

Antioch University

AURA - Antioch University Repository and Archive

Antioch University Full-Text Dissertations &
Theses

Antioch University Dissertations and Theses

2022

A Journey to Finding Space in the Tension: Experience of Instructors' Relationship with Religion and Spirituality in Doctoral Psychology Programs

Samantha McGee
Antioch University Seattle

Follow this and additional works at: <https://aura.antioch.edu/etds>



Part of the [Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural Education Commons](#), [Higher Education Commons](#), [Mental and Social Health Commons](#), [Metaphysics Commons](#), [Practical Theology Commons](#), and the [Psychology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

McGee, S. (2022). A Journey to Finding Space in the Tension: Experience of Instructors' Relationship with Religion and Spirituality in Doctoral Psychology Programs. <https://aura.antioch.edu/etds/768>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Antioch University Dissertations and Theses at AURA - Antioch University Repository and Archive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Antioch University Full-Text Dissertations & Theses by an authorized administrator of AURA - Antioch University Repository and Archive. For more information, please contact hhale@antioch.edu.

A JOURNEY TO FINDING SPACE IN THE TENSION:
EXPERIENCE OF INSTRUCTORS' RELATIONSHIP WITH
RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY IN DOCTORAL PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAMS

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of
Antioch University Seattle

In partial fulfillment for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PSYCHOLOGY

by

Samantha McGee

ORCID Scholar No. 0000-0002-1552-4734

February 2022

A JOURNEY TO FINDING SPACE IN THE TENSION:
EXPERIENCE OF INSTRUCTORS' RELATIONSHIP WITH
RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY IN DOCTORAL PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAMS

This dissertation, by Samantha McGee, has
been approved by the committee members signed below
who recommend that it be accepted by the faculty of
Antioch University Seattle
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PSYCHOLOGY

Dissertation Committee:

Michael Sakuma, PhD, Chairperson

Leihua Edstrom, PhD, Committee Member

Cheryl Azlin, PsyD, Committee Member

Copyright © 2022 by Samantha McGee

All Rights Reserved

ABSTRACT

A JOURNEY TO FINDING SPACE IN THE TENSION: EXPERIENCE OF INSTRUCTORS' RELATIONSHIP WITH RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY IN DOCTORAL PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAMS

Samantha McGee

Antioch University Seattle

Seattle, WA

Religion and spirituality, when viewed through a holistic lens, can reflect important aspects of a person's identity. It can be a source of well-being and also struggle. The fields of religion, spirituality and psychology have had a history of being polarized, with some efforts to integrate the two fields. Tensions exist at multiple ecological levels around the topic of religion and spirituality, which can make it easier to avoid discussing it in classrooms and therapy rooms. It is important to address and create room for discussion of experiences around religion and spirituality in classrooms that are training psychologists so they can be better prepared to address it with their clients. The addressing of religion and spirituality in considering multiple levels is supported by the new ecological framework shared in the American Psychological Association (APA) multicultural guidelines. Many psychologists, students, and the APA itself, support the idea of training in religion and spirituality as a diversity factor, yet this topic is being taught inconsistently across accredited health service psychology doctoral programs. The incongruence between the support for training and lack of consistent implementation in doctoral programs revealed an opportunity to explore the topic of teaching religion and spirituality with instructors. Understanding their experiences helped to make sense of what might contribute to these inconsistencies. This study explored and analyzed the topic of religion and spirituality by understanding the experiences of instructors in secular APA accredited clinical doctoral psychology programs across the U.S. It sought to explore instructors' relationship with religion

and spirituality and how their personal and professional experiences influence their teaching practices. Data was collected from eight instructors across the U.S., using semi-structured interviews and analyzed through Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The results of this study revealed three major themes about these instructors' experiences with religion and spirituality. These experiences crossed multiple ecological levels, which impacted their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors both inside and outside of the classroom that demonstrated: [religion and spirituality as a] diverse inter-related evolving process, the [importance of] creating space in the tension, and the [importance of understanding] biases shaped by support and struggles. This information could help to create more space in clinical and classroom settings for discussion on complex topics like religion and spirituality, developing cultural humility, and also exploring its impact on treatment and healing processes. This dissertation is available in open access at AURA (<https://aura.antioch.edu>) and OhioLINK ETD Center (<https://etd.ohiolink.edu>).

Keywords: religion, spirituality, teaching, doctoral psychology training, diversity

Dedication

To my fellow travelers that are trying to find space in the tension to ask questions, seek answers, and live out your unique spiritual and religious values. To my participants, I was changed by your stories and experiences. I found myself connecting to each one of your stories in different ways and realized I am not alone. At the end of this process, I have never felt so able to live in the tension and paradoxes of life, especially around the topic of religion and spirituality. I feel more like myself than I have ever been. Your stories permitted me to show up more honestly and authentically, thank you seems like not enough.

Acknowledgments

I want to acknowledge that I have benefited from others who have paved the way for me to be here. My ancestors, family, and parents who sacrificed a lot so I could have this opportunity. To the various helpers, researchers, clinicians, teachers, and fellow psychologists, I am grateful to have been shaped by your work and all my various interactions with people who have been on my journey of life. This dissertation process was a sacred and spiritual journey full of ups and downs.

I want to thank Antioch University Seattle and my advisor, Dr. Bergkamp for creating a space in academia to discuss social justice issues. To my dissertation committee members Drs. Sakuma, Edstrom, and Azlin, you have contributed your valuable time, wisdom, and experiences to support me, not only with this project but my development as a person. You encouraged and challenged me in all the needed ways. To Dr. Waters, you believed in my idea. Your direct enthusiasm and support for me to pursue this project I will forever be grateful for. You helped me believe I could take on this challenge, feel seen and know that my voice matters.

To my friends, who are more like family, I would not have survived this process without your love and care. Amber, I know without a doubt that our connection was a divine alignment and grateful that you literally walked alongside me in this life-changing endeavor. Last but not least, to my husband and daughter, you are the reason I am here. This journey is yours as much as mine. We grew together, struggled together, and celebrated together. May you also be encouraged to always follow your passions, especially when there are challenges.

Table of Contents

List of Tables	xi
List of Figures	xii
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Background and Statement of the Problem	2
Understanding Diversity	2
More Frameworks on Identity and Culture.....	4
Biopsychosocial-Spiritual Model.....	4
The Addressing Model.....	5
Further Defining Terms	6
Religion and Spirituality	6
Secular versus Non-Secular University	8
Current Inconsistent Training	10
Purpose and Significance of the Study	12
Research Question	13
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW	14
History of Healing: Theology and Psychology.....	15
Education and Training in Religion/Spirituality.....	18
Separation of Church and State.....	18
Historical Development of Integrated Programs	19
APA and Diversity	21
APA Division 36.....	23
Training in Religion and Spirituality	24
Ethical Considerations in Training	24
Training across Disciplines.....	25
Psychology Doctoral Training	26
Competencies for Psychologists	28
Barriers to Training and Integrating Religion and Spirituality	30
Psychologists' Bias and Attitudes.....	31
Clinical Implications of Religion and Spirituality	33
Support for Well-Being.....	33

Harm and Struggles for Well-Being	35
Religion and Spirituality in Psychotherapy	36
Prayer	36
Faith Developmental Process.....	37
CHAPTER III: METHOD	41
Research Design.....	41
IPA	42
Research Method	43
Participants.....	43
Recruitment.....	44
Participant Protection.....	46
Data Collection	46
Data Analysis	47
Reliability and Credibility.....	49
The Researcher.....	49
CHAPTER IV: RESULTS.....	51
Introductions to the Participants	51
Diverse Interrelated Evolving Process.....	56
Spirituality as an Individual Relationship.....	57
Religion as Diverse Organized External Structures.....	58
Finding Space in the Tension.....	59
Important When Tied to Clinical Work	60
Need for Competency Training	60
Requirement Barriers	61
Biases Shaped by Support and Struggle	62
Social and Cultural Bias.....	63
Secular Bias	64
Area of Identity Support and Struggle	65
CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION.....	67
Research Findings.....	70
Tension on Multiple Levels	70

Define or Not to Define?.....	71
Teach or Not to Teach?.....	72
Competency or Cultural Humility?.....	76
Connect or Disconnect?	80
Implications.....	83
Limitations	87
Future Directions	89
Conclusions.....	90
References.....	92
Appendix A: Interview Questions	99
Appendix B: Consent Form	100
Appendix C: Recruitment Flyer.....	103
Appendix D: Third-Party Confidentiality Waiver for Study	104
Appendix E: Tables and Diagrams of Themes and Codes	106

List of Tables

Table 1 Participant Demographics..... 44

List of Figures

Figure 1 Superordinate Theme, Subordinate, and Emergent Themes 1 56

Figure 2 Superordinate, Subordinate, and Emergent Theme 2..... 59

Figure 3 Superordinate, Subordinate, and Theme 3 62

Figure 4 Diagram of Superordinate, Subordinate, and Emergent Themes 107

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The 2011 Gallup poll shows that 89% percent of the U.S. population believes in a higher power, yet many therapists appear to not discuss this issue with their clients (Newport, 2016). There seems to be a consensus from clients, psychologists, and governing bodies in the need for training around the topic of religion and spirituality, especially as a diversity factor. The ethical and multicultural guidelines of the American Psychological Association (APA) emphasize that psychologists be trained and competent in various areas of diversity, including religion and spirituality. As one might expect, religion and spirituality are generally covered more widely in non-secular (faith-based) schools, but also inconsistently. At the doctoral level, progress has been made to increase training in religion and spirituality. However, research is still needed in looking at the differences between non-secular and secular schools.

