If so, you are not alone and consider the following:

**What?** “Clergy Wife Wings”

A 5-week psychoeducational group

**For whom?** 8 women who are married to clergymen & who experience some stress (great or small) related to ministry

**Why?** Group Goal of “Clergy Wife Wings”:  
To decrease stress related to life as a clergy wife

**How?** Activities, Mini-lectures, Listening, Learning, Talking, Sharing, & Laughing with other clergy wives.

**Concepts covered:** stress, coping, spiritual resources, thoughts, feelings, actions, humor, serenity, courage, wisdom, acceptance, boundaries, and enmeshment. Findings will also be presented from previous research on clergy wives.

**Session 1:**

“Leave Your Halo at the Door”  
Getting Acquainted and Oriented

**Session 2:**

“But I Don’t Sing or Play the Piano!”  
Dealing with Role & Time Expectations

**Session 3:**

“Living in a Stained Glass Fish Bowl”  
Dealing with Clergy Family Boundary Intrusiveness

**Led by?** Polly Sheffield Roberts

Ph.D. Candidate in Counseling, Va. Tech  
Clergy Wife, Clergy Daughter

**When?** 5 Mondays: Oct. 13-Nov. 10, 2003  
7:15-9:15 PM

**Where?** Va Tech Counselor Education Clinic  
Roanoke Higher Education Center  
Map to be sent (free lighted parking with security guards present)

(1)

Do you feel lonely or isolated?  
Do you long for friends with whom you can be yourself?  
Do you need time to grow personally, spiritually, and to laugh with other women who understand?  
Are you afraid to share with anyone your feelings of anger, discouragement, hurt, or disillusionment about church?  
Do you long for a pastor, spiritual mentor, or religious community to support you

(2)

Are you confused about your role as a preacher’s wife?  
Do you feel unsuited to the role of a clergy wife?  
Are you concerned that you, your husband, or children be paragons of virtue?  
Do you feel you are taken advantage of as a clergy wife?  
Does your role as a clergy wife conflict with your roles as wife, employee, mother, daughter, or homemaker?  
Do you have too little time to do what you think is expected of a preacher’s wife?  
Are you frustrated when your husband does not follow your suggestions about church?

(3)

Do you resent that that the needs of the congregation seem always to come first?  
Do you struggle in knowing where your family stops and the church begins?  
If you live in a parsonage, is that hard for you?  
Is your family life a painfully open book with your congregation?  
Do you wish you and your family had more privacy?  
Do you interpret criticism of church or of your husband as a personal failure?

**Session 4:** “Lonely Amidst Many People”  
Dealing with Lack of Social Support

**Session 5:**  
“Pick Up Your Wings as You Leave”  
Summarizing, Evaluating, and Preparing to Fly



**Perks?** -- FREE!  
-- Money for babysitting, if requested  
-- Input into Va Tech graduate research about clergy wives and stress

**Call?** Polly Roberts 540-776-0729



## Appendix GG

## VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

**Informed Consent for Participants****in Research Projects Involving Human Subjects**

**Title of Project:** Alleviating Stress in Clergy Wives: The Development and Formative Evaluation of a Psychoeducational Group Intervention

**Researcher:** Polly Roberts (also group leader)

**Faculty Advisors:** Dr. Hildy Getz, Dr. Gary Skaggs

**I. Purpose of this Research**

The purpose of this study is (a) to develop a psychoeducational group plan to alleviate ministry-related stress in clergy wives and (b) to evaluate formatively the plan in its initial implementation. You are participating in the second part of the study, as a group member and a participant evaluator of Clergy Wife Wings, the group plan developed in part (a). This study is conducted by Polly Roberts as the focus of a doctoral dissertation, one of the requirements of a Ph.D in Counselor Education.

