

Chapter 2

Social Work Values, Ethics, and Spirituality

Tracing the Social Work-Religion Connection

It is easy to forget that social work's roots were, at one time, grounded in religion. Canda and Furman (1999) concluded from their review of the connections between social work and religion that the relationship between the two had passed through three distinct phases in the United States. During the first phase, which extended from prior to U.S. independence during the colonial period to the beginning of the twentieth century, the majority of social service agencies and charities that addressed spirituality were premised on Jewish and Christian sectarian beliefs and institutions (Canda 2002). For example, Protestant social welfare efforts were premised on a belief in the possibility of individual salvation (Meinert 2009). Protestant and Catholic social welfare organizations functioned under the organizational and financial control of their respective churches. Less frequently, social welfare advocates, such as Jane Addams, promoted a nonsectarian approach (Canda 2002).

The second phase, which spanned the time period from the 1920s to the 1970s, was characterized by a transformation of social work into a profession, the separation of social work education from explicit religious connections, and the expansion of the governmental social welfare system. The distancing of the social work profession from its original roots and its increasing emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge during this time appears to have resulted, at least in part, from the profession's reaction to Abraham Flexner's (1915) dismissal of social work as a profession due to the absence of a distinctive method and a scientific body of knowledge (Bisman 2004). Despite this apparent distancing of social work from religion, numerous religiously-related and -affiliated organizations continued to provide social work services including, as examples, Catholic Charities (2015), and the Salvation Army (Salvation Army USA 2016).

The third phase of the social work-religion connection extended from the 1980s through the 1990s (Canda 2002). This era heralded calls to return to social work's

roots that had been grounded in spirituality and for the respectful and knowledgeable inclusion of diverse religious and spiritual perspectives (see Canda and Furman 1990). It was during this era that it was suggested that social work expand its perspective from a biopsychosocial one to a biopsychosocial-spiritual model in order to better understand clients' strengths and issues (Cornett 1992). In addition, various societies and journals were established to promote the integration of social work and spirituality.

Canda (2002) has hypothesized that a new, fourth phase of the social work-religion connection is currently underway. This fourth phase is characterized by increased efforts at international networking between leaders in religion-specific approaches to social work and the formation of formal, organized networks and organizations dedicated to this world view of spirituality and social work. While such efforts are critical to the promotion of panhumanism—the recognition of human rights across all people—he suggests that such activities may obscure the need to be cognizant of and attentive to the rights and needs of other beings as part of larger spiritual consciousness and awareness.

Social Work Values

Various portions of the *Code of Ethics* of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW 2008) and the *Educational Standards and Accreditation Policy* of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE 2015) are relevant to the integration of client religious/spiritual concerns into the delivery of social work services and social work practice. Table 2.1 below delineates these provisions. Emphasis has been added to draw the reader's attention to those portions of these provisions that are most relevant to this discussion.

A reading of these provisions of the NASW *Code of Ethics* and the CSWE *Policy and Standards* suggests that ethical practice of social work demands that social workers recognize and acknowledge each person as a unique individual, respond to the client holistically and with care and respect, distinguish between the social worker's personal values and those of the client, and respect the client's autonomy.

Social work's focus extends beyond addressing the needs of individuals, however, to encompass those of groups and communities. This attention to "the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty" (NASW Code of Ethics) and social work's "quest for social and economic justice" (CSWE Policy and Standards) parallel in various degrees the teachings of several faiths. Examples include liberation theology's "defence of the rights of the poor" (Aldunate 1994, 297), Catholic ethics' "preferential option for the poor" (Pope 1993, 242), and Judaism's emphasis on communal welfare (Dorraj 1999). Biblical passages that underlie both Judaism and Christianity suggest an obligation to care for the poor, the widowed, the fatherless, and the stranger, e.g., Deuteronomy 10:17–19, 15:11, 27:19.ⁿ¹

Table 2.1 Values and Goals of Social Work Relevant to the Integration of Religion and Spirituality in Social Work