Why is there so much support from many levels, yet the training in religion and spirituality is so variable? What factors influence what gets prioritized in the training of psychology doctoral students? Who determines if religion and spirituality should be included and how it is included? Religion and spirituality seem to not be prioritized as other aspects of diversity in some academic spaces. Bergin (1983) points out that "race, gender, and ethnic origin now receive deserved attention, but religion is still an orphan in academia" (as cited in Brawer et al., 2002, p. 171). This suggests there may still be a bias that exists within the western academic school system around the topic of religion and spirituality. Reviewing the western history of psychology, religion, and spirituality, along with cultural events in the U.S., has set the backdrop for the dynamic between these two fields. This dynamic is one that includes both an attempt to integrate and separate the fields, that impacts how religion and spirituality shows up on individual and systemic levels. This study explored and analyzed instructors' experiences with

religion and spirituality personally and professionally. It sought out to make sense of their experiences, attitudes, and beliefs about what contributes to teaching (or not) on the topic religion and/or spirituality in APA accredited clinical doctoral psychology programs. The results of this study provide some insight and implications for doctoral psychology training programs, educators, students, and psychologists.

Background and Statement of the Problem

A note regarding the current context of the study. This study was done at a time in the U.S. where there is a public health crisis and great political and racial unrest during the COVID-19 global pandemic. The importance of understanding differences, while also being able to connect as humans with things in common, has never been greater. Instructors were called to do even more, adjust, and make rapid changes while not being exempt from the impact of these issues. As Dr. Neff points out in her book *Embodying Integration*, we are also in a postmodern era looking at knowledge through a more contextual and relational frame, and where the church is split over multiple issues that are causing many people to look outside of faith institutions for spiritual connection even greater than previously in history (Neff & McMinn, 2020). The current climate and context are important to consider when reading through this dissertation. My hope is that we all continue learning, growing, creating space for complexity in unity, and celebrating all our differences in the process. Religion and spirituality are framed as a part of cultural and individual identity and diversity. This next section will provide some information with definitions, terms, and frameworks around these topics that shape this study.

Understanding Diversity

Diversity is a way to describe differences that makeup culture and individuals. Often people use the term diversity without a common understanding what it means. Here are a couple

of ways to begin thinking about this word. The APA website defines diversity as:

The wide range of variation of living organisms in an ecosystem. When describing people and population groups, diversity can include such factors as age, gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, nationality, and religion, as well as education, livelihood, and marital status (APA, n.d.)

Further, it defines cultural diversity as: “the existence of societies, communities, or subcultures that differ substantially from one another; and “communities or subcultures that function within a larger society while maintaining their distinct culture traits” (APA, n.d.).

Framework for Multicultural Diversity

The American Psychological Association (APA) is one of the biggest governing bodies for psychologists. The APA has supported and pursued efforts to demonstrate that religion and spirituality is an important diversity variable. In 2017, the APA adopted a new set of ten multicultural guidelines using a five-layered ecological framework. The framework builds on Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model that shares layers of environmental and contextual domains that influence each other, including where spiritual and religion are present in some of these layers: the microsystem (immediate context of the individual), mesosystem (relationships with one's home, school, community), exosystem (societal and cultural influences), macrosystem (cultural values and government laws) and chronosystem (historical context; Clauss-Ehlers et al., 2019). The new APA multicultural model was developed to guide psychologists' work while considering the bi-directional influences of “levels” that are used to describe the prior micro, meso, and macro systems. The levels are: Level 1 (bi-directional model of self-definition and relationships); Level 2 (Community, school, and family context); Level 3 (Institutional impact on engagement); Level 4 Domestic and International Engagement; and Level 5 (Outcomes; Clauss-Ehlers et al., 2019). Further, the framework adds the language that dynamics of power-privilege, tensions, and fluidity all impact the layers (Clauss-Ehlers et al., 2019). This

model outlines the complexity and inter and intra dynamic processes that shape and influence outcomes.

Religion and spirituality are a part of diversity on cultural, systemic, and individual levels. Framing religion and spirituality as an aspect of diversity helps create a context to understand that they are a part of many things that make up individuals and groups. For some, this can be such an important part of who they are (identity) and how they show up in the world. The following section shares more frameworks that include religion and spirituality as an important aspect of one's identity.

More Frameworks on Identity and Culture

Our identity and subsequent behaviors are shaped by varying experiences on multiple levels. Many models discuss this relational dynamic and process. Below there will be a brief sharing of a couple of them. These all can help provide a framework that can understand differences and diversity that shape and help to make sense of experiences and look holistically at a person.

Biopsychosocial-Spiritual Model

The Biopsychosocial-spiritual model has had its process of evolution. It was created out of moving away from biomedical dualistic thinking and integrating the idea that shares nothing exists in isolation. Engel in 1977 added a systematic and social component to the framework for healthcare workers to understand what influences a person's health beyond the physical (Sulmasy, 2002). Sulmasy (2002) argued from a holistic view that spirituality was an important piece missing from this framework that can be discussed beyond and within rigid scientific-reductionistic ways of thinking in healthcare. He shares that humans are "intrinsically spiritual" because they are relational, not just externally but the internal parts also have this dynamic.

(Sulmasy, 2002). Therefore, the Bio-psychosocial-spiritual model looks at healing the whole person as restoring the “relationships,” challenging healers to look at all aspects of a person. This also highlights the tension that was present in the field of science and medicine on whether healthcare workers should be addressing religion or spirituality at all and the fear of “proselytizing” the patients (Sulmasy, 2002).

The Addressing Model

The Addressing Model also adds to the understanding that there are many aspects of someone’s identity and cultural influences. The Addressing Model was created by Pamela Hays to describe a way to understand and recognize aspects of diverse cultural influence that counselor’s need to be examining in themselves and their clients’ lives, focusing on ethnic minority cultures that have been marginalized by the counseling field (Hays, 1996). She further highlights the natural human cognitive processes that shape a person to generalize information into stereotypes, further biasing their views. In addition, sharing that the U.S. has historically been influenced by the power held by Euro-American cultural norms that have marginalized and excluded whole cultures of people (Hays, 1996). She defines culture using a more inclusive interpersonal frame sharing it is “all of the learned behaviors, beliefs, norms, and values that are held by a group of people passed on from older members to newer, at least in part to preserve the group” (Hays, 1996). The model shares that the cultural factors of **A**ge, **D**isability, **R**eligion, **E**thnicity, **S**ocial status, **S**exual Orientation, **I**ndigenous heritage, **N**ational origin, and **G**ender and how they correspond to minority groups and forms of oppression (ADDRESSING; Hays, 1996). This model is important to consider when thinking about all the overlapping complex factors that make up the relationship with religion and spirituality, culture, diversity, and identity. It also helps to understand the Western, U.S. culture and history that have shaped biases

and oppressive behaviors in systems, which include academic institutions.

Further Defining Terms

Religion and Spirituality

Defining religion and spirituality is complex and also made up of a wide variety of perspectives. Ames (2012) challenges scholars to think about how the word “religion” was used historically and not to just base it off of what we can see and define it solely using our own religious experiences. She highlights the work of religion scholar Jonathan Smith that says “religion is made by the individual scholar, as well as generationally and collectively; disciplinary constructions jostle against contextualized meanings” (Ames, 2012). Taking into consideration social, cultural, political, individual, and other factors is important when thinking of how one defines a term. Further, William James believed that religion includes the experience of spirituality (Russell & Yarhouse, 2006). Spirituality can be differentiated from the term "religion" or used interchangeably. Pargament (2007) has defined spirituality as “the journey people take to discover and realize their essential selves and higher-order aspirations” (p. 58), or a “search for the sacred” (as cited in Vieten, 2013). Here there is some recognition of the importance to honor individual expressions of religion and spirituality.

The American Psychological Association (APA) has added the term “spirituality” to Division 36 Religion and Spirituality in 2012 (Piedmont, 2013). While adding the term “spirituality” helped broaden research in the field of psychology outside of religion (Piedmont, 2013), the definition is still inconsistently defined in psychological research. Further, Koenig (2008, as cited in Oxhandler et al., 2018) defines religion and spirituality as follows:

Religion is a system of beliefs and practices observed by a community, supported by rituals, that acknowledge, worship, communicate with, or approach the Sacred, Divine, God, Ultimate Truth, Reality, or Nirvana. Spirituality is the personal quest for understanding answers to ultimate questions of life, about meaning, relationship to the

sacred or transcendent, which may or may not lead to or arise from the development of religious rituals and formation of a community.

Last, Fowler (1981) uses the term “faith” to describe something beyond religion and belief but an “existential stance” finding meaning to our lives. He says faith is:

People’s evolved and evolving ways of experiencing self, others, and the world (as they construct them), as related to and affected by the ultimate conditions of existence (as they construct them), and of shaping their lives purposes and meanings, trusts, and loyalties in light of the character of being, value and power, determining the ultimate conditions of existence (as grasped in their operative images-conscious and unconscious-of them. (Fowler, 1981, p. 92)

Even with stating some of the definitions and terms, we can see the vast diverse ways to begin talking about things that surround the topic of religion and spirituality that have changed throughout history and culture. This term goes beyond any one field of study and crosses over time, culture, and individual experiences. For this project, I used the terms religion and spirituality simultaneously and sometimes interchangeably, unless the term is used specifically different for a study. Religion and spirituality were also viewed in this study as a relationship, both intra and interpersonal, as well as an aspect of cultural diversity and identity. Using the ecological frame, we are all connected and influence and affect each other. For the data collection in this current study, the participants defined the term for themselves.