**II. Procedures**

Approximately eight non-clergy women who are married to fulltime, Protestant, parish clergymen and who want to work on alleviating stress will participate as group members. The Clergy Wife Wings group will meet for five weekly two-hour sessions at the Virginia Tech Counselor Education Clinic, housed at the Roanoke Higher Education Center in Roanoke, Virginia. The group will be lead by the researcher, Polly Roberts -- a clergy wife, a counselor trained in group work, and a former secondary teacher. Group sessions will include information presented by the leader, discussion and personal sharing by group members, group activities, and some simple homework. The educational component will include content related to stress, techniques to relieve stress, family systems, and research findings about clergy wives. The Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory and the Adapted Normative Stress Scale for Clergy Wives will be administered confidentially to each participant before the first session and after the last session. Participants will also complete informal evaluation forms concerning personal progress, the effectiveness of the group, and suggestions for improvement.

As part of this research study, a second female counselor will observe each session. At the end of the last session, she will also facilitate a discussion by the group members about strengths and weaknesses of the group experience and suggestions for improvements.

As a psychoeducational group, Clergy Wife Wings is not a therapy group. In addition, the group is not designed to treat mental illness, such as clinical depression or serious anxiety.

**III. Risks**

Participation in any group environment presents a small element of risk. For example, a participant may become annoyed with or disagree with the group leader or others in the group. In this study, however, the leader will work to establish a group atmosphere of respect, support, and acceptance -- despite possible differences. As a group participant, you may experience some discomfort – in the sessions, at home, or at

church -- from efforts to learn and practice new skills and attitudes. It is normal for you, and perhaps others close to you, to experience some discomfort and awkwardness when you are trying out new approaches. Participants are encouraged to talk about such discomfort within the group. If you experience extreme discomfort, however, you are encouraged to contact the group leader. The purpose of this group is to lessen, not to increase, stress.

#### **IV. Benefits**

By participating in this group study, you may experience a number of benefits. In particular, you may experience a decrease in stress related to your role as a clergy wife. You may learn concepts and techniques that will help you in the future to cope more effectively. You may particularly enjoy and benefit from the company and support of other clergy wives. You may become more self-aware and gain a sense of normalcy in learning about research findings related to clergy wives. By participating, you will also be adding to the body of research about clergy wives, especially concerning ways to prevent or to alleviate stress. You will have the opportunity to give feedback and suggestions for improvement in the design of Clergy Wife Wings. In doing so, ultimately your participation may benefit other clergy wives.

No promise or guarantee of benefits can be made. You may contact Polly Roberts at a later time for a summary of the research results.

#### **V. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality**

The group leader promises to maintain confidentiality concerning any personal information shared by group members. This promise of confidentiality does not apply, however, if the leader learns of or strongly suspects child abuse or elder abuse, or if a group participant is believed to be a threat to her self or to others. Group members are also asked to maintain confidentiality concerning personal information shared by group members. As with all groups, however, the leader cannot guarantee that members will do so.

After the conclusion of the last group session, the researcher will write a summary to include analyses of pre and post results on the clergy wife stress assessments. The synopsis will also include a summary of group members' verbal evaluations of the group's effectiveness and their suggestions for improvement. Some personal quotations may be included from the group members' written evaluations and from the evaluation discussion at the last session. Also a general description of the demographics of the group members will be included. In this summary, the leader will make every effort to conceal the personal identity of each participant.

To enhance anonymity, at the first session each group member will randomly and anonymously select a number to identify her completed forms and stress assessments. Instead of her name, she will put that number on the completed demographic form, stress assessment tests, weekly written evaluations, and final evaluation form.

Each group session will be videotaped for research purposes only. The tapes will be viewed only by the researcher, possibly by the group observer, and possibly by involved faculty, who are bound by the same rules of confidentiality as the leader. The leader will view the tapes in evaluating the effectiveness of sessions and to make suggestions for improvements. The leader will transport the tapes to and from sessions and keep them under lock and key at home. After the leader has defended her dissertation, the videotapes will be destroyed.

#### **VI. Compensation**

No financial compensation will be provided to participants. Funding for babysitting is available upon request. If you have or the leader has concerns that you may need counseling or medical treatment, she will talk with you confidentially and provide you with a list of local services.