Value/goal	NASW code of ethics	CSWE policy and standards
Purpose/mission of social work profession	The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. A historic and defining feature of social work is the profession's focus on individual well-being in a social context and the well-being of society. Fundamental to social work is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living The mission of the social work profession is rooted in a set of core values. These core values, embraced by social workers throughout the profession's history, are the foundation of social work's unique purpose and perspective: • or potential conflict of service • social justice • dignity and worth of the person • importance of human • relationships • integrity • competence	The purpose of the social work profession is to promote human and community well-being. Guided by a person-in-environment framework, a global perspective, respect for human diversity, and knowledge based on scientific inquiry, the purpose of social work is actualized through its quest for social and economic justice, the prevention of conditions that limit human rights, the elimination of poverty, and the enhancement of the quality of life for all persons, locally and globally.
Demonstrating professional behavior; managing personal and professional values conflicts	Standard 1.06 Conflicts of Interest (a) <i>Social workers should be alert to and avoid conflicts of interest that interfere with the exercise of professional discretion and impartial judgment.</i> Social workers should inform clients when a real or potential conflict of interest arises and take reasonable steps to resolve the issue in a manner that makes the clients' interests primary and protects clients' interests to the greatest extent possible. In some cases, protecting clients' interests may require termination of the professional relationship with proper referral of the client.	Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant laws and regulations that may impact practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision-making and how to apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. <i>Social workers recognize personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. They also understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior.</i> Social workers understand the profession's history,

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Value/goal	NASW code of ethics	CSWE policy and standards
		its mission, and the roles and responsibilities of the profession. Social Workers also understand the role of other professions when engaged in inter-professional teams. Social workers recognize the importance of life-long learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure they are relevant and effective. Social workers also understand emerging forms of technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice. Social workers: • <i>make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context;</i> • <i>use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations;</i> • <i>demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;</i> • <i>use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and</i> • <i>use supervision and Consultation to guide professional judgment.</i>
Addressing diversity and difference	Value: Dignity and Worth of the Person Ethical Principle: <i>Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person.</i> <i>Social workers treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity.</i> Social workers promote clients' socially responsible self-determination. Social workers seek to enhance clients' capacity and opportunity to change and to address their own needs. Social workers are cognizant of their dual responsibility to clients and to the broader society. They	Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice <i>Social workers understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and are critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation,</i>

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Value/goal	NASW code of ethics	CSWE policy and standards
	seek to resolve conflicts between clients' interests and the broader society's interests in a socially responsible manner consistent with the values, ethical principles, and ethical standards of the profession. Standard 1.05 Cultural Competence and Social Diversity (a) Social workers should understand culture and its function in human behavior and society, recognizing the strengths that exist in all cultures. (b) <i>Social workers should have a knowledge base of their clients' cultures and be able to demonstrate competence in the provision of services that are sensitive to clients' cultures and to differences among people and cultural groups.</i> (c) <i>Social workers should obtain education about and seek to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, and mental or physical disability.</i> Standard 4.02 Discrimination <i>Social workers should not practice, condone, facilitate, or collaborate with any form of discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, or mental or physical disability</i>	and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that, as a consequence of difference, a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers also understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, and cultural exclusions, may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create privilege and power. Social workers: • apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels; • present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences; and • <i>apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies.</i>
		Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities Social workers understand that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals,

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Table 2.1 (continued)

Value/goal	NASW code of ethics	CSWE policy and standards
		families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are knowledgeable about evidence-informed interventions to achieve the goals of clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to effectively intervene with clients and constituencies. <i>Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing and implementing evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals.</i> Social workers value the importance of inter-professional teamwork and communication in interventions, recognizing that beneficial outcomes may require interdisciplinary, inter-professional, and inter-organizational collaboration. Social workers: • <i>critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies;</i> • apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies; • use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes; • negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies; and • facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals.

Integrating Religion and Spirituality into Social Work Practice

Engaging the Client

Individuals who present to social workers for services, whether for case management, psychotherapy, or other services, present as whole persons, with body, mind, and soul (Streets 2009). Social work's emphasis on the dignity and worth of each individual and on responsiveness to all individuals suggests the need for

all social work practitioners and educators to give greater priority to exploring the potential significance of religious and spiritual beliefs in their training, in their professional practice and in the lives and perspectives of service users and colleagues. Social workers need to be able to respond appropriately to the needs of all service users, including those for whom religious and spiritual beliefs are crucial. Culturally competent practice depends, amongst other things, on an understanding and appreciation of the impact of faith and belief (Gilligan and Furness 2006, p. 617).