Bias

Bias and heuristics are often terms used to describe a cognitive system that ignores part of the information to make quick decisions (often unconsciously) and can result in attitudes in favor of or against something (De Houwer & Hermans, 2010). Biases are also shaped by experiences in living and are held by individuals, groups, and institutions. As a result, biases can lead to prejudice and discrimination against groups or topics if not made conscious, called implicit bias. For example, Sloane and Petra (2021) found the following in their study on cultural humility and religious identity with social work students:

It appears that students developed their belief that most religious people are judgmental after experiencing discrimination because of their (the student's) beliefs did not conform to religious expectations, or because they did not hold to religious standards. These experiences of discrimination due to religion were common regardless of the student's race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation. (p. 33)

Understanding biases and cognitive processes can help make sense of how one experiences and tries to resolve the tension when there is competing or different beliefs. Biases show up on multiple levels and may help understand what contributes to one's complex relationship to religion and spirituality, including training and teaching.

Secular versus Non-Secular University

The term secular university generally means non-faith-based/religious institutions. Non-secular refers to institutions that are based on certain faith or religious traditions (Bart, 2007). Non-secular (faith-based) institutions often have a mission statement geared towards the moral and spiritual development of the students based in religious traditions. In the U.S. most of these universities are Christian based. This study looked at instructors from secular universities only.

Spaces and Tension

Religion and spirituality are topics that bring together the fields of psychology and theology that both have an interest in healing and supporting humans to be whole. In this study, I am discussing tension experienced and attempts to create space on multiple levels that include a person's individual mind, body, and behaviors, interpersonal interactions between people, academic institutions, government systems, and historical and cultural events. The classroom is one space where all these aspects converge.

Tension. Tension can be described as the process to integrate parts that have been polarized. It can be experienced as individual and collective stress, pressure, expectations or

assumptions that are internal or external, unconscious and conscious, and dis-integrated parts. The tension can look like experiencing cognitive dissonance and noticing how uncomfortable the body responds to discussions around religion and spirituality, especially with people and institutions that hold power or privilege. A common stress or traumatic response, that involves the whole body, to uncomfortable or distressing experiences within an individual or interpersonally, can result in trying to get rid of, change or dismiss that thought, feeling, or person(s). This process Acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) would call experiential avoidance, causes people to move away from parts that can create wholeness, unity and connection (Luoma et al., 2007). Further, Integrated Family Systems (IFS) model shares that self-acceptance of all the parts of ourselves, without trying to get rid of them, leads to transformation and extends out to others (Schwartz, 2013). Historical humanistic and mindfulness-based practices have been adapted to more contemporary psychological interventions that support the process of having an inner focus and dialogue to accept all the parts themselves that leads to change versus trying to change with judgment, blame, shame, and further polarization (Schwarz, 2013). IFS brings together the principles of multiplicity, systems, and self-leadership (soul, spirit, higher power) and views all parts as inherently valuable that may have had traumatic experiences that disconnected them from the self-leadership part where compassion, acceptance or clarity is (Schwartz, 2013). What would this look like to pull from these models to understanding how our individual and collective experiences have been polarized and try to bring it together in the classroom space?

Space. When there is tension, it can be valuable to create space for compassionate, listening, observation, and understanding. Space in this study represents a shift in paradigm to focus and sit with tension wherever it exists. ACT and IFS would support this looks like a

practice of mindfulness, sitting with all the parts without judgement (Luoma, 2007; Schwartz, 2013). It is also a relational strategy that involves internal observation, curiosity, and honest dialogue within a person, between people, and external hierarchical structures. Later in the discussion, the researcher will use the results of this study to suggest integrating a new pedagogy in the classroom that includes a more relational and holistic character development paradigm. This new way of thinking would expand the current focus in western psychology and academia that can tend to focus more often on gaining more content knowledge and skills building as a primary way to provide training to doctoral psychology students.

Current Inconsistent Training

Religion and spirituality can be important aspects to understanding individuals and their human experience, yet research shows variable instruction in this area within doctoral programs. Brawer et al. (2002) led one of the first studies that looked at APA doctoral clinical psychology programs (secular and non-secular) and the issue of training in religion and spirituality. Over 90 directors of clinical training took a 10-item survey to measure the coverage of religion and spirituality in clinical doctoral training. The results demonstrated that 77% of training directors said that religion and spirituality were covered more often variably in supervision, with 61% saying it is also covered as a part of another course and 16% indicating it is not covered at all (Brawer et al., 2002). This study pioneered the efforts to focus the training of religion and spirituality in clinical doctoral training. Further, in 2011, Schafer et. al. did a follow-up study to the Brawer et al. (2002) study, showing the training in religion and spirituality had increased but there were still programs that were not covering it. Just as difficult as it is to try and define religion and spirituality, there is also variability in how it is being taught across doctoral psychology programs.

There have been a handful of studies that have looked at training around religion and spirituality in secular and non-secular doctoral programs. Saunders et al. (2014) looked at training in religion and spirituality in counseling doctoral programs and demonstrated there was little to no training in this area. McMinn et al. (2015) did a study involving APA accredited faith-based universities. The results indicated that students from Christian (non-secular) doctoral programs receive more religious and spiritual-based training. Many studies however did not separate training in non-secular (faith-based) versus secular. Further, counseling doctoral psychology programs may differ from clinical based programs. Reedy (2016) did a study on clinical psychologists from APA accredited secular and non-secular doctoral psychology programs. The results demonstrated that despite primarily empirical studies previously looking at secular schools, clinical psychologists in both programs had similar inadequate training in religion and spirituality.

Due to the inconsistent or sometimes lack of training, psychologists are often unprepared to address the topic of religion and spirituality with their clients. Shafranske and Malony (1990) demonstrated that psychologists' personal beliefs, attitudes, and training, correlated with how often they used spiritual interventions in psychotherapy; this was evidenced by 55% agreed it was not appropriate for a psychologist to use religious scripture or texts during psychotherapy, and 68% also said it was not appropriate for a psychologist to pray with a client. Despite getting the perspectives of many psychologists, much of the literature around doctoral training in religion and spirituality did not look at individual attitudes or preferences of instructors. The instructors are the people responsible for the classroom environment and carrying out the training to graduate students. There may also be differences in counseling psychology programs versus clinical programs.

Hathaway (2013) shares the main problem that this current study attempts to highlight is:

At minimum, this topic (religion and spirituality) should be given focused attention within multicultural psychology coursework. Yet a strategy of integrating across the curriculum is more likely to alter the culture of pedagogical neglect that currently exists in professional training programs about this competency.

This dissertation study provided information that helped to explore and bridge the gap in research that exists around training in religion and spirituality in secular APA doctoral clinical psychology programs. It also sheds light on why some of these inconsistencies in training, and even discussing religion and spirituality, may exist in the classroom environment.

Purpose and Significance of the Study

This study provided the experiences of instructors and gave more insight into what factors influence whether or not, and/or how religion and spirituality, are being taught in APA accredited secular clinical doctoral psychology programs. This study explored the beliefs, attitudes, and experiences of current instructors regarding teaching religion and spirituality and how they make sense of their experiences. Exploring teaching spirituality from the lived experience of instructors, offered a valuable contribution to psychological research that is currently missing. The current research gathers information from clinical directors, psychologists, and students who may have a different perspective than instructors. The instructors are often the responsible parties for creating and implementing the curriculum. We need to understand more about teaching religion and spirituality from the perspective of the instructors themselves to integrate into the existing research. Taken together, this might help create more focus on creating inclusive, integrative, student-centered, relational, embodied, and character formative spaces inside the classroom for discussion of religion and spirituality as aspects of diversity, that are needed. Further, this discussion is also needed on systemic levels to develop guidelines that add character formation and cultural humility to the current focus on

content and competency skill building that will support the instructors to create these environments.

Teaching and training on the topics of religion and spirituality as a diversity factor, is supported by students, professional psychologists, APA, and clients. This study highlights the complexity and tension-filled dynamics related to religion and spirituality on multiple ecological levels. It further shows potential bias around religion and spirituality within the history of the U.S., field of clinical psychology, and in academia. Further, it highlights the instructors' supportive and harmful experiences with religion and spirituality that may also contribute to inconsistencies in teaching. This information provides guidance to address teaching and training for psychologists on the topic of religion and spirituality.

Research Question

This study explored the experiences of instructors around teaching religion and spirituality in APA accredited clinical doctoral psychology programs in the U.S. The interview questions were aimed at asking the instructors about their personal and professional experiences with the topic of religion and spirituality and the factors they believe contribute to if/how religion and spirituality are taught in their programs. (See Appendix A).

