



Bringing Religion and Spirituality to the Social Work Profession

Dr. Rebecca Ranz and Dr. Merav Moshe-Grodofsky

School of Social Work, Sapir Academic College

Abstract

Religion and spirituality are fundamental resources that serve populations as they cope with life challenges and stresses. Schools of social work prepare future professionals to address life challenges and stresses, yet attention to both religion and spirituality as key resources to address these challenges is not integral to mainstream social work education. This current state of affairs raises questions as to whether future social work professionals, the majority of whom are women, are prepared to address these resources with their clients. This article presents the findings of a cross – sectional study of 131 Israeli Jewish and Arab social workers, the majority of who were women, that aimed to predict the probability that social workers will integrate religion and spirituality in practice. Study participants responded to the Religious/ Spiritually Integrated Practice Assessment Scale. . Findings show that social workers have favorable attitudes and high levels of self-efficacy as they related to religion and spirituality. However, study participants reported almost no training in this area and even lower levels of engagement of client's R/S beliefs in practice. The current lack of adequate religious and spiritual training not only affects practice but may also limit tolerance, understanding and respect for religious and spiritual issues within academic settings, ultimately alienation students who identify themselves as such.

Keywords: Women; Professional; Training; Mainstream; Practice.