Furman and colleagues identified a number of practice areas that would seem to lend themselves to discussions with clients about their religious/spiritual beliefs and values (Furman et al. 2005). These include the treatment of substance use and addiction, issues relating to mental illness (see Chap. 9 of this volume), coping with the diagnosis of a serious illness (see Chap. 11), mourning and preparing for the end of life (see Chaps. 6 and 12), and issues relating to inclusion and exclusion (Chap. 18).

Social workers, in general, appear to recognize the need to develop the ability to work with clients in an appropriate manner with respect to the clients' religious and spiritual beliefs and practices and their impact in the clients' lives. A study conducted by Canda and Furman (1999) revealed that the majority of respondents supported the need to develop the requisite knowledge and skills to engage their clients on such issues. A number of respondents noted that engagement with the client on issues of spirituality and religion is consistent with several social work values and practices, including upholding the dignity of the person and starting from where the client is.

Whether engagement with the client around issues of religion and spirituality raises ethical concerns depends, in large part, on the nature of that engagement. Consider, for example, the following possibilities:

- The social worker discusses the client's religious/spiritual beliefs with the client;
- The social worker discusses the social worker's religious/spiritual beliefs with the client;
- The social worker recommends to the client that he or she utilize a form of religious or spiritual healing;
- The social worker recommends that the client practice forgiveness or say penance;

- The social worker recommends that the client develop religious or spiritual rituals as an intervention;
- The social worker utilizes healing touch with the client;
- The social worker prays together with the client during a session at the request of the client;
- The social worker initiates prayer with a client during a session;
- The social worker prays for a client outside of the practice setting and without the knowledge of the client;
- The social worker refers the client to an outside religious/spiritual helper or support system;
- The social worker collaborates with an outside religious/spiritual helper or support system with the client's knowledge and consent (Cf. Sheridan 2009).

Each of these various scenarios raises one or more ethical questions, e.g., the presence, absence, or validity of client informed consent; client autonomy; unprofessional conduct and/or a conflict of interest on the part of the social worker. A study by Sheridan that sought respondent social workers' thoughts about the ethics of some such practices and their personal comfort level with each found that responses from the majority of the participants were not derived from relevant ethical principles. Sheridan concluded that these responses suggested "both over- and under-utilization of various activities [that] can result in unethical and ineffective practice" (Sheridan 2008, p. 14).

Addressing Values Conflicts

It is clear that social workers may be challenged in some instances to separate their personal values from their professional responsibilities and values (Streets 2009). Several examples are readily evident. A social worker engaged in couples counseling who believes on the basis of his or her faith that marriage should be afforded only to heterosexual couples may find it difficult to provide competent services to a self-identified gay couple. A social worker who is personally opposed to abortion under any circumstances or has had difficulty conceiving a child despite numerous attempts may be conflicted when faced with a client who is pregnant as the result of rape and is struggling to decide between an abortion and a full-term pregnancy and adoption.

In addressing such situations, it is crucial that the social worker recognize and acknowledge his or her power that is an integral component of social work, and critically analyze their role and the situation to reduce the possibility that the power is being used coercively rather than to shape the helping process in a manner that is beneficial to the client. The social worker's power stems from three sources: his or her expertise, interpersonal skills to develop trust and rapport with the client, and legitimate power derived from dominant cultural values and norms (Hasenfeld 1987). That said, the values and interests of the social worker may be constrained

by the policies of the organization for which he or she works, as in the case of a social worker who believes that women should have the right to choose an abortion but who works for a religious social service agency that prohibits any mention of abortion.

Further, the NASW *Code of Ethics* recognizes both that such conflicts may occur and that the guidance offered by the *Code* is inadequate to resolve such dilemmas:

The *Code* offers a set of values, principles, and standards to guide decision making and conduct when ethical issues arise. It does not provide a set of rules that prescribe how social workers should act in all situations. Specific applications of the *Code* must take into account the context in which it is being considered and the possibility of conflicts among the *Code's* values, principles, and standards. Ethical responsibilities flow from all human relationships, from the personal and familial to the social and professional.