### **VII. Freedom to Withdraw**

Group participants are free to withdraw from this study at any time. Group members are free not to answer any questions or participate in group activities but are encouraged to do so. There may be circumstances under which the group leader determines that a group member should not continue as a participant.

### **VIII. Approval of Research**

This research project has been approved, as required, by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Research Involving Human Subjects at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and by the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. The IRB Approval Date is \_\_\_\_\_ and the IRB Approval Expiration Date is \_\_\_\_\_ (dates to be provided by IRB shortly) .

### **IX. Subject's Responsibilities**

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I have the following responsibilities: (1) attendance at the five group sessions, if at all possible, unless I decide to withdraw; (2) maintaining confidentiality concerning personal information shared by other group members; (3) treating other group members with respect and acceptance; and (4) helping to evaluate Clergy Wife Wings.

### **X. Subject's Permission**

I have read and understand the Informed Consent and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### **Subject signature**

Should I have any questions about this research or its conduct, I may contact:

Investigator: Polly Roberts 540-776-0729/ porobert@vt.edu

Faculty Advisors: Dr. Hildy Getz 540-231-8194 / hgetz@vt.edu  
Dr. Gary Skaggs 540-231-9734 /gskaggs@vt.edu

Department Head: Dr. David Alexander 540-231-5642/mdavid@vt.edu

Chair, IRB David M. Moore 540-231-4991/moored@vt.edu  
Office of Research Compliance, Research & Graduate Studies

This Informed Consent is valid from Oct., 2003 to May, 2004.

[NOTE: You must be given a complete copy (or duplicate original) of the signed Informed Consent.]

**Appendix HH**  
**Application Form**  
**Clergy Wife Wings**

Five Mondays: October 13, 20, 27, November 3, 10, 2003 7:15 – 9:15 PM  
 Va Tech Counselor Education Clinic Roanoke Higher Education Center

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone Numbers: Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Work: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (optional) (optional)

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_ (optional, but very helpful)

Church where your husband is currently serving: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (He must be a full-time, parish clergyman.)

Are you interested in the provision of babysitting funds? \_\_\_\_\_

To apply, please fully complete and submit the following:

1. This Application Form
2. Applicant Preferences Form

Note: The Informed Consent for Participants has been included in the initial packet to provide detailed information about the Fall 2003 group. It does not have to be signed and returned when you apply.

Mail to: (stamped envelope provided)	Polly Roberts 5249 Crossbow Circle Roanoke, VA 24018
---	--

You will be contacted by mail, email, or phone, as soon as possible, to let you know whether your application has been accepted.

Why might you not be accepted for the Fall 2003 Clergy Wife Wings group?

Because the group is already full or because a later group may better meet your needs. If you are not accepted, are you possibly interested in participating in another Clergy Wife Wings group at a later date? \_\_\_\_\_

**Disclaimer:** As a psychoeducational group, Clergy Wife Wings is not a therapy group. The group is not designed to treat mental illness, such as clinical depression or serious anxiety. For more information about the nature of the Fall 2003 group, read the “Clergy Wife Wings” group flyer and the Informed Consent for Participants.

If you have questions, please contact Polly Roberts at 540-776-0729 or at [porobert@vt.edu](mailto:porobert@vt.edu)

## Appendix II

Applicant Preferences Form  
Clergy Wife Wings

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Because women with great differences in Christian beliefs may apply to participate in the Clergy Wife Wings group, these questions are designed to try to place interested clergy wives in a compatible, comfortable group. Your responses will be kept confidential.

For each question below, please circle the number of your response.

1. How would you rate your personal Christian beliefs?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
very liberal	liberal	somewhat liberal	moderate	somewhat conservative	conservative	very conservative

2. How comfortable would you be in a group with clergy wives whose beliefs are more liberal than yours?

1	2	3	4	5
very uncomfortable	somewhat uncomfortable	not sure	somewhat comfortable	very comfortable

3. How comfortable would you be in a group with clergy wives whose beliefs are more conservative than yours?

1	2	3	4	5
very uncomfortable	somewhat uncomfortable	not sure	somewhat comfortable	very comfortable

4. The Clergy Wife Wings group is based on psychological/educational/counseling principles. Although the use of spirituality will be addressed and welcomed and discussed, participants will be encouraged to utilize their own spiritual beliefs and resources. How comfortable are you with this kind of approach?

