

Competency 10: Quantitative Assessment of the Spiritual Domain

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Abstract

This teaching module begins with a historical perspective of spiritual integration which illustrates the need for counselor competence in spiritual assessment. A description of spiritual competency, based on the Association for Spiritual, Ethical and Religious Values in Counseling (ASERVIC) *Competencies for Addressing Spiritual and Religious Issues in Counseling* (2009), is provided. Before expanding on how spirituality is formally assessed, the module focus's on why assessment is important and what the counselor and client gain by assessing this deeply personal and subjective part of the client's inner world. Four models of spirituality and wellness are then reviewed and ten quantitative (formal) assessment strategies are presented. A high level description, including theoretical foundation (as applicable), of each assessment strategy is provided. Finally, a case study is used to discuss the use of two formal assessment strategies within a counseling context.

The focus of this module is to promote spiritual competence by providing the reader with a high level overview of specific tools which appropriately and ethically allow the counselor to assess the client's spiritual domain. Because of the historical background provided to students, as well as the introduction to spiritual competency, this module should be presented to student's prior to a review of qualitative (informal) assessment strategies. There are no prerequisite coursework to this module, although an introduction to testing and assessment would be useful for conceptualization of how these tools could actually be used in the counseling process.

This module is in direct alignment with three Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) core content areas: Assessment (CACREP Standard G.7.), Helping Relationships (CACREP Standard G.5.), and Social and Cultural Diversity (CACREP Standard G.2.). Designed specifically for use in appraisal and assessment

core courses in CACREP accredited programs, this module can also be used in courses related to helping relationships (e.g., counseling skills, human growth and development, practicum/internship) and multicultural counseling. In terms of assessment, students are not only learning a historical perspective concerning the nature and meaning of spiritual assessment (CACREP Standard G.7.a), but also considering multicultural factors which may be related to assessing the client's spiritual domain (CACREP Standard G.7.f). Finally, the importance of ethically selecting, administering, and interpreting spiritual assessment strategies is also emphasized (CACREP Standard G.7.g).

In terms of helping relationships, students will learn how to establish a more positive working alliance with clients through investigation of the spiritual domain (CACREP Standard G.5.b). This module will also help students enhance their interviewing skills and assist in the development of appropriate counseling interventions (CACREP Standard G.5.c; G.5.d). In terms of social and cultural diversity, students will better appreciate the spiritual and/or religious domain of clients, thus increasing their ability to fully understand others as psychospiritual beings (CACREP Standard G.2.b; G.2.e). At the end of this module, students will be able to:

1. describe four models of spirituality and wellness and ten quantitative (formal) assessment strategies and discuss why counselors choose different strategies (CACREP Standard G.7.b);
2. understand the historical perspective of spiritual integration, what it means to be spiritually competent, why spiritual competence is important, and counselor/client gains related to spiritual assessment (CACREP Standard G.7.a; G.7.f; G.7.g);
3. apply formal assessment strategies to a case example (CACREP Standard G.7.b); and

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4. participate in self-awareness experiences designed to foster students' understanding of themselves as spiritual and/or religious beings (CACREP Standard G.2.b).

This module will introduce students to formal spiritual and/or religious assessment strategies but is not intended to be an exhaustive review of any one assessment or tool. Rather, it is hoped that students will further explore the assessments and practices reviewed to gain a greater level of proficiency. Students wishing to learn more should be encouraged to more thoroughly explore the tools described, accessing the sources noted throughout the module (see reference list), and by attending professional development workshops.

It is recommended that the material in this module cover two lectures. Notes pages, provided within the module, give instructors additional information to utilize in the event that they plan to elicit more information from students or to expand the lesson. Finally, it is the intension of the author that this module will be used as a precursor to a lecture on qualitative (informal) assessment strategies.

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