Further, the NASW Code of Ethics does not specify which values, principles, and standards are most important and ought to outweigh others in instances when they conflict. Reasonable differences of opinion can and do exist among social workers with respect to the ways in which values, ethical principles, and ethical standards should be rank ordered when they conflict. Ethical decision making in a given situation must apply the informed judgment of the individual social worker and should also consider how the issues would be judged in a peer review process where the ethical standards of the profession would be applied ... In addition to this *Code*, there are many other sources of information about ethical thinking that may be useful. Social workers should consider ethical theory and principles generally, social work theory and research, laws, regulations, agency policies, and other relevant codes of ethics, recognizing that among codes of ethics social workers should consider the NASW *Code of Ethics* as their primary source. *Social workers also should be aware of the impact on ethical decision making of their clients' and their own personal values and cultural and religious beliefs and practices. They should be aware of any conflicts between personal and professional values and deal with them responsibly* (National Association of Social Workers 2008) (emphasis added).

There are several potential courses of action open to the social worker in such situations. First, the social worker is obligated to recognize and acknowledge this conflict in values and, if he or she is to provide services to clients, to do so in a manner that adheres to the ethical guidelines of the profession (Streets 2009). This would require that the social worker strive to understand the client's history and values and the role of religion/spirituality in the client's life. Bilich and colleagues offered an example of how this might be accomplished when the social worker and the client hold different faith beliefs:

The therapist ... must focus on understanding the [abuse] survivor's spiritual and religious world to be helpful. For example, let us take the case of a Jewish therapist working with a Catholic survivor. If Jesus is important to the survivor, the therapist's task is to try to understand how Jesus is important in the survivor's life—what Jesus means to this person. An attempt by a Jewish therapist to understand Jesus' meaning in the life of another says nothing about that therapist's faithfulness to her own religion, but speaks to her willingness to be of service to another. The therapist need not engage in theological discourse, but in an exploration of the foundation of this person's spiritual and religious beliefs and how those beliefs influence her life (Bilich et al. 2000, p. 15).

A second option is to work with the client and to obtain competent consultation/supervision from a more experienced professional during the course of

working with the client. This approach is recommended only if the social worker believes that he or she can put aside his or her personal beliefs and values and work with the client competently, recognizing that the client's goals may not be congruent with what the social worker might wish to see personally. This approach may help the social worker to develop a deeper understanding of the client's situation and others in similar situations, which he or she might then apply in his or her work with future clients. Finally, if the social worker feels that he or she cannot provide the client with the necessary services at the level of competence that is required, even with supervision, the social worker may be obliged to remove him- or herself from the case and refer the individual for the requisite services elsewhere (Levy 1979).

It has been argued that such values conflicts have given rise within social work to the oppression of Evangelical Christians. What was once one large middle class, it has been suggested, has become two ideologically divergent segments, consisting of the old middle class largely involved with the production and distribution of material goods and services and a "new class" that is concerned with the production and distribution of knowledge (Berger 1986). According to Hodge (2002), the social work profession has not only adopted the "new class" ideology, but

when an area of disagreement occurs between the religious values and "new class" values (for example, sexual orientation), the profession's guiding ethical principles are superseded by its ideologically inspired drive to control the parameters of the debate by excluding divergent [Evangelical] voices (Hodge 2002 p. 406).

Whether the social work profession has or has not adopted a "new class" ideology that serves as the premise for the resolution of all values conflicts remains an open and relatively unexplored question. While Hodge and others appropriately challenge the social work profession to examine its own biases and prejudices and to provide safe spaces for the discussion of divergent perspectives (Garland 1999; Hodge 2002; Thyer and Myers 2009), Hodge fails to acknowledge that, ultimately, a resolution in various situations requires that competing values be prioritized and that the demarcation between service delivery and proselytizing may be a fine one, indeed (Rice 2002; Sherr et al. 2009). In refuting Hodge's claims, Sherr and colleagues note that Hodge premised his argument entirely on a section of the National Association of Social Worker's Code of Ethics that urges social workers to obtain education related to diversity and oppression, but neglected to mention social workers' responsibility to apply "ethical standards to set and maintain boundaries that are conducive to their clients' well-being, regardless of their own religious beliefs" (Sherr et al. 2009, p. 159).