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

There are diverse historical, cultural, and social factors that can influence and shape a person's worldviews. Diversity here is defined (see the previous definition in Chapter I) as all the different aspects that contribute to a whole (person or community). In addition, these historical, cultural, and social factors have also shaped the relationship between religion, spirituality, and psychology in the U.S., one that has largely caused a separation. There is some literature that looks at the history and development of religion and spirituality in education and integrates it into the field of psychology. This literature also highlights a historical bias and split in the relationship between religion and spirituality and psychology. Thus, paralleling the dynamic between the fields of theology, science, and psychology. The circumstances that have caused a split in the fields of psychology and religion and spirituality have shaped training, teaching, and therefore the client's experience in their healing process. For example, the Renaissance and Enlightenment periods provided the backdrop for changes in philosophy and technology that created outcomes of the split from traditional religious institutions. This was followed by policies to separate church and state, and academically the creation of the APA guidelines for training and accreditation of doctoral programs. World War II (WWII) shaped the field of psychology to be viewed as more experimental and research focused. This caused more of the field to focus primarily on science and away from humanistic and spiritual healing models. Non-secular (faith-based) schools such as Fuller Theological Seminary and Rosemead School of Psychology have been attempting to integrate these two fields for years (Bootzin, 2012). The efforts at integration have had success and contributed to seeing religion and spirituality as an important aspect of identity and diversity.

There is a trend towards more doctoral training in psychology to include diversity variables such as religion and spirituality. As a result, there has been an increasing amount of literature on the topic of religion and spirituality. There is literature covering religion and spirituality as both a source of well-being as well as a source of struggle. Further, there has been some literature on training in religion and spirituality, especially across various healthcare providers. However, no study to date has looked at the experiences of instructors teaching religion and spirituality in secular APA accredited clinical doctoral psychology programs. This study will explore the literature that exists including: the history of healing involving religion and spirituality, the development of the field of psychology, the integration of religion and spirituality to the training of psychologists, and the clinical implications of religion and spirituality. These topics highlight the gap that exists in the literature around instructors' experiences in teaching religion and spirituality in secular APA accredited clinical doctoral psychology programs.

History of Healing: Theology and Psychology

Psychology started as a subset discipline to theology and philosophy and this relationship demonstrates that both fields have an interest in learning about the nature of humans, especially about spirituality and psychology (Piedmont, 2013). Looking at the European and U.S. history from the 1300s until now, helps to create some context for how to understand the relationship with religion and spirituality and psychology, more specifically in the Western world and the United States.

The Renaissance period (14th–17th century) can be marked as the first period of time where there was a cultural and intellectual shift challenging religion toward more romanticism, a sort of decolonizing from dominant European thought and practices, after the fall of the Roman

Catholic church in Europe (Poni Venter, 2020). This was an important period to highlight the desire to look beyond the prevalent narrative at the time that fed into more oppressive behaviors by institutions of power and instead supported a search for a sacred history that honored a sense of freedom and liberation.

During the Enlightenment period (17th and 18th centuries), early European philosophers such as Kant, Voltaire, and Rousseau challenged traditional religious customs to not privilege certain groups called by God, but instead seeing them as a part of the government known as “civil religion” (Heinrich, 2015). This period added to the movement against religious authority having the power regarding healing and well-being.

In the 1900s, Modernity and Individualism are two terms that are used to describe this shift in society from organized religion having the main authority to treat psychological problems to individuals that were left to find their way without the structure of religion (Paris, 2013). During the same era, science and research began in the field of psychology, which brought new ideas into looking at supernatural issues. In 1885, the American Society for Psychical Research started to look at techniques such as clairvoyance, telepathy, and hypnosis, followed by astronomers, and then physicians discovering “trans” states, which lead to Freud and his work with dream states (Taylor, 2000). It can be argued that this was the start of a split in the relationship between psychology and theology. Freud, Skinner, Watson, and Ellis are prominent names in psychology who believed that religion was negative and even pathological (Plante, 2008). In addition, during this time, some philosophers were bringing psychology into the sciences. Wilhelm Wundt, Emil Kraepelin, and G. Stanley Hall are among those credited often for bringing the discipline of psychology to the scientific world around the late 1800s and eventually lead to William James’ election as president of APA, with a more philosophical focus

than just “lab time” (Bootzin, 2012).

Before Freud made his debut in the United States, the Emmanuel Movement set the stage for the relationship between psychology and medicine. The Emmanuel Movement was born out of a relationship between physicians and Episcopalian ministers to treat nervous disorders with “a fusion of religious faith and scientific knowledge” (Caplan, 1998, p. 290). This created a foundation for Americans to understand psychotherapy in the twentieth century. The Emmanuel movement also created some integration of the medical profession to integrate mind and spirit with the body. “As an American physician explained in the spring of 1909, that the medical profession should thank the Emmanuel Movement for a revival of interest in the spiritual side of man” (Caplan, 1998, p. 292).

The world wars demonstrated a greater need for psychology, and thus the efforts were pushed more in the scientific direction and away from spirituality and religion. Campbell (2011) argues that the relationship with religion and psychology has developed from two separate fields, “a forced marriage, and then ‘uneasy relationship’” (p. 60). Before World War I (WWI) the professional training in psychology was heavily focused on clinical psychologists doing intelligence and personality assessments and diagnosis of mental disorders (Bootzin, 2012). After WWII, the Veteran’s Administration (VA), National Institute for Mental Health (NIMH), and APA funded and subsequently required doctoral training in clinical psychology (Bootzin, 2012). Carl Rogers, APA president in 1946, created a committee for establishing training guidelines for clinical psychologists (Bootzin, 2012). Plante (2008) argues further that the field of psychology has maintained its efforts to be secular and scientifically validated, which has created a “repackaging” of spiritual interventions under new positive psychology constructs like mindfulness, forgiveness, and compassion.

Education and Training in Religion/Spirituality

There are many types of universities and colleges that have their historical roots. Universities in the U.S. came from a history of educating white, Christian males using both teaching and research-based models of the European West (Vesilind, 1999). This helps to create an understanding of the context where universities were historically based with direct ties to religious beliefs and institutions. Over time historical, social, and cultural events such as WWI and II have shaped the desire for separation of church and state. The efforts at separation have further polarized the fields of spirituality, religion, and psychology.

Separation of Church and State

Historically, there has been moral and legal tension with religion and spirituality in the education system. The Establishment Clause, part of the first amendment in the U.S. Constitution, states “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof” (U.S. Const. amend. I). This clause has led to bans of religion in any government-related establishment including schools. However, the first amendment also assures the free exercise of religion through the Free Exercise Clause. These constitutional rights have been at the core of many debates for years.

Two important court cases established rulings around the teaching of religion and spirituality in public schools. *Everson v. Board of Education 1947* and *Abington v. Schmepp 1963* demonstrated that the state cannot encourage or require religion in schools, but also cannot deny the expression of it (Heinrich, 2015). There are many other circumstances where the expression of religion and spirituality within government entities is challenged but also encouraged. For example, Thomas Jefferson in an 1802 letter demanding separation of church and state, “In God we trust” is written on U.S. currency, the U.S. flag, the Pledge of Allegiance,

national anthem, and oaths of office are all demonstrations where these fields overlap (Heinrich, 2015). This demonstrates ways that this continued relationship between God and State is still expressed in the U.S.

Trying to figure out how to teach religion and spirituality in public schools that honor the U.S. Constitution can be challenging. Heinrich (2015) points out that objective teaching in public schools that brings religious history to create an understanding of important historical events does not violate the government requirement for separation of church and state. However, *in loco parentis*, is a legal and ethical mandate that shares the teachers and schools are responsible for the child's well-being during the school day and essentially act as their parents (Heinrich, 2015). Even though this mandate creates some reasons to avoid teaching religion and spirituality, graduate schools consist of adult learners. However, the controversial history may have set a precedent that teachers avoid these topics altogether, no matter the age of students.

Historical Development of Integrated Programs

Teaching religion and spirituality as an intervention in psychology dates back centuries. In the early 1900s, a priest named Worcester pioneered techniques for combining psychology and Christian teachings (Taylor, 2000). As stated earlier, after WWII, the field of psychology seemed to shift towards healing more as a science. The history of training in psychology was primarily experimental with little focus on clinical training. The Boulder conference in 1949 set the stage for scientist-practitioner programs (Johnson & McMinn, 2003). This created the first framework for training psychologists in clinical psychology following the medical model (Bootzin, 2012). The community mental health Act of 1963 created more employment opportunities for psychologists and a need for more professional schools. This led to the first scholar-practitioner doctoral program at Adelphi University in 1951, followed by the first PsyD

program under the scholar-practitioner model established at the University of Illinois in 1968 (Bootzin, 2012).

This idea of integration was brought to doctoral programs with the development of more professional doctoral programs. Fuller Theological Seminary was the first to create an “integrated” doctoral program in clinical psychology in 1965, which blends faith and the profession of psychology (Johnson & McMinn, 2003). The first Christian practitioner program followed this in 1970 at the Rosemead School of Psychology. The psychological field was starting to recognize the need for faith-based programs as well as more clinical training in psychology. The National Council on Graduate Education held the Vail conference in 1973. The conference supported the newly established practitioner-scholar PsyD professional training programs that focused more on clinical application and training in psychotherapy (Johnson & McMinn, 2003).

Despite the emphasis to integrate religion and spirituality into professional programs, there still are biases and barriers. For example, Campbell (2011) shares that graduate school applicants that made no mention of religion were more likely to be admitted than those who identified as evangelical fundamentalist Christians. The bias against religion and spirituality is seen on the personal as well as the systemic levels. Johnson and McMinn (2003) share that historically faith-based programs have also had trouble with the APA accreditation process. The bias against religion in the field of psychology has historical roots that have been filled with the pressures to both unify and separate, leading to the ongoing tension and complexity experienced in academic programs.

