

## Q & A

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### ***Beyond the Clinical Hour***

*How Counselors Can Partner with the Church to Address the Mental Health Crisis*

March 19, 2024 | \$28, 264 pages, paperback | 978-1-5140-0104-2

## Concrete Guidance for Mental Health Professionals

### What led to your interest in and now sharing about the mental health crisis?

**James Sells:** In recent years I've observed incredible demand for mental health services and stunning wait times that have become commonplace. Most of my fellow therapists have long waiting lists. Parents of children with need have told me, when asking for a referral, that it takes six months to get in to see a child psychiatrist, or they contacted a clinician to get an appointment to address depression or anxiety and the soonest they could be seen was four months. Pastors would call to say that their requests for counseling could fill their entire week. At the same time, I observed churches offering support groups to address a myriad of personal or family needs.

We hope to prompt churches, clinicians, and especially training institutions to think about mental health care through a larger paradigm than the allied health profession. The prevalence rates are not compatible with the capacity to meet need in the current system. Professional mental health care is excellent, but is overwhelmed by the demand. The need could be met to a greater degree by creating supportive structures in the church to address human suffering.

**Amy Trout:** I was driven by the compelling need to bridge the gap between mental health practitioners and churches. I recognized that both institutions have a shared goal of promoting well-being and providing care to individuals, yet there's often minimal collaboration. My motivation was to encourage a more integrated and holistic approach to mental and spiritual well-being, recognizing the vast potential of tapping into the established community and resources of the church.

### What is your main thesis in *Beyond the Clinical Hour*?

**J. Sells:** The current mental health need and the cost for care to address that need is increasing faster than our capacity to train and fund the professional service. Therefore, the church collaborating with the mental health profession and institutions that prepare clinicians must innovate around how the science of mental health care can integrate with the mission of the church.

This book calls on Christian colleges, universities, and seminaries that train clinicians to prepare them for service within ministry contexts.

**Trout:** The central thesis of the book is that there exists a significant opportunity for mental health practitioners to partner with churches to amplify and enhance the care and support offered to individuals. By aligning resources, expertise, and purpose, we can create a more inclusive, understanding, and effective care system that respects both spiritual and psychological dimensions. The distinctiveness of this approach lies in its emphasis on collaborative care, harnessing the power of community and professional expertise to cater to a larger demographic with varying needs.

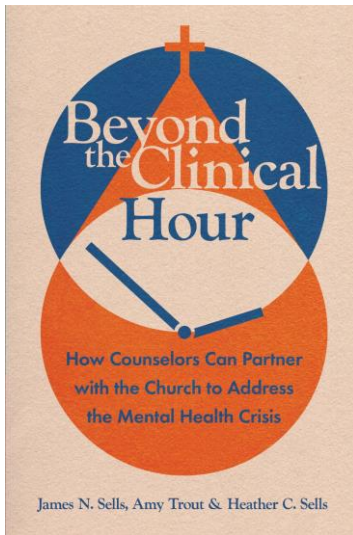


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Karin DeHaven, academic publicist  
kdehaven@ivpress.com or ivpress.com/media

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#### **Who did you have in mind as you were writing this book?**

- J. Sells:** 1. This book is written to graduate students and professors to think about their future work and how they should be prepared for that work.
2. This book is written for church leaders to think innovatively regarding mental health ministry within churches.
3. This book is written for clinicians who need to think beyond their “clinical hour” to address the mental health need.

#### **What do you hope your book contributes to the counseling and church communities?**

- J. Sells:** 1. To recognize the depth, severity, and extent of human suffering, and how the paradigm of ministry can be joined with the paradigm of professional care.
2. To alter the practice and proclamation of “Christian Integration.” We write of a new direction for integration in academic circles. We seek to implement a “Christian Articulation”—that is the speaking out of our Christian mission within the delivery of mental health services.
3. To provide a curricular map to prepare students to address mental health need in this new context. If professional mental health providers are to have a place in the Church then they will need to be prepared for this new context. Therefore, the inclusion of theology, supervision, consultation and evaluation are needed alterations in mental health preparation.

#### **What are the five main things you want readers to take away from your book?**

**Trout:** Collaborative Potential: Churches and mental health professionals can greatly benefit from each other’s expertise and resources.

Holistic Well-Being: Integrating spiritual and mental health care can address the multifaceted needs of individuals, ensuring a more comprehensive approach to well-being.

