

CSWE Religion and Spirituality Clearinghouse Submission Form

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TITLE OF RESOURCE	TIME FRAME (Check all that apply)
<p>The Social Work Integral Model (SWIM): A tool for conceptualizing the place for religious/spiritual/nonspiritual worldviews in practice.</p> <p>Based on: Garner, M. D. (2011). Thinking practice: The social work integral model. <i>Families in Society</i>, 92(3). DOI: 10.1606/1044-3894.4128</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Class unit of < 30 minutes</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Class unit of 30–60 minutes</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Class period of > 1 hour</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Two or more class period</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Theme for academic term</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Homework assignment</p>
DESCRIPTION (Maximum 250 words)	
<p>The Social Work Integral Model (SWIM) is a visually based, transtheoretical micro–macro model for case conceptualization and in-vivo practice decisions (Garner, 2011). Using a Venn diagram, it offers a metacognitive architecture for conceptualizing practice that is complimentary to eco-systems and other social work practice and ethics theories. SWIM depicts the social work practitioner, the client, and social work values and ethics in a given context. Competent social work practice is defined as occurring within the active convergence of these components. The visual spheres and overlapping spaces represent practice principles and prompt consideration of differentiation of the professional self, meeting clients where they are, and working toward consciousness raising and social justice. SWIM is a general practice model of and for social work, but it can be of significant utility in conceptualizing proper and ethical handling of <i>religion</i> (broadly defined below) in practice.</p> <p>SWIM can help conceptualize that the practitioner’s religious beliefs should influence practice insofar as they are congruent with the client’s worldview and the profession’s values and ethics. SWIM also helps conceptualize that the professional self should work with a client’s religious beliefs by focusing on those aspects of the client’s beliefs that support their forward movement on empowerment and social justice continuums. SWIM has been peer reviewed and appears in <i>Families in Society</i> (Garner, 2011); the article includes model: description; rationale; theoretical positioning; implications for practice, field, and peer review; and micro and mezzo case examples. Linkage to three of CSWE’s EPAS competencies and suggestions for instructional use teaching religion in practice are offered here.</p>	
RELIGIOUS/SPIRITUAL TRADITION OR PERSPECTIVE EMPHASIZED BY RESOURCE (Maximum 250 words)	
<p>No one religious perspective is emphasized. Rather, for the purposes of this teaching resource, the terms <i>religion</i> and <i>religious</i> are conceptualized as representing the full spectrum of formal and informal beliefs, belief systems, and worldviews that capture how an individual relates to God/the divine. Thus, <i>religion</i> in this text represents informal spiritual, atheist, or agnostic beliefs as well as formal religious systems such as specific Christian, Jewish, Islamic, Buddhist, Hindu, Pagan, etc. traditions. SWIM assumes both the client’s and worker’s right to diverse <i>religious</i> beliefs, but instructs that <i>religion</i> should be used in social work practice only when</p>	

and as congruent with the nexus of the profession's values and ethics, the client, and the professional self. There are important nuances among faith inspired SW practices and faith infused or guided practices. While the former can facilitate practitioners to embody compassion, advocate for the less fortunate, etc., the latter may or may not be congruent with acceptable social work practices. When not, a client's self-determination, sexual and gender identity, and personal religious beliefs etc., may be subjugated. By cueing the practitioner to consider and work within the juncture of the profession's values/ethics, the client, and his/her professional self, SWIM can help the practitioner competently and ethically navigate nuances of bringing *religion* into practice.