APA and Diversity

The American Psychological Association (APA) is one of the biggest governing bodies for psychologists. The APA has supported and pursued efforts to demonstrate religion and spirituality as an important diversity variable. They have created a task force and hired a diversity officer to address issues around diversity, equity, and inclusion, and supported increased research and published work in the area of religion and spirituality (Oxhandler et al., 2018). The APA has recognized the importance of training in areas of diversity affecting a psychologist's work with clients. My contention is that religion and spirituality must be treated as one of these important diversity variables. More recently, in 2017, the APA adopted a new set of ten multicultural guidelines using a five-layered ecological framework. The *APA Multicultural Guidelines: An Ecological Approach to Context, Identity, and Intersectionality* (2017) was updated to reflect important research and practice changes around areas of multicultural diversity since the 2002 guidelines.

The goal of this new version is to regard the term multicultural more fully—to consider it in its broadest conceptualization. The broadening of our understanding within the *Multicultural Guidelines* reflects current trends in the literature that consider contextual factors and intersectionality among and between reference group identities, including culture, language, gender, race, ethnicity, ability status, sexual orientation, age, gender identity, socioeconomic status, *religion, spirituality*, immigration status, education, and employment, among other variables. (APA, 2017, p. 8)

The new guidelines take an ecological framework to demonstrate the advances of research and training that have taken place over the past 15 years. The framework builds on Bronfenbrenner's ecological model to guide psychologists' work while considering the influences of one's microsystem (immediate context of the individual); mesosystem (relationships with one's home, school, community); exosystem (societal and cultural influences); macrosystem (cultural values and government laws); and chronosystem (historical context; Clauss-Ehler, 2019). APA has

served as a guiding body for psychologists. Over the years the APA has put increased emphasis on multicultural competency. The APA Guidelines on Multicultural Education, Training, Research, Practice and Organizational Change for psychologists, as well as APA's Guidelines and Principles for Accreditation of Programs in Professional Psychology both include direct language for psychologists' practice with religion and spirituality (Vieten et al., 2013). The APA training and accreditation guidelines support the importance of training in religion and spirituality.

The APA Standards of Accreditation in Health Service Psychology (2015) outline a framework for doctoral psychology programs to create a diverse and culturally inclusive training program:

The program recognizes the importance of cultural and individual differences and diversity in the training of psychologists. The Commission on Accreditation defines cultural and individual differences and diversity as including, but not limited to, age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, national origin, race, *religion*, culture, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status...compelling pedagogical interests require that each program prepare graduates to navigate cultural and individual differences in research and practice, including those that may produce value conflicts or other tensions arising from the intersection of different areas of diversity. (p. 8)

These guidelines indicate that doctoral psychology programs should be offering training to psychologists in the area of religion so that they can be prepared when working with clients around these issues.

Further, the APA Ethical Principles for Psychologists and Code of Conduct (2016) shares:

Where scientific or professional knowledge in the discipline of psychology establishes that an understanding of factors associated with age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, *religion*, sexual orientation, disability, language, or socioeconomic status is essential for effective implementation of their services or research, psychologists have or obtain the training, experience, consultation, or supervision necessary to ensure the competence of their services, or they make appropriate referrals. (p. 5)

The language in the APA ethical codes mimics the accreditation guidelines and demonstrates the importance of training psychologists in the area of religion and spirituality. However, we also must realize that the governing body of APA has also been undoubtedly created and impacted by western colonization and continues to perpetuate potentially harmful and oppressive biases. For example, a recent letter written by the Association of Black Psychologists in response to APA's statement of apology regarding the atrocities of racism highlights the failure to live up to their desires for inclusivity and diversity when they did not consult the very groups that have been impacted by continued oppressive practices of organizations (ex. Association of Black psychologists, Hispanic Psychological Association, Society of Indian Psychologists, and the Association of Asian American Psychologist) (The Association of Black Psychologists, 2021).

APA Division 36

The APA has historically recognized the importance of religion and spirituality by creating a division that focused on these issues. The original name of the division started as "Psychologists Interested in Religious Issues," founded from individuals from the Catholic religion, which changed to "Psychology of Religion" in 1993, and more recently in 2012 renamed the "Society for the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality" (Piedmont, 2013). The changes emphasize the importance of the topic to the field of psychology. Division 36 added the term "spirituality" to help broaden research in the field of psychology outside of religion (Piedmont, 2013). Further, the division has gone through its own evolution recognizing the tensions trying to create an identity and increase diversity outside of the Judeo-Christian traditions (Piedmont, 2013). Having the additional term spirituality and understanding the history of the division, highlights the impact of the wider cultural influences and relationship with

religion and spirituality, and psychology.

Training in Religion and Spirituality

Ethical Considerations in Training

The health professions and religious and spiritual organizations both overlap in concerns related to ethical behaviors. These are ethical concerns such as: concern for others, integrity, respect, and honesty (Plante, 2008). It is important to consider ethical issues around religion and spirituality to reduce the potential of harm to clients. One example of concern is clinicians attempting to convert the clients to their beliefs. Training related to ethics in religion and spirituality for psychologists is important.

Many guidelines and ethical codes in the mental health field share the importance of avoiding harm, discrimination, and respect around religious and spiritual issues. These include; the American Psychological Association Ethics Code Principle E; APA standard 3.01, 3.03; the APA Guidelines on Multicultural Education, Training, Research, and Practice, and Organizational Change; American Counseling Association Code Standard C.5 and A.4; Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers standard 1.05; and the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Code of Ethics Principle 1 (Barnett & Johnson, 2011).

Despite having the ethics codes, it can be difficult to navigate ethical decisions regarding religion and spirituality issues. Barnett and Johnson (2011) propose a six-step decision-making process under an ethical frame to help guide psychologists when religion and spirituality issues present themselves in psychotherapy. These ethical issues consider disclosing information, informed consent, the therapy relationship, competence, and consultation. The stages are: respectfully assess the client's religious beliefs and preferences; carefully assess any connection

between the presenting problem and religion and spirituality beliefs and commitments; use results of the assessment to the informed consent process; consider countertransference to the client's religiousness; evaluate your competence; consult with experts in the area of religion and psychotherapy; consult with client's clergy or religious professional if appropriate, decide about treating or making referrals; and assess outcomes and plan accordingly (Barnett & Johnson, 2011).

Training across Disciplines

“Spirituality is an essential element that needs to be addressed in any comprehensive model of human functioning” (Piedmont, 2013, p. 1). Many other professional and health graduate school programs have implemented training with religion and spirituality. The programs included are social work, psychiatry, and counseling psychology. These programs cover religion and spirituality as an important multicultural variable (Schafer et al., 2011).

Oxhandler et al. (2018) conducted a study on about 200 interdisciplinary mental health professionals (social workers, counselors, psychologists, nurses, and marriage and family therapists) to assess what helped or hindered their ability to integrate religion and spirituality into their clinical practice. This study found that barriers to integrating them into their clinical practice included, lack of training, time, discomfort with the topic of religion and spirituality, and client's not wanting to bring it up; while supports for integrating it in their clinical practice were the professional's religiosity, education, having a religious and spiritually sensitive practice (openness to integrating client's religion and spirituality; Oxhandler et al., 2018). This study demonstrates that while some mental health professionals have some specific education and exposure to begin integrating religion and spirituality, there are still barriers to a more formal systematic training in this area. Of further note in this study was that psychologists remain

among the lowest in comparison to these other professions to integrate religion and spirituality into their clinical work.

Psychology Doctoral Training

Despite the APA providing guidelines to doctoral programs, there is still inconsistency of systematic training in religion and spirituality. Vogel et al. (2013) surveyed 292 students and faculty in APA accredited doctoral health service psychology programs and internships around multicultural training in religion and spirituality. The results indicated that formal training of religion and spirituality as one of the other diversity variables is not prioritized and even lacks support for the informal methods, in APA accredited doctoral health service psychology programs and internships. Furthermore, Jafari (2016) did a systematic review of training in religion and spirituality at APA accredited clinical and counseling doctoral psychology programs. This review found that these programs were not offering frequent systematic training that covered religion and spirituality within curriculum contexts. These studies demonstrate that there is the little specific, structured, and systematic teaching of religion and spirituality in APA accredited health service psychology doctoral programs.

Some studies looked specifically at counseling and clinical psychology programs. Saunders et al. (2014) gathered data from over 500 individuals in APA accredited doctoral counseling psychology programs. The results showed that individuals in doctoral psychology programs endorsed that they have received little to no training in religion and spirituality. Further, Schulte et al. (2002) surveyed training directors of APA accredited doctoral counseling psychology programs. The results revealed that 82% of the training directors indicated that there are no course offerings in religion and spirituality. These studies support the absence of training in religion and spirituality in counseling doctoral psychology programs.

Reedy (2016) did a study on clinical psychologists that graduated from both APA accredited secular and non-secular doctoral programs. The results demonstrated that despite primarily empirical studies previously looking at secular schools, clinical psychologists in both programs had similar inadequate training in religion and spirituality. In addition, McMinn et al. (2015) did a study that surveyed over 300 students from APA accredited Christian doctoral programs. This study used the same survey previously used to gather information from students at APA accredited doctoral programs that were not religiously affiliated. The results indicated that students from APA accredited Christian (non-secular) doctoral psychology programs receive more religion and spirituality training. These studies demonstrate that although some improvement is happening, religion and spirituality are being taught inconsistently across doctoral health service psychology training programs.