Consider, as an example, a situation in which an adult who self-identifies as gay/homosexual is feeling distress, not because of his sexual orientation, but because of his family's response to his disclosure. There are numerous potential courses of action open to the social worker consulted in such a situation, each of which presents its own ethical concerns. These include strategies such as (1) counseling the client to assist him in dealing with his feelings of distress; (2) working with the client and his family to increase his family's understanding of

homosexuality and client and family tolerance/acceptance of each other's beliefs; (3) recommending that the client refrain from homosexual practices in order to repair his relationship with the family; and (4) referring the client to or providing conversion therapy to facilitate the client's "conversion" from homosexuality to heterosexuality. A social worker who believes based on religious precepts that homosexuality is wrong remains obligated to maintain boundaries and recommend a course of action that respects the client's autonomy, advances his well-being, and is grounded in valid research. In this case, numerous studies have demonstrated the potential for harm and the lack of benefit associated with conversion therapy, a practice that has received the disapproval of various professional societies and state governments (Drescher 1998; Haldeman 1991, 1994; Murphy 1992; Stein 1996). A social worker's referral of a client to or practice of conversion therapy violates the social worker's ethical obligations to the client. Similarly, a recommendation to the client that he refrain from all sexual and romantic involvement with other men would condemn the client to a life devoid of intimacy.ⁿ²

However the social worker decides to address or resolve a particular situation, it is important that he or she be able to articulate the analytical process used to arrive at their decision. For example, a social worker may choose a course of action that the client opposes, believing that he or she is acting in the client's best interest and is adhering to the ethical principle of beneficence, i.e., maximizing good. In doing so, however, the social worker may, in fact, be guilty of paternalism, "a form of beneficence in which the helping person's concept of harms and benefits differ from those of the client and the helper's interpretation prevails" (Abramson 1989, p. 102; Mattison 2000, p. 202).

An Ethical Framework for Decision-Making

Mattison (2000, p. 206) has suggested that all decision-making proceed along a consistent sequence that includes (1) obtaining the necessary background information and case details; (2) separating practice consideration from ethical components; (3) identifying potential values conflicts; (4) identifying relevant principles in the Code of Ethics; (5) identifying all possible courses of action, together with their potential benefits, risks, costs, and outcomes; (6) determining which obligation should be given priority and why; and (7) reaching a resolution and implementing the decision. Although this progression may be helpful in reaching a decision, it does not provide a foundation for decision making apart from the standards enunciated in the National Association of Social Worker's *Code of Ethics*.

It is suggested here that the four principles relied on in the context of biomedical care—respect for persons, beneficence, nonmaleficence, and distributive justice—would provide a solid foundation from which such an analysis could proceed (see Chap. 22 for a more in-depth discussion of these principles). Respect for persons comprises the requirement of informed consent and a recognition of individual autonomy. Beneficence refers to the obligation to maximize good, while

nonmaleficence seeks to minimize harm. The principle of distributive justice suggests that benefits should be available to all who are eligible, regardless of their personal characteristics.

Consideration of and reference to these principles is consistent with the provisions of the NASW *Code of Ethics*. The *Code of Ethics* encourages social workers to consider ethical theory and principles in their ethical decisionmaking. The congruence between these ethical principles and specific sections of the Code of Ethics is set forth in Table 2.2 below. The entire language of each of the relevant NASW standards has not been provided, but can be found at <https://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp>.

Social Work Education

Findings from various studies suggest that the majority of practicing social workers and social work students have had little or no training relating to spirituality and/or religion as part of their professional social work education (Bullis 1996; Canda and Furman 1999; Cascio 1999; Dudley and Helfgott 1990; Furman et al. 2004; Gilligan and Furness 2006; Graf 2007; Heyman et al. 2006; Joseph 1988; Kvarfordt and Sheridan 2007; Murdock 2005; Rizer and McColley 1996; Sheridan 2004; Sheridan and von-Hemert 1999; Sheridan et al. 1994). It has been posited that, due to this lack of training, social workers have addressed issues of religion and spirituality in practice in one or more of four ways, none of which is optimal: (1) by

Table 2.2 Congruence between four ethical principles and provisions of NASW Code of ETHICS

Ethical principle	Provision(s) of the NASW code of ethics
Respect for persons	Standard 1.02 Self-determination Standard 1.03 Informed consent Standard 1.07 Privacy and confidentiality
Beneficence	Standard 1.01 Commitment to clients Standard 1.14 Clients who lack decision-making capacity
Nonmaleficence	Standard 1.06 Conflicts of interest Standard 1.07 Privacy and confidentiality Standard 1.09 Sexual relationships Standard 1.10 Physical contact Standard 1.11 Sexual harassment Section 1.12 Derogatory language Section 1.15 Interruption of services Section 1.16 Termination of services
Distributive Justice	Value: Social justice: Social workers strive to ensure access to needed information, services, and resources, equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation in decision making for all people

resisting and avoiding the issues (2) by overgeneralizing (3) by radically divorcing the concepts of religion and spirituality, and (4) by engaging in interdisciplinary discussions between religious studies and social work (Praglin 2004).