CONNECTION TO 2008 EPAS COMPETENCIES (Select most relevant; maximum of 3)

- X Identify as professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly
- X Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice
- X Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments
- ___ Engage diversity and difference in practice
- ___ Advance human rights and social and economic justice
- ___ Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research
- ___ Apply knowledge of human behavior and social environment
- ___ Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services
- ___ Respond to contexts that shape practice
- ___ Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities

RELEVANCE OF RESOURCE FOR PRACTICE (Maximum 250 words)

SWIM is a conceptual practice model that can be used across eco-levels and sites to help the practitioner identify sound practice options. SWIM does not dictate a system by which to resolve ethical conflicts, but it can assist the practitioner to identify them and could be the basis of a standard for procedural justice (Garner, 2011). Pedagogically, SWIM offers a systematic way of critically thinking about social work practice that includes the dual roles of individual and community/advocacy work, both worker and client perspectives, the profession's values and ethics, and practice specific features (context and practice theories). SWIM's depicted spheres reinforce for the practitioner the need to be self-reflective, bounded, and self-correcting in practice and need to recognize and work only within the scope of social work values and ethics. It acknowledges the ambiguity of the fact that varied specifics and methods of ethical reasoning may lead to different outcomes. SWIM implicitly requires critical thinking and provides a systematic framework through which such thinking should occur. Use of SWIM can help practitioners determine responsible inclusion of aspects of their and their client's religious/spiritual/or nonspiritual beliefs within solid social work interpersonal, administrative, and advocacy practice. SWIM can be used to help teach social

work class and field work and could help assess student or peer's ethically sound practice (Garner, 2011).

APPLICABLE PROGRAM LEVEL	CONTENT AREA
<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Diversity and cultural competence <input type="checkbox"/> HBSE <input type="checkbox"/> Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Practice skills <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (specify): SWIM is fundamentally a practice model, but by helping conceptualize practice, it has relevance to teaching diversity, HBSE, and policy too.

ASSESSMENT MEASURES (Check all that apply)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Case study paper <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Individual presentation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Journal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Participation in group discussion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Participation in group presentation <input type="checkbox"/> Research paper <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (specify): SWIM could be assessed in an exam.

SUGGESTIONS, IF ANY, IN APPLYING RESOURCE IN DIFFERENT SETTINGS (Maximum 250 words)

SWIM has clear relevance in teaching social work class, field, and continuing education courses. Instructors should read the model introduction article (Garner, 2011) in preparation for teaching. The model is visual and should be presented visually. Repetition and making use of multiple forms of learning will help practitioners learn to reliably use SWIM in practice to appropriately attend to religious dimensions. As such, student comprehension can be increased by assigning the original SWIM article (Garner, 2011) to which they may refer, and then lecturing on the SWIM followed by small group discussions on the topic. Application requires model comprehension, ability to use the model and also recognition that it should be used. I suggest enhancing application skill by: demonstrating its use in class; having small groups apply SWIM to practicum or assigned cases (across eco-levels); repetitious modeling of use of SWIM throughout the course; assigning SWIM as individual homework or creating exams that require its use (one could test comprehension of practice conceptualization based on areas of the spheres or test application to see if and how students are able to use SWIM when prompted directly or indirectly with a case study they must conceptualize). Sharing SWIM with peers in the field via in-service trainings, brown-bag discussions, and the like can promote uptake of SWIM among seasoned and in-training practitioners.

You may also contact the author at mdgarner@uw.edu for SWIM PowerPoint slides or with comments or questions.

SUGGESTIONS, IF ANY, FOR PREPARATION FOR INSTRUCTOR (Maximum 250 words)

Pedagogical difficulties encountered in teaching SWIM tend to stem either from (a) students' difficulty understanding or applying the model or (b) students' conflict over or rejection of the premises of the proper role of religion in practice, which is assumed in the model.

The former is easily remedied. Read the introduction to SWIM article (Garner, 2011). Be comfortable with the model and ready to walk people through its application with a case study

example or two. Use Socratic methods to help students use the diagram to reason out aspects of a case.

The latter issue is the heart of the contested discussion on the topic of religion in social work. Underpinnings of the assumptions of this model include: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948), the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers ([NASW], 2008), and data suggesting that being insensitive to client worldviews leads to poorer outcomes (Betancourt, Green, Carrillo, & Park, 2005). SWIM can help practitioners identify professionally appropriate and client centered aspects of their own and clients' beliefs for active inclusion and reinforcement in social work practice. SWIM is a visual and systematic representation of well-established social work practice principles. If social workers or social work trainees are struggling with or rejecting the premises used in conceptualizing proper and bounded roles of religion assumed in SWIM, then they are struggling with tenets (established practice principles, values, and ethics) of the profession.