Training in the topic of religion and spirituality is lacking despite psychologists' interest in being trained. A study done by Crook-Lyon et al. (2012) surveyed over 300 psychologists who were members of various divisions in APA. Results found 65% of those psychologists felt that religion and spirituality issues should be included in graduate training. However, the topic of religion and spirituality is covered more widely in pre-doctoral internship supervision. Russell and Yarhouse (2006) surveyed APA accredited health service psychology doctoral internship sites and reported that the topic of religion/spirituality is most often addressed in the context of supervision. The study demonstrated that over 90% of the internship sites surveyed covered religion and spirituality in supervision.

A more recent study demonstrated an improvement in the training of religion and spirituality in APA accredited clinical psychology programs. Schafer et al. (2011) completed a follow-up study to Brawer et al. (2002), looking at efforts to cover religion and spirituality across

APA accredited clinical doctoral psychology programs. These programs included both secular and non-secular schools. Clinical training directors reported that religion and spirituality tended to be covered in supervision, or as a part of diversity courses. This study demonstrated that there was an increase in the number of programs that covered religion and spirituality in training, although still not as the main topic in most.

Competencies for Psychologists

The APA uses competency to measure knowledge, skill, attitudes, and the application of these in the practice of psychology (Rodolfa et al., 2005). This includes religion and spirituality as a part of multicultural competency.

As a subset of multicultural competencies, spiritual and religious competencies are defined as a set of attitudes, knowledge, and skills in the domains of spirituality and religion that every psychologist should have to effectively and ethically practice psychology, regardless of whether or not they conduct spiritually oriented psychotherapy or consider themselves spiritual or religious. (Vieten et al., 2013, p. 133)

The classroom is a rich space to provide professional development, cultural humility and competency training in religion and spirituality. Heinrich (2015) argues that the classroom is the best place to build "religious tolerance and acceptance", and this would not be possible with the emphasis to ban any teaching of religion in schools. Further, psychologists themselves seem to be getting a variable and inconsistent training experience across doctoral programs. Shafranske and Malony (1990) found that 85% of psychologists surveyed reported little to no discussion of education and training in religion and spirituality in their own doctoral training.

Hathaway (2013) supports the need for religious and spirituality competencies in graduate programs and current efforts in the field of clinical psychology to integrate religion and spirituality. Further, he highlights that clinical psychology at present offers more specialized (faith-based specific) programs and more individual-focused support, versus a more standardized

and consistent competency training for graduate students around religion and spiritual competency (Hathaway, 2013).

Vieten et al. (2013) realized the gaps between psychologists' need to be competent in the area of religion and spirituality and the guidelines for them to do this. They created 16 spiritual and religious competencies to guide licensed psychologists in addressing these issues in psychotherapy. This study used a focus group, an online survey of experts in the area of religion and spirituality in psychology, and a thorough review of the literature (Vieten et al., 2013).

Despite the effort to create competencies, there seems to be a lack of implementing them in the training and practice of psychologists. The reasons for the lack of implementation could include: psychologist's own religious and spiritual beliefs, spirituality and religion being seen as an unimportant part of psychological functioning, and how to implement religion and spirituality in training (Vieten et al., 2013).

Supervision Competency. Schafranske (2016) shares that competency-based clinical supervision can create a setting for psychologists in training to explore religion and spirituality. The study outlines certain skills, knowledge, and attitudes that lead to competence around spiritual issues. These include skills to: assess the importance of and implement spiritual coping, the knowledge of empirical literature in spirituality to clinical practice, and the awareness of the trainee's own biases around spirituality (Schafranske, 2016). Supervision is one area that psychologists in training are gaining competency in religion and spirituality.

Applied Competency for Psychotherapy. Many psychologists do not receive guidance on how to incorporate religion and spirituality into psychotherapy. Plante (2008) offers 13 religious and spiritual principles that psychologists can use to work with their clients regardless of their beliefs. These include: meditation, prayer, vocation/meaning and purpose, bibliotherapy,

community rituals/ceremonies, service, and volunteer work, ethical values, and behaviors, demonstrating love, gratitude, forgiveness, compassion, social justice, learning from spiritual models, acceptance of self and others, being a part of something larger than yourself, and sacredness of life. Having guidance and training is essential to aid psychologists in becoming competent and practicing ethically when using religion and spirituality in psychotherapy.

Pearce et al. (2020) developed an eight-week online training program using the 16 spiritual competencies model by (Vieten et al., 2013) to support spiritual competencies for all mental health professionals across various disciplines and theoretical orientations. This free online, self-paced program was shown to decrease barriers for mental health professionals to integrate religion and spirituality into their clinical work (Pearce et al., 2020).

Barriers to Training and Integrating Religion and Spirituality

Most agree that barriers exist to teaching religion and spirituality in doctoral programs, but little has been done to identify the barriers. Quantitative studies exploring the training of religion and spirituality in doctoral psychology programs are more common in the literature than qualitative studies. Cassidy (2006) surveyed 253 psychology interns. The study found that most interns did not feel prepared or competent in addressing religion and spirituality issues in counseling. The results also indicated that the inability to address religion and spirituality in therapy was related to a lack of training in doctoral programs. The study mentioned suggestions of possible barriers like lack of training, expertise, or personal values. One additional suggested barrier in this study was state-affiliated programs were reluctant to violate the separation of church and state. This study supports that there are barriers to training in religion and spirituality.

There are a few qualitative studies that have looked specifically at barriers to teaching religion and spirituality in APA accredited doctoral health service psychology programs. One

study done by Adams et al. (2015) explored barriers to teaching religion and spirituality in APA accredited doctoral counseling programs. The study found that two main categories of barriers were the psychologist's lack of both information on the topic and personal relevance. This study used the Delphi methodology that included an emphasis on using experts in the area of religion and spirituality (Adams et al., 2015).

Research has also explored barriers to using religion and spirituality in psychotherapy from psychologists' perspectives. Brown et al. (2013) found that most psychologists were open to discussing religion and spirituality with their clients. The results also revealed the following barriers: ethics, having clashing morals and beliefs with the client, client's dependence on religion and spirituality for decision making, lack of knowledge, understanding, training, client resistance, discomfort with their spiritual self, and specific psychological approaches that make it difficult. The barriers identified in this study were just one of five questions asked of the psychologists. This study's methodology included the use of focus groups to gather data. The results revealed barriers to incorporating religion and spirituality into therapy, with a lack of training being one.

Psychologists' Bias and Attitudes

Shafranke and Malony (1990) surveyed over 400 members of APA Division 12 (Clinical psychology) that assessed personal attitudes and beliefs around religion and spirituality, including training experiences and how they practice in psychology. They found that these psychologists value religion and spirituality, with over half of the psychologists finding personal relevance, although the psychologists appeared to have low involvement with organized religion (Shafranske & Malony, 1990). Many psychologists in America share that religion is not important to them at all, with only about 1/3 stating any commitment to a religious community

(Shafranske, 2000, as cited in Plante, 2008). Psychologists appear to have recognized the importance of religion and spirituality, but the variability in personal practice may inhibit them from using spiritual interventions with clients.

The personal bias that psychologists have with religion and spirituality directly influences their use of it in psychotherapy. Shafranske and Malony (1990) demonstrated that psychologist's personal beliefs and attitudes, training, correlated with how often they used spiritual interventions in psychotherapy, evidenced by 55% agreed it was not appropriate for a psychologist to use religious scripture or texts during psychotherapy, and 68% also said it was not appropriate for a psychologist to pray with a client.

Positive personal experiences with religion and spirituality can aid counselors in confidently addressing it with their clients. Tillman et al. (2013) did a qualitative study on the process with Christian master-level counselors who identified as confident in addressing religion and spirituality issues in counseling. The results found that having a positive foundational sense of things spiritual, engaged in a personal spiritual journey, having the opportunity to socially construct one's ideas about religion and spirituality, having the inner drive to become confident, and developing the ability to deal with "pitfalls" when talking about religion and spirituality orientation with clients were the main themes to addressing confidence around religion and spirituality in counseling (Tillman et al., 2013).

Oxhandler and Parrish (2018) did a study across 3500 licensed professionals, which included psychologists, about their attitudes and behaviors on integrating spirituality and religion into their clinical practices. These included: self-efficacy attitudes, perceived feasibility, and behaviors towards integrating religion and spirituality. Psychologists ranked lower compared to other professions in self-efficacy (due to lower religiosity) and behaviors in integrating religion

and spirituality in clinical work. They had a favorable attitude towards integrating religion and spirituality and low feasibility (perception of being able to integrate it) along with other mental health professionals. This study further supports that in general, attitudes among psychologists can be favorable or mixed with integrating religion and spirituality, and that their personal views and practices might play a role in the process.

Clinical Implications of Religion and Spirituality

Support for Well-Being

Religion and spirituality have been shown to have overall positive effects on well-being. However, also important is to acknowledge the harm and struggle that many people face with religion and spirituality. Abu Raiya (2017) shares a great perspective on how the reductionistic and non-reductionistic views are linked to how health and well-being might be viewed when related to religion and spirituality:

The reductionistic approach considers the links between religion and health and well-being to be not direct, but rather mediated by non-religious/spiritual variables. Thus, religious involvement might lead to some “secular” consequences (e.g., sense of meaning, sense of belonging), and those secular elements of life are what eventually lead to outcomes. In contrast, according to the non-reductionistic logic, religious involvement is inherently linked to health and well-being because it constitutes a system of ultimate beliefs and practices and a source of deepest values, commitments, and world views. (p. 545)

This is sharing that there can be views in health and psychology that the well-being of individuals is either related to inherent religious and spiritual beliefs or the (reductionist) views that there are multiple reasons that are not directly linked to religious and spiritual beliefs.

