CSWE: Religion and Spirituality

The CSWE Religion and Spirituality Work Group was organized in 2011 to promote social workers' knowledge, values, and skills for ethical and effective practice that takes into account the diverse expressions of religion and spirituality among clients and their communities. Given the pervasiveness of religion and spirituality throughout people's lives and cultures, social workers need to understand religion and spirituality to develop a holistic view of the person in environment and to support the professional mission of promoting satisfaction of basic needs, well-being, and justice for all individuals and communities around the world.

This mission is reflected in the 2008 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards, the National Association of Social Workers' Code of Ethics and Standards for Cultural Competence, the International Federation of Social Workers/International Association of Schools of Social Work's Statement of Principles, and the standards for professional practice in many fields of social work practice, such as health, mental health recovery, hospice and palliative care, and substance abuse.

Social workers are expected to work ethically and effectively with religion and spirituality as relevant to clients and their communities and to refrain from negative discrimination based on religious or nonreligious beliefs.


Religion and Spirituality Educational Resources

The Religion and Spirituality Clearinghouse (RSC) initiative is relevant to all the 2008 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards of CSWE, in particular the following core competencies:

- Educational Policy 2.1.2 regarding application of ethical principles to guide practice and to recognize and manage personal values accordingly;
- Educational Policy 2.1.4 regarding engaging diversity in practice, especially with regard to religious diversity and its intersection with other factors of diversity, all of which influence the formation of identity and experiences of oppression and negative discrimination;
- Educational Policy 2.1.7 regarding knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, especially with regard to spiritual development; and
- Educational Policy 3.1 regarding an educational program's commitment to diversity, including religious diversity, as reflected in the overall learning environment.

Resources can be applied as educational components within courses throughout the curriculum, specialized courses on religion and spirituality, or continuing education offerings.