1	2	3	4	5
very uncomfortable	somewhat uncomfortable	not sure	somewhat comfortable	very comfortable

5. Comments?

## Appendix JJ

Group member # \_\_\_\_\_

**Clergy Wife Wings  
Demographic Form**

1. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is your race? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Are you employed outside the home? \_\_\_\_\_  
If "yes," are you employed part-time or full-time? \_\_\_\_\_  
If "yes," what is your job? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What is the highest level of education you have achieved? \_\_\_\_\_
5. How long have you been married to your clergy husband? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Have you been married before? \_\_\_\_\_
7. How many children do you have? \_\_\_\_\_ How many stepchildren do you have? \_\_\_\_\_
8. How many children live with you at home? \_\_\_\_\_
9. How many children are in college or other higher education settings? \_\_\_\_\_
10. How long has your husband been in the ministry? \_\_\_\_\_
11. How long has your husband served at his current church? \_\_\_\_\_
12. What is the denomination of your husband? \_\_\_\_\_
13. Do you live in a parsonage? \_\_\_\_\_
14. Did you grow up in a clergy family? \_\_\_\_\_

Note: This information is for research purposes only.

## Appendix KK

**Clergy Family Boundaries -- Some Clergy Wife Research Findings****Intrusiveness & Lack of Privacy**

Douglas (1965) found that 30% of clergy wife participants named a **goldfish bowl existence** as the most difficult component of their family situation.

Valeriano (1981) found that “**fishbowl**” **difficulties** continued in clergy wives. (survey by *Leadership* magazine)

Hack (1993) identified **lack of privacy** as a negative variable in predicting clergy wife role satisfaction.

Pettitt (1998) found that **lack of privacy** negatively affects marital satisfaction in clergy wives.

Fox (1997) identified **family intrusiveness** as the most influential predictor (negative) of marital satisfaction in clergy wives. (wives from 6 denominations)

Morris & Blanton (1998) identified **family intrusiveness** as negatively affecting clergy wives’ sense of competence in family functioning. (same wives as above study by Fox)

Baker & Scott (1992) found **greater impact of church on the clergy family** as one of the negative factors in a sense of global well-being for clergy wives.

**Conflict & Criticism in the Church**

Mickey & Ashmore (1991) reported that clergymen from 11 denominations believed that **church conflict** often created stress in their wives.

Mickey & Ashmore (1991) and Cox (1991) noted that some clergy wives experience a **personal sense of lack of control or of powerlessness** related to conflict in the church.

**Parsonage Living**

Bare (1998), in her analysis of the content of self-help books written by clergy wives for clergy wives, identified a consistent theme of “**parsonage living has complications,**”

Blanton (1992) suggests that the **parsonage system** contributes to boundary problems experienced by some clergy families.

Brunette-Hill (1999) found that **housing** is becoming less a source of stress for clergy wives.

(continued)

### **Clergy Wife's Personal Sense of Identity**

Five studies (1978, 1978, 1984, 1989, 1992) found that **personal identity and self-actualization** can be difficult for clergy wives.

Lanham (1990) found in clergy wives a strong negative relationship between **derived sense of identity** (identity dependant upon the clergy husband) and self-esteem.

Blanton (1992) listed a clergy wife's **sense of identity** as a possible source of internal stress in some clergy families.

Brunette-Hill (1999) found **diminished sense of identity** (derived identity) to be less a problem now than for clergy wives in the 1960's.



## Appendix LL

### Lack of Social Support -- Some Findings from Clergy Wife Research

#### Lack of Social Support

In a survey across six denominations, clergy wives identified **lack of social support** as affecting their competence in family functioning (Morris & Blanton, 1998) and as affecting their life satisfaction (Fox, 1997).