READINGS OR OTHER LEARNING MATERIALS (APA format for references)

Required:

Garner, M. D. (2011). Thinking practice: The social work integral model. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*, 92(3). doi:10.1606/1044-3894.4128

References & Recommended Reading

Betancourt, J. R., Green, A. R., Carrillo, J. E., & Park, E. R. (2005). Cultural competence and health care disparities: Key perspectives and trends. *Health Affairs*, 24(2), 499–505. doi:10.1377/hlthaff.24.2.499

National Association of Social Workers (NASW). (2008). Code of ethics. Retrieved from <http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp>

United Nations. (1948). The universal declaration of human rights. Available at: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/history.shtml>

DESCRIPTION OF LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND PROCEDURES (Maximum 250 words) or Attachment (Maximum 6 pages, double-spaced)

Please see Appendix.

Appendix

DESCRIPTION OF LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

Religion¹ is intertwined in people's lives and therefore relevant to multiple course and practice arenas. The Social Work Integral Model (SWIM) is helpful in conceptualizing how best to use and include religion within competent social work practice and, thus, also applicable in this capacity across social work instruction. The visual model is depicted in Figure A1. Rather than use a numbered legend, as was used in the introductory article (Garner, 2011), the current figure is adapted and labels areas of the model directly, thus removing any implication of order that might be inferred as numbers are inherently sequenced.

This resource relates the SWIM specifically and solely to select practice behaviors within the first three EPAS competency areas. This is a somewhat arbitrary election because—just as religion and the utility of the SWIM are inextricably woven throughout accredited social work education curricula—they are relevant across most of the EPAS competencies and multiple targeted practice behaviors. See the “Relevance of Resource for Practice” and “Suggestions, If Any, in Applying Resource in Different Settings” sections of this resource and the introduction to the SWIM article (Garner, 2011) for more discussion on instructional context and use. Note the introduction article (Garner, 2011) contains a community-based case conceptualization involving multifaith communities and description of how I have used SWIM didactically in practice class to approach a student question. Instructors might substitute religiously laden content as focus of the discussion and use the article's didactic description as

¹ For the purposes of this teaching resource, *religion* and *religious* are conceptualized as representing the full spectrum of formal and informal beliefs, belief systems, and worldviews that capture how an individual relates to God/the divine. Thus, religion in this text represents informal spiritual, atheist, or agnostic beliefs as well as formal religious systems such as specific Christian, Jewish, Islamic, Buddhist, Hindu, Pagan, etc., traditions.

a model for how to teach SWIM. A specific practice course assignment and possible variations of it are presented as example curricular use of this resource with linkage to the CSWE EPAS.

Practice Course Example Assignment

Primary Course Learning Objectives:

Understanding and applying the SWIM will have the following EPAS-associated outcomes related to inclusion of religious beliefs and worldviews in social work practice.

- 1) Practitioners will conceptualize that inclusion or reinforcement of religious/spiritual/nonreligious beliefs and viewpoints is appropriate insofar as doing so falls in the nexus of the professional self, the client, and the profession's values and ethics.
 - Practitioners will be oriented to always guide their practice by the profession's values and ethics. [EPAS 2.1.2, *Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice*].
- 2) Practitioners will practice critical thinking and personal reflection regarding boundaries and professional behavior, striving to use in practice only those beliefs and frameworks that support the values and principles defined in the profession's code of ethics.
 - Practitioners will practice identifying and managing personal values as sometimes different from professional duty and conduct. [EPAS 2.1.1, *Identify as professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly*].
- 3) Practitioners will employ a mental framework through which they systematically consider, integrate, and analyze multiple sources of knowledge, and the appropriateness of introduction or reinforcement of specific religious/spiritual/nonreligious beliefs and viewpoints.
 - Practitioners will demonstrate ability to use the SWIM for case conceptualization and in-vivo practice decisions that inherently prompts critical thinking about inclusion or reinforcement of religious/spiritual/nonreligious beliefs and viewpoints, includes both clinical and social justice

aspects of practice, and can help order thinking and communication. [EPAS 2.1.3, *Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments*].

