

Possible Topics for Submission: Religion & Spirituality Clearinghouse

Use and Application of Theory

- Human behavior theories of spiritual development and human functioning
- Spiritually-oriented practice theories/practice models (micro, mezzo, macro)

Religious/Spiritual Diversity

- Demographic trends in U.S. and globally
- History, beliefs, and practices of diverse faith traditions/spiritual perspectives
- Experiences of discrimination/oppression
- Self-awareness regarding bias/lack of information regarding diverse traditions
- Skills in working across religious/spiritual identities
- Intersection of religious/spiritual diversity with other dimensions of difference (e.g., race, ethnicity/culture, immigrant status, sex and gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, socio-economic status)
- Methods for handling sensitive issues/topics

Context for Spiritually-Sensitive Practice

- Preparation of the worker
- Impact of the physical setting
- Quality of presence of worker with client
- Nature of the helping relationship
- Exploration of meaning, purpose, connection, human potential, etc., as well as attention to problems/issues

Assessment

- Process and continuum of assessment (setting the stage, initial explicit assessment/screening, ongoing implicit assessment, comprehensive explicit assessment)
- Various approaches to assessment (integrated into existing assessment procedures, use of standardized scales and assessment tools, open-ended inquiries, use of non-verbal modalities)
- Existing assessment tools – validated and reliable instruments
- Assessment relevant to particular religious/spiritual traditions
- Assessment of religious/spiritual groups
- Decision-making trees regarding assessment choices
- Distinguishing religious/spiritual problems vs. mental health problems
- Assessment of spiritual emergence/emergencies
- Assessment of spiritual bypassing

Use of Spiritually-based Interventions

- Levels of intervention (private practitioner preparation activities, activities recommended outside of practice context, activities utilized within practice context, referral and collaboration)
- Types of interventions/evidence-based practices
- Conceptual frameworks for use of interventions
- Interventions for particular issues (e.g., value conflicts, loss, moral injury)
- Supporting helpful religious/spiritual beliefs, practices, systems
- Addressing harmful religious/spiritual beliefs, practices, systems
- Interventions requiring specialized training, supervision, certification
- Guidelines for use of interventions

Referral and Collaboration

- Development of working knowledge of existing religious/spiritual resources
- Development of effective referral systems
- Development of effective collaborative relationships
- Guidelines for engaging in referral and/or collaboration

Organizational and Community Practice

- Faith-based initiatives and intersection with social work
- Religiously affiliated organizational structures as a context for social work practice
- Principles and characteristics of spiritually-sensitive human service organizations
- Assessment of community religious/spiritual resources
- Spiritually-based community practice approaches
- Spiritual activism

Social Policy and Advocacy Practice

- Historical and current role of religious/spiritual perspectives in shaping social welfare policy
- Historical and current role of spiritual and religious groups in social movements
- Role of religious/spiritual groups in current legislative/advocacy efforts
- Use of social policy analysis for spiritual and religious sensitivity

International Practice and Global Issues

- Diversity and complexity of religious/spiritual traditions globally
- Role of religion/spirituality in historical and current inter-state and intra-state conflicts and peacebuilding efforts
- Role of religious/spiritual organizations in social development/social welfare efforts
- Intersection of religion/spirituality and human rights issues
- Intersection of religion/spirituality and environmental/ecology issues

Field Education Issues

- Incorporating spiritually-sensitive practice into field placements
- Addressing differences between students' and field supervisors' religious/spiritual perspectives and/or between students and agency affiliation or orientation
- Addressing resistance within field agencies
- Enhancing agency awareness/capacity to address religious/spiritual diversity
- Assessing students' progress in this area

Ethical Issues

- Client/community self-determination
- Dual relationships (e.g., practitioner in both social work/religious or spiritual leadership roles; practitioner/client attending same religious/spiritual congregation or group)
- Displacing religious/spiritual authority
- Imposition of religious/spiritual beliefs or values
- Use of spiritually-based interventions (e.g., ethical decision-making regarding when and how to use)
- Church/state separation issues; agency affiliation issues
- Intervening in "danger to self or others" situations
- Professional competence in spiritually-sensitive practice

Research Methods

- Methods of integrating relevant content into research courses
- Conceptualization and measurement issues
- Selecting existing instruments and developing new measurement tools
- Analyzing and consuming research publications on religion/spirituality
- Quantitative and qualitative approaches to studying religion/spirituality
- Human participant issues, including spiritually-sensitive informed consent

Personal Growth Issues

- Assessment of personal spiritual growth and development
- Involvement in personal practices (e.g., spiritual, contemplative) that foster growth
- Spirituality and creativity
- Spirituality and self-care
- Identifying spiritual needs relative to lifecycle/lifespan issues

Note: This list, expanded and re-organized, was based on a list originally developed by Dr. Helen Land, for a 2011 Hot Topics presentation at CSWE's APM, Atlanta, GA.