Lucas (1992) identified **dissatisfaction with social support** as a predictor of depressive symptomatology in clergy wives.

In a qualitative study, Cox (2001) identified a theme of longing in pastors' wives **to have another pastor's wife with whom to talk**, especially one sympathetic and more experienced.

#### Loneliness or Sense of Isolation

At least ten studies found that clergy wives, across denominational lines and within denominations, tend to experience **loneliness or a sense of isolation** with various impacts (Bare, 1998; Brackin, 2001; Hack, 1993; Mickey, 1991; Presnell, 1977; Putnam, 1990; Slack, 1979; Warner & Carter, 1984; Valeriano, 1981; Watts, 1982). See the following for examples.

Bare (1998) identified in self-help books for clergy wives a **consistent theme** of "having many friends is a benefit of the ministry, but **ministry can be lonely in the midst of people**" (p. 136).

Warner and Carter (1984) found both male ministers and their wives in a small Presbyterian denomination **significantly more lonely** than male and female lay members in the same denomination.

Brackin (2001) found that clergy wives exhibited **higher levels of loneliness** than expected for their level of marital satisfaction.

Baker and Scott (1992) reported, in a study of Lutheran clergy wives, **loneliness** as one of the variables accounting for lower scores of well-being.

#### Impact on Marriage

According to Slack (1979), women divorced from UM ministers cited **loneliness and lack of social support system** among the stress factors that contributed to the divorce.

P. A. R. Allen (1998) found in a qualitative study of women divorced from clergymen, a **theme of isolation and loneliness** experienced as clergy wives.

Putnam (1990) identified **loneliness** in clergy wives as a variable with a negative relationship to marital satisfaction.

### **Mobility – Some Findings from Clergy Wife Research**

Morris & Blanton (1998) found that clergymen and wives from six denominations cited **mobility-related stress** as impacting family functioning

In qualitative studies, a **theme of stress from frequent relocation** emerged in women divorced from clergymen (P. A. R. Allen, 1998) and in wives of evangelical pastors (Cox, 2001).

D. L. Allen (1992) found that **moving did not negatively affect marital satisfaction**.

Bare (1998) found the **challenge of moving** as a **consistent theme** across 40 years of self-help books for clergy wives.

### **Mobility and United Methodist Clergy Wives**

Two studies (Frame, 1998; Watson, 1990) found that **UMC clergy wives who had just relocated** reported **more stress than their pastor husbands**.

From qualitative data, Frame (1998) also noted in UM clergy wives grief, powerlessness, and loneliness related to mobility.

In Watson's study (1990) of UM clergy wives, younger wives, wives with children in the home, and wives employed outside the home reported **more stress related to mobility**.

Holling (1992) reported qualitatively that one UM clergy wife identified as the **greatest source of stress in her marriage**, "disagreement over moving. I refused to consider giving up my job to accommodate the cabinet" (p. 89).

Reference List available on request

## Appendix MM

**Outline for Resource List -- Clergy Wife Wings**  
(Date)

**I. Counseling (individual, group, couple, family)****A. Guidelines in looking for a counselor.**

Be familiar with (Virginia) state license credentials:

- LPC: Licensed Professional Counselor
- LCSW: Licensed Clinical Social Worker
- LCP: Licensed Clinical Psychologist
- LMFT: Licensed Marriage and Family Counselor
- CSAC: Certified Substance Abuse Counselor

Be sure to familiarize yourself with your insurance policy's counseling coverage. Many policies utilize a provider list. When contacting a counselor, ask up front about fees and insurance.

Word of mouth is often the best recommendation for a counselor. Check with people you trust – such as your physician or a knowledgeable friend. The yellow pages (under “counselor”) provide a list of names and groups -- a few with specialties identified. When first making contact, you may ask a counselor to talk to you by phone about his or her counseling approach and areas of expertise. Upon calling a counseling group, specify if you have a preference about the counselor's gender. Also specify if you are looking for a pastoral counselor. A pastoral counselor is not required to be licensed by the state, but many are; only fully licensed counselors can be paid through insurance. The label “Christian counseling” may mean a very theologically conservative approach. If you have concerns, find out more about the approach.