Shared Mission: Both churches and mental health practitioners aim to care for and uplift individuals, making their collaboration seamless and impactful.

Resource Optimization: Collaborative efforts can lead to better use of resources, minimizing wastage and maximizing impact.

Community Building: Such partnerships can help in building stronger, more resilient, and inclusive communities that understand and cater to the diverse needs of their members.



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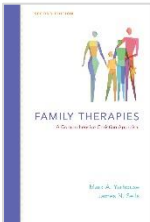
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There is an institution uniquely positioned to help the global mental health crisis: the church. In this encouraging road map, psychologists James Sells and Amy Trout and journalist Heather Sells call clinicians, students, and educators to combine the science of the mental health discipline with the service of Christian ministry.

## New from the Coauthor of *Family Therapies*

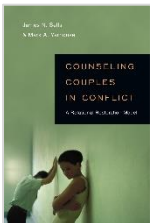
**JAMES N. SELLS** (PhD, University of Southern California) is Rosemary S. Hughes Professor of Christian Thought and Mental Health and codirector of the Charis Institute at Regent University in Virginia Beach, Virginia. He has served on the faculties of Northern Illinois University and West Texas A&M University, and he is also a licensed psychologist. He is the coauthor of *Counseling Couples in Conflict* and *Family Therapies*.

Also by James N. Sells:



***Family Therapies: A Comprehensive Christian Appraisal (Second Edition)***  
September 26, 2017 | \$60, 512 pages, casebound | 978-0-8308-2854-8

Mark A. Yarhouse and James N. Sells survey the major approaches to family therapy and treat significant psychotherapeutic issues within a Christian framework, offering timely wisdom for therapeutic practice. Fully updated and revised, this second edition is an indispensable resource for those in the mental health professions, including counselors, psychologists, family therapists, social workers, and pastors.



***Counseling Couples in Conflict: A Relational Restoration Model***  
March 7, 2011 | \$40, 300 pages, paperback | 978-0-8308-3925-4

How do you counsel a couple that is already heading for divorce by the time they seek help? Building on the research presented in their previous book *Family Therapies*, Mark Yarhouse and James Sells have developed a resource to train pastors and counselors in restoring high-conflict relationships.



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## **Guidance for Counselors and Church Leaders**

**AMY TROUT** (PsyD, Wheaton College) is founder and director of a private practice, Cornerstone Consultants, and chief education officer at Counterpoise (a subsidiary of The Burrell Group). She was previously associate professor of counseling ministries at Regent University. Trout's current professional interests include partnerships between psychology and the Church, substance abuse assessment and treatment, ministry assessment, and understanding perceptions of Christians regarding infertility treatment and Christian therapy practices.

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*"Beyond the Clinical Hour by Sells, Trout, and Sells is a comprehensive and very helpful guide to how Christian mental health professionals can partner with churches to deal with the mental health crisis before us. It includes integration of Christian approaches to mental health and a biblical theology for the foundation of Christian care. It also emphasizes and covers in detail the topics of supervision, consultation, church development and evaluation, and the ethics and economics of care. Highly recommended!"*

—**Siang-Yang Tan**, senior professor of clinical psychology at Fuller Theological Seminary and author of *Counseling and Psychotherapy: A Christian Perspective*



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## **Guidance for Counselors and Church Leaders**

**HEATHER C. SELLS** (MA, University of Illinois–Springfield) is managing editor for CBN News. She has an undergraduate degree from Wheaton College in political science and a master’s degree in Political Affairs Reporting from the University of Illinois—Springfield. She has worked for CBN since 2005 with prior employment with the City News (Chicago Tribune wire service), Copley News in print journalism and numerous television news affiliates as a reporter, assignment editor, and producer.

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“This is one of the most unique, timely, and long-overdue resources for those committed to meeting the pressing needs of the men and women in today’s world. The authors give us a fresh and much-needed biblically based, socially informed, clinically sound, and comprehensive model of providing meaningful Christian care. In some ways it provides an invaluable paradigm shift for understanding the essential role of the counselor and the church working together. This encouraging, empowering, and vision-casting resource is a book that you’ll be reading more than once and wanting to share with your friends.”

—**Gary J. Oliver**, executive director of the Center for Healthy Relationships and professor emeritus of psychology and practical theology at John Brown University



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