Rothman (2009) has proffered a listing of the various domains requiring coverage in a comprehensive course focused on religion and spirituality and the contents of each such domain. Rothman's domains, together with a modified listing of her suggested domain content, are provided in Table 2.3, and are accompanied by a listing of the social work values and standards that may be associated with each such component.

Table 2.3 Domains and Content in a Comprehensive Social Work Religion/Spirituality Curriculum*

Domain	Content	Social work value/standard/associated ethical principle
Knowledge acquisition	History and variety of spiritual traditions	Value: Service Value Social justice Value: Competence Standard 1.04 Competence Standard 1.05 Cultural competence and social diversity Standard 3.01(a) Supervision and consultation Standard 3.02(a) Education and training Standard 3.08 Continuing education and staff development
	Relationship between religion and spirituality	Value: Service Value Social justice Value: Competence Standard 1.04 Competence Standard 1.05 Cultural competence and social diversity Standard 3.01(a) Supervision and consultation Standard 3.02(a) Education and training Standard 3.08 Continuing education and staff development
	Major traditions	Value: Service Value Social justice Value: Competence Standard 1.04 Competence Standard 1.05 Cultural competence and social diversity Standard 3.01(a) Supervision and consultation Standard 3.02(a) Education and training Standard 3.08 Continuing education and staff development
	Relationship between religion, spirituality, and culture	Value: Service Value Social justice Value: Competence Standard 1.04 Competence Standard 1.05 Cultural competence and social diversity Standard 3.01(a) Supervision and consultation Standard 3.02(a) Education and training Standard 3.08 Continuing education and staff development
	Spiritual experiences and the meaning of life	Value: Service Value Social justice Value: Competence Standard 1.04 Competence

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Table 2.3 (continued)

Domain	Content	Social work value/standard/associated ethical principle
		Standard 1.05 Cultural competence and social diversity Standard 3.01(a) Supervision and consultation Standard 3.02(a) Education and training Standard 3.08 Continuing education and staff development
	Varieties of spiritual experiences	Value: Service Value Social justice Value: Competence Standard 1.04 Competence Standard 1.05 Cultural competence and social diversity Standard 3.01(a) Supervision and consultation Standard 3.02(a) Education and training Standard 3.08 Continuing education and staff development
	Theoretical perspectives, e.g., humanism, postmodernism, transpersonal psychology, Jungian psychology	Value: Service Value Social justice Value: Competence Standard 1.04 Competence Standard 1.05 Cultural competence and social diversity Standard 3.01(a) Supervision and consultation Standard 3.02(a) Education and training Standard 3.08 Continuing education and staff development
	NASW Code of Ethics; international social work standards and ethical guidelines	Value: Service Value Social justice Value: Competence Standard 1.04 Competence Standard 3.01(a) Supervision and consultation Standard 3.02(a) Education and training Standard 3.08 Continuing education and staff development
	State and national laws; relevant international agreements, treaties, conventions	Value: Service Value Social justice Value: Competence Standard 1.04 Competence Standard 3.01(a) Supervision and consultation Standard 3.02(a) Education and training Standard 3.08 Continuing education and staff development
Skill acquisition	How to introduce religion and spirituality into social work practice	Value: Service Value: Social justice Value: Dignity and worth of the person Standard 1.01 Commitment to clients
	Assessing where the client is and how to start there	Value: Service Value: Social justice Value: Dignity and worth of the person Standard 1.01 Commitment to clients Standard 1.02 Self-determination Standard 1.03 Informed consent Standard 1.04 Competence Standard 1.05 Cultural competence and social diversity
	Maintaining a nonjudgmental approach	Value: Service Value: Dignity and worth of the person Standard 1.01 Commitment to clients Standard 1.02 Self-determination

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Table 2.3 (continued)