Despite your best efforts, you may eventually find that you just do not click with the counselor who is working with you -- frustrating, but not unusual. Do not hesitate to try again with another.

**B. Counselors**

**The following are just a few of the options available in** (name area) .  
(Include names of counselors for individuals and for marriage & family.)

:  
:

**C. These organizations may be of help in locating a counselor:**

1. American Association of Pastoral Counselors [www.aapc.org](http://www.aapc.org)
2. Mental Health Association

List addresses and phone numbers of local chapters

**II. Marriage Enrichment**

1. Association for Couples in Marriage Enrichment (non-sectarian)  
[www.bettermarriages.org](http://www.bettermarriages.org)

Local (or closest) Chapter:

2. Marriage Encounter United Methodist  
[www.encounter.org](http://www.encounter.org)

Local or closest Chapter:

Other?

### **III. Spiritual Enrichment**

1. Spiritual Direction/Formation/Development

Spiritual Directors International [www.sdiworld.org](http://www.sdiworld.org)

2. Spiritual Books

3. Spiritual Websites

The Courtyard  
[www.umc.org/spirituallife/](http://www.umc.org/spirituallife/)

4. Spiritual Retreats

- (a) Retreat Centers, such as:

The Cove [www.thecove.org](http://www.thecove.org)

Lake Junaluska [www.lakejunaluska.com](http://www.lakejunaluska.com)

Montreat [www.montreat.org](http://www.montreat.org)

- (b) Walk to Emmaus [www.upperroom.org/emmaus/](http://www.upperroom.org/emmaus/)

### **IV. Financial Counseling**

:  
:

### **V. Resources through specific denominations**

:  
:

### **VI. Resources at local colleges and universities**

Such as life planning seminars and career counseling offices

### **VII. Perhaps include resources for dieticians, yoga, massage therapy, exercise, etc.**

:  
:

NOTE: Website URL's and email addresses frequently change. If you cannot connect with a listed site, try searching via the resource's name. If an email address is incorrect, try the phone number listed.

Resource List compiled by (give name)  
For Clergy Wife Wings participants  
(give date)

## Appendix NN

*Intervention Strengths, Weaknesses, and Suggestions Not Identified in Chapter 4 but noted by a Single Participant*

Category of comment	Comment
Strength	“session on loneliness” (identified as most helpful)
Weakness	“statistics” (identified as least helpful)
Suggestion	“I felt that some of the earlier sessions could have been longer and the last session of evaluation could be shorter.”
	“As a person who just moved for the first time in 17 years, I would have personally benefited from discussion of stress from clergy moves. However, I realize that you can’t cover too much in a limited time frame.”
	“More on spirituality maybe?”
	“Maybe separate young from ‘old timers’ in small group activities?”

## Appendix OO

*Descriptive Statistics for Individual Items on the Adapted Normative Stress Scale for Clergy Wives*

Rating scale utilized by participants in responses:  
 1 – creates no stress for me  
 2 – creates mild stress for me  
 3 – creates moderate stress for me  
 4 – creates severe stress for me

