

**Religion & Spirituality in Therapy:
Legal & Ethical Guidelines**

Advanced Topics in Law & Ethics

Taught by Debra Manchester, LCSW

Saturday November 16, 2024

SYLLABUS

| EDUCATIONAL GOALS & LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Educational Goals:

Many clinicians have long recognized the important role that religious and/or spiritual beliefs and practices play in the role of healing and transformation—both for good and for ill. Now there is solid research indicating that the vast majority of our clients want to address this subject in psychotherapy. Unfortunately, most therapists receive little to no training on how to do this. This workshop will explore how to address religion/spirituality both effectively and ethically.

Learning Objectives:

Upon completion of this course, the participants will be able:

1. To clinically assess the role that religion/spirituality plays in our clients' lives.
2. To explain both the potential positive and negative effects of R/S on mental health.
3. To describe and give 3 examples of “spiritual struggles”
4. To discuss the ethical principles involved in addressing R/S in therapy
5. To discuss 5 competencies for spiritually integrated mental health care

| COURSE OUTLINE

1. RESEARCH ON RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY (R/S)
 - a. 2024 Pew Research Survey of Americans religious identification
 - b. Who are the “nones” (no religion) and what do they believe
 - c. Study on the role of R/S in psychotherapy and mental health

2. ETHICAL DILEMMAS AROUND R/S
 - a. Little to no training offered in R/S
 - b. Do no harm: microaggressions in therapy
 - c. Providing non-discriminatory care
 - d. APA Guidelines: the 16 competencies for spiritually integrated care

3. POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF R/S
 - a. Positive effects
 - b. Negative effects: the “nones” and the “dones”
 - c. Religious deconstruction and spiritual struggles
 - d. Other S/R based problems faced by clients

4. ASSESSMENT AND TREATMENT OF R/S STRUGGLES
 - a. R/S tools, interventions and education
 - b. Helping clients find their strengths (the calling protocol)
 - c. Increasing our clients’ hope (Snyder’s Hope Theory)

| COURSE TIMELINE

9:00am-9:15am: Overview of course

9:15am-10:00am: Research on Religion/Spirituality & Ethical Dilemmas

10am-10:30am: Positive and Negative Effects/Spiritual struggles

10:30-10:40: Break

10:40am-12:00pm: Assessment and Treatment of R/S struggles

12:00am-12:15pm: Wrap-up/questions/discussion

| COURSE REFERENCES

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