Assignment

Students in a practice content course may be given the following written assignment:

In a five-page paper, please summarize then use the SWIM model to address one of the following scenarios. Be sure to first identify and articulate your personal and professional perspectives, the client's perspective, and relevant NASW ethical principles or policy statements (cited in APA format). Next, based on these sources of knowledge, identify and critically analyze your ideas about how best to intervene. Conclude by describing one or more practice decisions/stances that fall within the nexus of the SWIM model and explain how you would proceed if you were the social worker in the scenario.

Discussion and Assessment

Certain content is more likely to encounter religious conflicts among the client, worker, and the profession's ethics and values. For instance, scenarios that touch on birth control, abortion, LGBTQ identities and marriage rights, physician-assisted suicide, capital punishment, patriarchal households, intimate partner violence, etc., more predictably touch religious viewpoints and therefore present better individual learning and classroom discussion material with which to explore appropriate inclusion of religious beliefs in professional practice. While instructors can critique dimensions of writing in the assignment, thoughtfulness and thoroughness of evident thinking and quality of client strengths-based approach, etc., the specific EPAS-related learning objects focused on appropriate use of religion in social work practice can also be assessed. Such measures are encouraged as part of an accredited program's formal assessment of student learning when aspects of assignments are behaviorally operationalized and articulated to show linkage to core competencies and a program's identified target behaviors (Holloway, 2009).

For illustrative purposes, let's assume a student's assignment dealt with abortion. The scenario to which the student responded might read: "You are a social worker in a secular community medical clinic. Your client is an upset 17-year-old high school student presenting today to discuss an unplanned pregnancy. How do you proceed in your assessment and planning work with her?"

The first part of the assignment requires students to actively consider and include social work ethical principles into their practice and, therefore, students who successfully identify NASW principles or policy statements that become balanced within the SWIM nexus have met sample learning Objective 1. Specifically, we can operationalize that the student has appropriately positioned any religious beliefs impacting this situation if: 1) she identifies that abortion is among the options appropriate to consider (based on NASW values and policy statements), 2) she identifies that discussing abortion options would therefore be within her professional self-role, and 3) she notes the need to assess and work within the client's values and interests. Similarly, by articulating her professional self (as congruent or different from her personal beliefs) and articulating a reasoned practice decision (one that falls in the SWIM nexus) that she would take as the worker in the scenario, the student is demonstrating ability to conduct herself as a professional social worker (Objective 2). If the student has successfully followed assignment directions and introduced and applied the SWIM, she has demonstrated her ability to apply a mental framework and critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments (Objective 3). Thus, dimensions of one assignment have been behaviorally operationalized to link and therefore provide indication of specified course and EPAS competency behaviors.

Variations on Example

Rather than a paper, the above assignment might be alternatively assigned in class for small groups to work on together. All or part might be used in an exam format. Instructors might also use the same scenarios but shift focus toward mezzo/macro practice by asking students to consider the