Much of the research on the benefits of religion and spirituality is centered on the concepts of intrinsic and extrinsic benefits. Intrinsic benefits are personal benefits and extrinsic ones benefit the whole community (Plante, 2008). Greenfield et al. (2009) studied religious participation and individual connection to the transcendent are related to psychological

well-being. The results demonstrated that psychological well-being was associated with a higher level of connection to the transcendent (spiritual perceptions), as well as religious participation linked to personal growth and purpose in life. In addition, lower levels of psychological well-being in the area of autonomy were correlated to more frequent religious participation (Greenfield et al., 2009). When individuals are actively participating in religious and spiritual practices, they tend to have more overall positive well-being. Religion and spirituality across cultures, especially when motivated from within the person, are correlated to mental, physical well-being and positive emotions like joy and happiness (Day, 2010). Lun and Bond (2013) suggest that religion and spirituality are subjectively associated with well-being but will differ across various cultural contexts and the measures that are used in the studies.

Spirituality and religion have been shown to increase physical well-being. Masters and Hooker (2013) found that religious and spiritual coping (attending religious service) are correlated to reductions in cancer and cardiovascular mortality. Research on religion and spirituality and health can aid in informing practices that positively influence well-being, meet the desires and health care needs of individuals with serious medical conditions, and preventative efforts to target individuals at high risk for certain diseases (Koenig, 2012). Religious and spiritual practices aid in an individual's psychological, physical, and spiritual well-being. Research has been done across disciplines to demonstrate the importance of including religion and spirituality as an aspect of whole-person care.

Henderson (2016) did a study that looked at childhood adversity for over 5,000 black Americans linked to poor mental health outcomes and that involvement in religious institutions and practices can serve as a positive buffer. The results showed that especially for this community, religious practices and involvement played a role in increasing self-worth that is not

otherwise offered by secular institutions that have historically excluded them. However, the study also demonstrated that “religious overcontrol” related to beliefs in early childhood can have a negative impact on adult mental health in this group of black Americans. It is important to balance looking at the benefits and struggles around religion and spirituality, especially in various racial and ethnically diverse groups.

Harm and Struggles for Well-Being

Religion and spirituality can also be a risk factors and not contribute to overall well-being. Faigin et al. (2014) did a study looking at spiritual struggles as a risk factor for various addictions in 90 first-year college students. They found that higher spiritual struggles were a possible risk factor for increased issues with addictions, but not including internet/video games, food bingeing, and alcohol. Context and individual factors will vary and contribute to varying levels of religious and spiritual involvement and the benefits. In addition, when the motivation is coming from outside the person, or highly controlling and authoritative religions, religion and spirituality are not associated with well-being (Day, 2010).

Further, Exline et al. (2021) conducted a study on religious and spiritual struggles from a sample (around 300) from a wider study with transgender and gender non-conforming individuals (TGNC) and mental health. The study supported that TGNC in this sample of the U.S. have low levels of religious engagement and have low-moderate religious struggles across the six domains, with interpersonal struggles being the highest and half with some form of religious rejection (from God and others).

Zinnbauer (2013) reminds us to consider that all models that look at religion and spirituality often include and overlap in various areas of Western thought (pre-modern, modern, postmodern, and integrative). He recognizes that this topic is complex, and the field of

psychology would benefit from leaving room for diverse cultural and contextual shifts that can hold the idea of multiple truths and ideas when it comes to health and well-being (Zinnbauer, 2013).

Religion and Spirituality in Psychotherapy

Religion and spirituality are important when using a whole person and client-centered care orientation in psychotherapy. Worthington, Jr. et al. (2011) completed a meta-analysis of 46 studies comparing religious versus non-religious therapies. The results revealed that greater improvement was shown in people that had religious and spiritual therapies. These therapies were mostly Christian and Muslim. These results demonstrate that incorporating religion and spirituality is effective for people that are committed and want them.

Prayer

Prayer is a common religious and spiritual practice and intervention to show positive implications for health. Prayer is the most commonly used intervention inside and outside of the U.S. for health issues (Masters & Hooker, 2013). Based on the 2002 Data from the National Health Interview Survey prayer increased for health-related concerns (i.e., dental pain) between 2001 and 2007 from 43–49%, suggesting that people who experience a decline in health or more likely to use prayer to cope than individuals who are not (Wachholtz & Sambamoorthi, 2011). In addition, this survey found that prayer could be used as a protective factor for psychological problems and are more likely to be used by individuals if they are non-Caucasian, female, or highly educated (Wachholtz & Sambamoorthi, 2011). Prayer seems to have increased in the U.S. and shown to support positive well-being. Prayer, as a religious practice, has been demonstrated to be a positive mechanism for: coping with stress and promoting relaxation, problem-solving skills, and personal growth, reduced anger and anxiety, and increased empathy (Day, 2010).

The history related to the freedom of prayer is important to consider. A Supreme Court case *Wallace v Jaffree 1985* shared that “silent meditation or voluntary prayer” violated the separation of church and state because the school required students to participate (Heinrich, 2015). These historical cases point to reasons why religious and spiritual practices are not being used as often.

Faith Developmental Process

Developmental theories can help to provide a framework for understanding there is a growth process for religion, spirituality and faith that can be similar to other developmental processes in life. Dr. James Fowler has built on the prior works of Piaget, Erikson, and Kohlberg to create *Stages of Faith* that help us understand how one’s faith development process can look (Fowler, 1981). He outlines six stages starting from around age 3. They are as follows:

- Stage 1: Intuitive-Projective faith (3–7 years), the first stage of self-awareness that is more filled with stories, fantasy, and imagination, and the faith is that imitation of their primary caregivers in their immediate world. Faith develops out of trust early on.
- Stage 2: Mythic-Literal faith (around 10 years), the person’s beliefs, stories, and things represent a sense of belonging to their community. These can be seen as more moral rules and attitudes that is more concrete than the previous stage.
- Stage 3: Synthetic-Conventional faith (adolescent/puberty years), a stage where it can describe a way for a person make sense of their identity within multiple social settings. This is where a person would be very attuned to how faith relates to interpersonal dynamics and likely conform to the social dynamics around them, while trying to gain a sense of autonomy.

- Stage 4: Individuative-reflective faith (late adolescent/early adulthood years), the person starts to take ownership of their beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes, feeling increased tension of individuality and group membership. Fowler (1981) shares at this stage many adults do not construct this in early adulthood and often are seen around 30–40 years of age. This stage is a critical reflection and “demythologizing” previously held unconscious beliefs. This stage creates room for increased complexity and even incorporates elements from other faith traditions.
- Stage 5: Conjunctive faith (adulthood-often before “mid-life”) that involves increased integration of previously suppressed parts of beliefs and self to a new re-storying of the past. This stage involves finding a deeper sense of self that can observe previous myths and prejudices that were present in the various religious traditions, ethnicity, and social class dynamics they grew up in. A freedom from all these external social dynamics and ability to listen and hear truths of the “other,” differences, and desire for justice, while preserving their well-being.
- Stage 6: Universalizing faith, building on “paradoxical and dialectical” parts of stage 5. This stage includes an active demonstration of sacrificing the self to make tangible the love, compassion, and justice values, even at the sacrifice of threats to group membership and parochial institutional systems in the spirit of a universal community and inclusive of all beings. Fowler states “they are contagious in the sense that they create zones of liberations from the social, political, economic, and ideological shackles we place and endure on human futurity” (p. 201).

Utilizing a stage and structure model helps to outline the idea that a person can move

through stages of development in their faith similar to their social, emotional, and physical development. However, Fowler's model does mostly focus on cognitive-emotional, and social development using a broader definition, and seems to derive more influence from male-dominated perspectives in psychology. Another four-stage model of faith development is presented by Brian D. McLaren (2021) that was influenced by his research of female and racial identity theorists. In this model, the concept of doubt is the catalyst for what moves individuals to other stages, he shares some of the following things that shape the four stages (that individuals can move in and out of):

- Stage 1-Simplicity: This starts for most around age 2, which is shaped by dualistic thinking, and faith beliefs are shaped by authority figures. Faith is an assent to required beliefs.
- Stage 2-Complexity: Usually around teens or pre-teens, shaped by pragmatic thinking, look to mentors and coaches to succeed. Faith is means to desired end.
- Stage 3-Perplexity: Some people never get to this stage, shaped by critical and relativistic thinking, views authority figures as manipulative who want control. Faith is an obstacle to critical thinking.
- Stage 4-Harmony: Shaped by integral/holistic thinking, authority figures are fallible like other humans. Faith is a humble, reverent openness to the mystery that expresses itself in non-discriminatory love.

Other theories can offer more specific perspectives on religion and spirituality. For example, Osler and Gmunder (2006) also supported a stage and structured model of religious and spiritual development looking at religious reasoning/judgment when navigating their freedom versus dependency with a higher power, in this case, more focused on religion (Oser et al.,

2006). The models of McLaren, Fowler, and Osler help to provide a framework and process of how individuals grow and navigate a relationship with religion and spirituality throughout the life span. These more structural theories though can lead to one thinking there may be a certain developmental “goal” or “end states” to achieve with religion and spirituality (Osler et al., 2006).

Day (2010) shares that developmental systems, attachment, social-cultural, and narrative theories also can add to the dialogues around religion, spirituality, and faith development (or what might be called moral development) to broaden the scope outside of more cognitive-based ones. Other theories in this area can help to shape a more relational, diverse, and inclusive view including how various contexts and individual experiences shape religious and spiritual identity.