Item	N = 9	Mean score		Mean dif*	SD	Effect size $d^{**}$	Sig.***
		Pre	Post				
1. I lack close, supportive friends		2.67	2.22	-0.44	0.53	-0.86**	0.03***
2. I have concerns about what the church members expect me to be.		2.22	2.22	0.00	0.71	-	-
3. I have concerns about what I think a pastor's wife ought to be.		2.00	2.22	0.22	0.67	0.33	0.35
4. I have concerns about what I think a pastor's wife ought to do.		2.11	2.44	0.33	0.71	0.47	0.19
5. I have concerns about what church members expect my husband to be.		2.67	2.78	0.11	0.78	0.14	0.68
6. I have concerns about what church members expect my husband to do.		2.78	2.78	0.00	0.71	-	-
7. I have concern about my husband's over-involvement in church activities.		2.78	2.67	-0.11	0.60	-0.18	0.59
8. I lack the skills for dealing with church and ministry activities.		1.67	1.67	0.00	0.71	0.00	1.00
9. I have difficulty understanding how to support my husband in ministry.		2.33	2.11	-0.22	0.83	-0.26	0.45
10. I am impacted by negative events or criticism at church.		2.78	2.78	0.00	0.50	-	-
11. I have difficulties with church members.		1.78	1.44	-0.33	0.87	-0.38	0.28
12. I have problems dealing with changes related to my husband's ministry, such as moving.		2.44	2.33	-0.11	0.93	-0.11	0.73

\* Mean dif = Post mean score – Pre mean score (Negative dif. indicates decrease in stress)

\*\*  $d \leq -0.50$  indicates medium effect      \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.05$

## Appendix PP

*Descriptive Statistics for Individual Items on the Adapted Clergy Family Life Inventory*

Rating scale utilized by participants in responses:  
 1 – creates no stress for me  
 2 – creates mild stress for me  
 3 – creates moderate stress for me  
 4 – creates severe stress for me

Item	Mean score		Mean dif*	SD	Effect size <i>d</i> **	Sig.***
	Pre	Post				
1. I am expected to participate in most every church event even though our members are not always expected to participate.	2.22	2.11	-0.11	0.33	-0.33	0.35
2. My husband and I find it difficult to establish times for our marital relationship without having interruptions related to the needs of our congregation.	2.56	2.44	-0.11	0.60	-0.18	0.59
3. Any unexpected financial demands create havoc for our family.	2.00	2.33	0.33	0.71	0.47	0.20
4. There are not enough relationships in my life where I feel I can be myself.	2.67	2.33	-0.33	1.00	-0.33	0.35
5. I resent congregational influences on our family.	2.11	1.89	-0.22	0.83	-0.26	0.45
6. Our congregation does not accept or does not respect our family's expressions of frustration and dissatisfaction.	1.78	1.56	-0.22	0.44	-0.49	0.17
7. The moves our family has made have created financial concerns for us.	1.89	1.78	-0.11	0.60	-0.14	0.59
8. Our family does not have enough privacy.	2.00	1.89	-0.11	0.78	-0.15	0.68
9. I have very few people I can confide in about the really important matters in my life.	2.56	2.89	0.33	0.71	0.47	0.20
10. Our congregation feels our marriage should be a role model for them to look to in shaping their own marital relationships.	1.56	1.56	0.00	0.71	-	-

\* Mean dif = Post Mean Score – Pre Mean Score (Negative difference indicates decrease in stress)

\*\*  $d \leq -0.50$  indicates medium effect      \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.05$

continued

## Appendix PP continued

Item All participants (n=9) responded to items 1-23.	Mean score		Mean dif*	SD	Effect size <i>d</i> **	Sig.***
	Pre	Post				
11. I feel we are caught in a tug-of-war between “church” and “family.”	2.33	2.22	-0.11	0.60	-0.14	0.59
12. Our financial situation requires more than the salary received from the church.	2.00	2.00	0.00	0.71	-	-
13. Our family lives in a “fishbowl.”	1.89	2.00	0.11	0.93	0.12	0.73
14. Our congregation seems to expect the needs of our family to be secondary to their needs.	2.00	2.00	0.00	0.71	-	-
15. Our family is upset when faced with the possibility of moving.	2.33	2.56	0.22	1.09	0.20	0.56
16. There are too few relationships in my life that make me feel “emotionally connected” with others	2.33	2.22	-0.11	0.78	-0.15	0.68
17. I am concerned about the level of retirement benefits we will have in the later years.	2.11	1.78	-0.33	0.87	-0.38	0.28
18. Congregation members think they have a right to know what goes on in our family.	1.67	1.44	-0.22	0.44	-0.49	0.17
19. Clergy salaries in our denomination simply do not provide a strong enough financial base for our family.	2.22	2.11	-0.11	0.33	-0.33	0.35
20. It is difficult to make it through each month without worrying whether or not our financial resources will be adequate for our needs.	1.89	1.67	-0.22	0.67	-0.33	0.35
21. The free time most families have are times when congregational demands interfere with our family’s time together.	2.22	2.67	0.44	0.88	0.49	0.17
22. It is difficult to balance church and family considerations in making decisions about changing pastorates.	2.56	2.00	-0.56	0.73	-0.77**	0.05***
23. Our inability to save money is a worry for me.	2.11	2.00	-0.11	0.33	-0.38	0.35