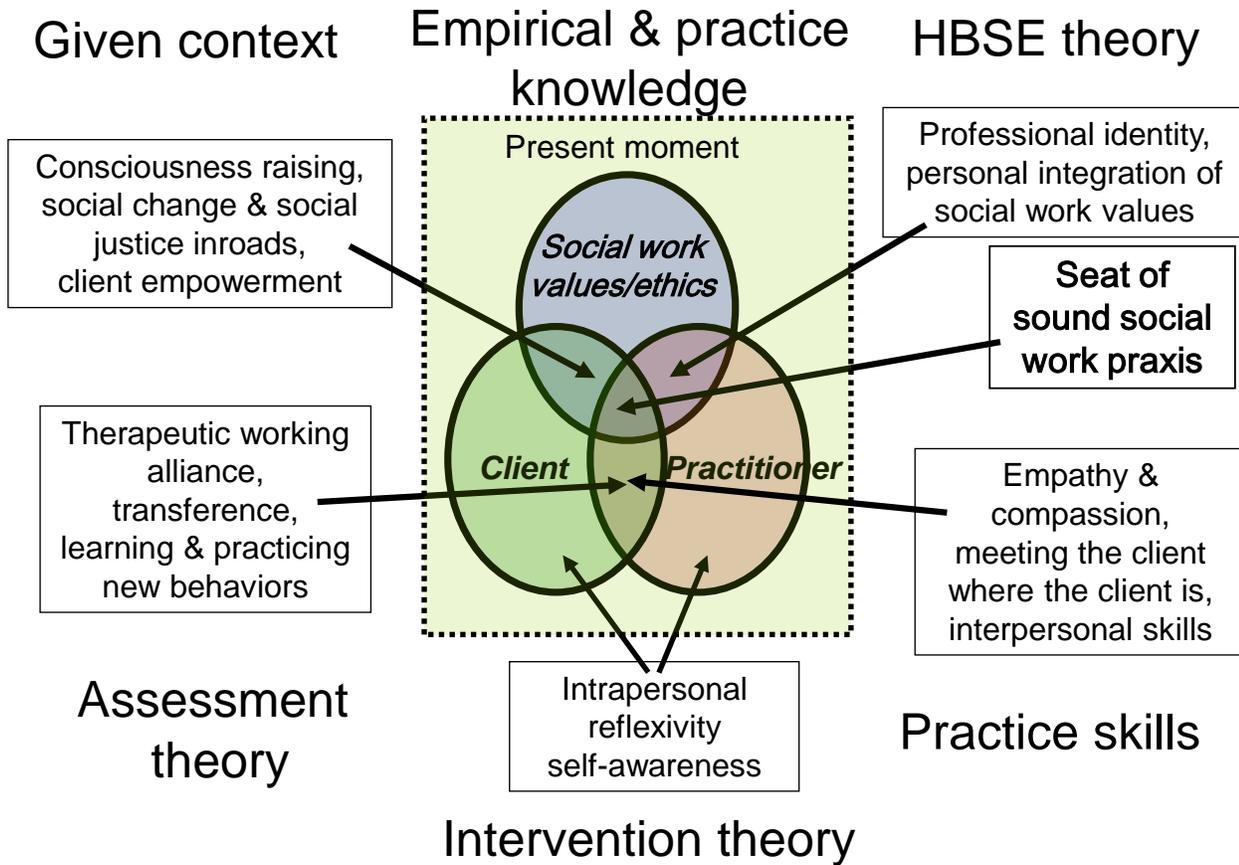
consciousness raising, empowerment, and advocacy possibilities of a given scenario that are represented in the overlaps between the SWIM spheres of social work values/ethics and the client and practitioner. I have used the SWIM in HBSE classes in this way and further asked students to explore cultural, legal, religious, economic, and political contexts influencing a given scenario (these considerations fall in the grounded context of the SWIM as noted in the first Venn diagram in the Garner [2011] article); similarly, SWIM might be used as framework through which students are directed to consider specific policies in a policy class. Once familiar with the model, field instructors might use SWIM routinely for case conceptualization, so when issues of client, worker, or community holding religious beliefs enter into practice they are seamlessly approached in an appropriate and competent way.

References

Garner, M. D. (2011). Thinking practice: The social work integral model. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*, 92(3). doi:10.1606/1044-3894.4128

Holloway, S. (2009). *Some suggestions on educational program assessment and continuous improvement for the 2008 EPAS, Revised 12/3/09* (10.07.2008 ADP). Retrieved from the Council on Social Work Education website: <http://www.cswe.org/File.aspx?id=31582>

Figure A1. The Social Work Integral Model (SWIM)



From "Thinking practice: The social work integral model" by M. D. Garner, 2001, *Families in Society*, 92(3), p. 256. © 2011 by *Families in Society* (www.FamiliesInSociety.org), published by the Alliance for Children and Families. Adapted with permission.