Domain	Content	Social work value/standard/associated ethical principle
	Understanding the client's spiritual/religious journey and network	Value: Service Value: Dignity and worth of the person Value: Importance of human relationships Standard 1.01 Commitment to clients Standard 1.02 Self-determination Standard 1.05 Cultural competence and social diversity
	Evaluating the need for a religious/spiritual screen or assessment and identifying the appropriate screening/assessment instrument	Value: Service Value: Dignity and worth of the person Value: Competence Standard 1.02 Self-determination Standard 1.05 Cultural competence and social diversity
	Identifying faith communities and associated resources	Value: Service Value: Dignity and worth of the person Value: Importance of human relationships Standard 1.05 Cultural competence and social diversity
	Integrating spirituality and/or religion into goal setting and interventions	Value: Service Value: Dignity and worth of the person Value: Competence Standard 1.01 Commitment to clients Standard 1.02 Self-determination Standard 1.03 Informed consent Standard 1.04 Competence Standard 1.05 Cultural competence and social diversity
	Developing an interprofessional network, e.g., priests, pastors, rabbis, imams, ministers, and collaborations, as appropriate	Value: Importance of human relationships Value: Competence Standard 1.01 Commitment to clients Standard 1.04 Competence Standard 1.05 Cultural competence and social diversity Standard 2.03 Interdisciplinary collaboration Standard 2.06 Referral for services
	Understanding non-mainstream spiritual and religious rituals and activities	Value: Service Value: Social justice Value: Competence Standard 1.04 Competence Standard 1.05 Cultural competence and social diversity Standard 3.01(a) Supervision and consultation Standard 3.02(a) Education and training Standard 3.08 Continuing education and staff development
	Integrating spiritual and/or religious rituals into practice, as appropriate and beneficial for the client	Value: Service Value: Dignity and worth of the person Value: Competence Standard 1.01 Commitment to clients Standard 1.02 Self-determination Standard 1.03 Informed consent Standard 1.04 Competence Standard 1.05 Cultural competence and social diversity

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Table 2.3 (continued)

Domain	Content	Social work value/standard/associated ethical principle
Self-awareness and personal growth	Understanding one's own personal religious/spiritual journey	Value: Integrity Value: Competence Standard 1.01 Commitment to clients Standard 1.06 Conflicts of interest
	Recognizing, acknowledging, and addressing one's own biases, stereotypes, and prejudices	Value: Dignity and Worth of the person Value: Integrity Value: Competence Standard 1.01 Commitment to clients Standard 1.06 Conflicts of interest
	Conducting a personal assessment	Value: Integrity Value: Competence Standard 1.01 Commitment to clients Standard 1.06 Conflicts of interest
	Addressing one's own value conflicts	Value: Integrity Value: Competence Standard 1.01 Commitment to clients Standard 1.06 Conflicts of interest
	How to conduct a religious/spiritual interview, including history and assessment	Value: Service Value: Dignity and worth of the person Value: Competence Standard 1.04 Competence
	Journaling and other spiritual practices to develop one's own self-awareness and promote self-growth	Value: Integrity Value: Competence Standard 1.01 Commitment to clients Standard 1.06 Conflicts of interest

*Enumerated content areas adapted from Rothman (2009)

Notes

1. These passages state as follows. (All passages from the Old and New Testaments are from Coogan (2007), unless otherwise stated.)

¹⁷For the LORD your God is God of gods and LORD OF LORDS, THE GREAT God, mighty and awesome, who is not partial and takes no bribe, ¹⁸who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves the strangers, providing them food and clothing.

¹⁹You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. (Deut. 10:17–10, NRSV)

Since there will never cease to be some in need on this earth, I therefore command you, "Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbor in your land." (Deut. 15:11, NRSV)

"Cursed be anyone who deprives the alien, the orphan, and the widow of justice." All the people shall say, "Amen!" (Deut. 27:19, NRSV).

2. This situation is somewhat analogous to that of judges who, based on their religious beliefs, are displeased with the recent Supreme Court decision permitting marriage of same-sex couples, but are legally and ethically bound to observe the ruling (Domonoske 2016)

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<http://www.springer.com/978-1-4939-7038-4>

Handbook of Religion and Spirituality in Social Work
Practice and Research

Loue, S.

2017, XXII, 397 p., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-1-4939-7038-4