\* Mean dif = Post mean score – Pre mean score (Negative difference indicates decrease in stress.)

\*\*  $d \leq -0.50$  indicates medium effect    \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.05$

continued



## Appendix PP continued

Item Only participants with children living at home (n=3) responded to items 24-27.	Mean score		Mean dif*	SD	Effect size $d^{**}$	Sig.***
	Pre	Post				
24. Our congregation's expectations for our child(ren) are unrealistically high.	1.67	2.00	0.33	0.58		
25. Our child(ren) have difficulty adjusting to new people and new situations when we move.	3.00	2.67	-0.33	1.16		
26. Our family is expected by our congregation to be a "model family."	2.00	2.00	0.00	-		
27. It is difficult for us to provide the same standard of living for our children as most of their peers have.	2.67	2.33	-0.33	0.58		

\* Mean dif = Post mean score – Pre mean score (Negative difference indicates decrease in stress.)

\*\* Effect size not computed for items 24 - 27 \*\*\* Significance level not computed for items 24 - 27

## VITA

Polly Agnes Sheffield Roberts was born in Petersburg, Virginia, in 1949, to John Courtney and Betty Lou (Loftis) Sheffield. In 1971, Ms. Roberts married Donald Hayse Roberts. They have two grown daughters, Amanda Grey and Susannah Sheffield.

As the daughter of a United Methodist clergyman and as the wife of a United Methodist clergyman, Ms. Roberts has had much experience concerning clergy families, her own and others. She has lived almost all her life in parsonages and has been a part of 13 local churches as a member of the pastor's family.

Ms. Roberts graduated summa cum laude in 1971 from Randolph-Macon Woman's College with a Bachelor of Arts in mathematics. While in college, she was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa. She graduated from Duke University in 1972, with a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) in secondary mathematics. In 2000, she graduated from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) with a Master of Arts in counselor education.

Ms. Roberts' work experience mingles various years of employment outside the home with years working as a stay-at-home wife and mother. She taught in several school systems as a secondary math teacher: in Durham County, North Carolina from 1971 to 1973; in Northumberland County, Virginia, from 1980 to 1984; in York County, Virginia, from 1985 to 1990; and in Arlington County, Virginia, in 1992. She taught courses in general math, basic algebra, algebra I and II, geometry, math analysis, statistics, and computer programming. She also often worked as a private math tutor and occasionally as a long-term substitute math teacher and as a teacher of homebound students.

In the academic year of 2002-2003, Ms. Roberts worked as a doctoral graduate teaching assistant in Counselor Education at Virginia Tech, during which she co-taught a graduate-level class on counselor use of the DSM-IV and served as a supervisor for masters-level counseling students. In the spring of 2002, Ms Roberts worked part-time as a Talent Search counselor with Upward Bound/Talent Search at Virginia Tech, in Blacksburg, VA.

In her training as a counselor, Ms. Roberts served counseling internships in the following locations: Carilion Hospice Services of the Roanoke Valley, academic year 2001-2002; Cook Counseling Center, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, academic year 2000-2001; College of Health Sciences and the Pastoral Counseling Center of Roanoke Valley, Inc., spring semester 2000; and the Pastoral Counseling Center of Roanoke Valley and Presbyterian Community Center, fall semester 1999. She is currently working towards licensure as a licensed professional counselor in the state of Virginia.