

The Integration of Religion and Spirituality

Into Treatment of Psychopathology Curriculum

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Abstract

The integration of religion and spirituality into coursework for counselors is an often overlooked dimension of training. The objective of this teaching module is to provide instructors of counselors with supporting material for integrating religious and spiritual issues into treatment of psychopathology curriculum. Instructor use of this module in a treatment of psychopathology course will provide students with:

- a theoretical context for evaluating distinctions between religion and spirituality
- a rationale for religious and spiritual assessment and intervention
- a basic framework for assessing and addressing religious and spiritual issues
(based on recent scholarly work by Pargament, 2007)
- a case study to facilitate applying knowledge into practical clinical skills

The unit provided will address components of the following CACREP-core content areas:

II.G.2.b: attitudes, beliefs, understandings, and acculturative experiences, including specific experiential learning activities designed to foster students' understanding of self and culturally diverse clients; and

II.G.2.d: individual, couple, family, group, and community strategies for working with and advocating for diverse populations, including multicultural competencies; and

II.G.2.e: counselors' roles in developing cultural self-awareness, promoting cultural social justice, advocacy and conflict resolution, and other culturally supported behaviors that promote optimal wellness and growth of the human spirit, mind, or body; and

II.G.3.f: human behavior, including an understanding of developmental crises, disability, psychopathology, and situational and environmental factors that affect both normal and abnormal behavior; and

II.G.5.d: counseling theories that provide the student with models to conceptualize client presentation and that help the student select appropriate counseling interventions. Students will be exposed to models of counseling that are consistent with current professional research and practice in the field so they begin to develop a personal model of counseling; and

II.G.7.f: social and cultural factors related to the assessment and evaluation of individuals, groups, and specific populations.

Integrating religious and spiritual assessment and therapeutic skills into treatment of psychopathology curriculum is particularly important for training competent counselors equipped with the skills, confidence, and compassion to work with their clients as integrated, whole beings. This teaching module is intended to serve as a springboard for integrating religious and spiritual assessment and intervention throughout a treatment of psychopathology course. It is recommended that religious and spiritual issues be discussed in the course (via the framework provided in this module) whenever disorder-specific symptoms and client case examples impact an individual or group's religious or spiritual worldview.

References

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