CHAPTER III: METHOD

This project used an interpretive, phenomenological, and hermeneutic framework, otherwise known as Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The field of research in psychology is seen by some as moving away from a positivist way of understanding to a more constructivist and interpretivist approach (Laverty, 2003). Cohen et al. (2007, as cited in Sloan & Bowe, 2014) share that “human behavior is determined by the phenomena of experience rather than objective, physically described the reality that is external to the individual” (p. 2). Individuals are unique and different. It is difficult to capture the true essence of their experience when looking solely at it through an objective lens. Qualitative research attempts to capture the phenomenon of the changing world in a socially constructed way (Sloan & Bowe, 2014).

Phenomenology was birthed out of a desire for a more profound philosophical view that was not focused on objectivity and positivism. Edmund Husserl was a German mathematician and philosopher that developed descriptive or transcendental phenomenology, during the 20th century, a time when scientific knowledge and empirical data were valued most (Sloan & Bowe, 2014). Husserl criticized the scientific view of measuring human behavior, and this phenomenology was later adopted by psychology as a credible method (Sloan & Bowe, 2014).

Research Design

There is a lack of qualitative studies that look at teaching religion and spirituality. Contrary to what is captured in quantitative studies, phenomenology endeavors to discover the overall “essence” of what is experienced (Creswell, 2013). This study used Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to capture the experience of instructors from APA accredited doctoral clinical psychology programs. The phenomenon being investigated is teaching religion and spirituality in secular APA clinical doctoral psychology programs. The study explored the

meaning of instructors' personal and professional experiences around religion and spirituality and the teaching, or lack thereof on this topic.

The IPA method was chosen to capture the experience of instructors, another side of the phenomenon that has not been studied. IPA involves hermeneutics that has also been used in biblical analysis and social sciences (Smith & Osborne, 2008). This supports a philosophical topic like religion and spirituality to be contextualized within a social and cultural context. To date, there has been no IPA study done on exploring the experiences teaching religion and spirituality in APA accredited doctoral psychology programs.

IPA

Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was birthed from Martin Heidegger, who was a student and academic assistant of Husserl at The University of Freiburg in Germany. Heidegger differed in thinking from Husserl in that he believed that the researcher cannot remove himself entirely from the process of describing the lived experience because they are part of the dynamic (Sloan & Bowe, 2014). IPA focuses more on the experiential versus experimental part of the research. Heidegger added that context and relation to time are essential pieces of the process (Sloan & Bowe, 2014).

IPA embraces three philosophical ideas that are phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography. Hermeneutics and phenomenology are epistemological theories of interpretation that describe how many contextual factors will always influence how things are understood, and the idiographic inquiry focuses on the more in-depth details of the lived experience (Laverly, 2003). The research process involves not only capturing the lived experience but also considering where that person is coming from and trying to make sense of it. The researcher searches for the meaning of what the participant's experience while the participants themselves are trying to make

sense of it (Smith & Osborne, 2008). This is known as a double hermeneutic.

Research Method

Participants

Brawer et al. (2002) and Schafer et al. (2011) studies used surveys to collect information regarding training in religion and spirituality in clinical psychology programs. The surveys asked clinical directors, across PsyD and PhD APA-accredited doctoral psychology programs in the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico, whether they thought their programs taught religion and spirituality. Neither of the studies included asking personal attitudes to the students or instructors. This present study expanded on these previous studies. The participants in this study were chosen from a list of APA accredited schools through the American Psychological Association Office of Accreditation. The participants were eight instructors from various non-faith-based (secular) APA accredited clinical psychology programs across the U.S. (west, midwest, south, and east). One program was mixed clinical and counseling psychology. The participants aged from 35–75, with five who identified as females, three who identified as males, and all identified as white/caucasian. They had been teaching in their doctoral programs for 1–40 years (with 5–40 years of experience teaching in total).

Table 1*Participant Demographics*

Age	53	60	35	40	53	75	37	42
State	Midwest	West	East	Midwest	Midwest	Midwest	Midwest	South
Gender	Female	Female	Female	Female	Male	Male	Female	Male
Race/Ethnicity	White	White	White	White	White	White	White	White
Longevity Teaching in Doctoral Program	20	5	1	8	10	40	2.5	8
Type of Program	Clinical	Clinical	Clinical	Clinical	Clinical	Clinical	Clinical	Clinical /Counseling
Total years teaching	20	9	5	11	20	40	6	11

Recruitment

The procedure involved obtaining a list of doctoral clinical psychology programs from the APA website. There are 237 accredited clinical psychology programs across the US. Then they were narrowed down by identifying just secular APA accredited doctoral clinical psychology programs. One school was randomly selected from each state and the flyer was emailed to instructors, clinical training directors, and program directors. In addition, the researcher sent out email flyers to Division 36 of APA (Society for the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality). Last, an email flyer was distributed to other listservs of fellow psychologists using the snowball method.

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria. The inclusion criteria included: instructors (current or retired), taught at an APA accredited university, a doctoral degree program in clinical psychology, and be non-faith based (secular). In addition, the instructors were able to have varying beliefs regarding religion and spirituality and also did not need to have taught on this specific topic either. Not having a focus on a certain belief or religion was done intentionally to capture a wide variety of experiences related to teaching religion and spirituality, including

people that did not think it was important.

The instructors were chosen through purposive and convenience sampling from the list of secular, APA accredited doctoral clinical psychology programs and the various listservs. This supports the process of IPA to select a group that fits the aim of the research study (Smith & Osborne, 2007). Smith and Osborne (2008) share that “a distinctive feature of IPA is its commitment to a detailed interpretative account of the cases included and many researchers are recognizing that this can only realistically be done on a very small sample” (p. 56). This study recruited nine participants and analyzed eight interviews. One interview was not included in the final analysis due to the participant being from a faith-based institution. Participants were not excluded due to demographic factors such as ethnicity/race, gender, sexual orientation, or SES.

Benefits and Risks. There is value in these instructors being able to share their stories. Their experiences offer a significant contribution to the field of psychology, teaching, and training. In addition, their contribution to this research can lead to policy changes for programs, which will extend to client welfare. In addition, by opening themselves up to this interview process, the instructors may have gained self-awareness about their own biases and behaviors around the topic of religion and spirituality.

Qualitative research tends to be more personal than quantitative and therefore carries with it some risks. These risks were outlined and approved via the Antioch University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The interviews involved questions that are personal and carry with them many feelings. The risks included things such as connections to the institution where they are employed and emotional triggers. There was a letter of consent (see Appendix B) given to the participant before the interview, outlining that they can withdraw from the study at any time. All participants consented written or verbally before proceeding with the interview process. There

were resources provided for ongoing psychological support should the participants have needed it.

Participant Protection

All data and information were kept secure. The signed consent form and data were kept on a password-protected secure USB drive, used on a password-protected computer, and USB stored in a locked cabinet when not in use. The original transcription was given pseudonym numbers to keep anonymity (ex. P1). The participants were given the option in the consent form, for the participant to review transcripts if desired (Smith et al., 2009).

I consistently sought supervision regularly by the dissertation committee and chair throughout the process to ensure the ethical quality of the data and research process.

Data Collection

The process involved semi-structured interviews with the instructors across the U.S from secular APA accredited clinical doctoral psychology programs. The semi-structured interviews lasted around 30–60 minutes. These took place via video conferencing on Zoom software, except for one interview by telephone. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. The researcher used [trascribee.wreally.com](https://www.trascribee.com) to help with transcription. They were then reviewed for accuracy and editing by the researcher. Participants were aware of the possibility of a transcription service being used in the informed consent.

The interviews involved the use of a semi-structured interview schedule to provide some structure focusing questions on relevant topics (Smith et al., 2009). Although there was an interview schedule set, the interview followed the guidance of the participant and where they led the conversation. The flexibility of the researcher during the interview is in line with the IPA process (Smith et al., 2009). The semi-structured interviews used open-ended questions with the

instructors using the following interview questions (See also Appendix A):

- How do you conceptualize religion and/or spirituality? Using your definition, Do you include religion/spirituality in your courses? (If yes, How)? If not, have you ever considered it? Why or why not?
- Do you believe that religion/spirituality should be included in doctoral psychology education like any other diversity variables? Why or why not?
- What factors do you think might influence your teaching of religion/spirituality in your courses?
- Can I ask what your personal background is with religion/spirituality (history/personal importance)
- Who should I turn to learn more about this topic?
- What is your perspective on whether or not religion and spirituality should be taught more?

The interviews ceased when there is enough data that reached saturation, demonstrated in IPA by not gaining any new understanding of the experiences through continued interviews (Laverty, 2003). For this project, we concluded at nine interviews, which is generally within the IPA framework, although IPA often focuses on very small samples (Smith et al., 2009).

Data Analysis

The analysis process was complex and in-depth, occurring on many levels. The process involved a reflective engagement with the data. This was shown by looking deeply at the language in the text, reading involving circling the data multiple times, and writing that has both the participant's interpretation as well as the researcher, with assumptions of the researcher used as an essential part of the process (Laverty, 2003). To assist in the participant being the sole focus, the researcher did keep a reflective journal through the process of recording their experience and bracketing it off (Smith et al., 2009). The data analysis procedure for IPA

outlines a general 5-step process that was followed:

1. Reading and re-reading: involved listening to the audio while reading the transcription, and then re-reading the transcription with the voice of the participant in mind. After the initial reading and re-reading. The transcripts were uploaded into NVIVO software for help with the coding process.
2. Initial noting: this involved noting anything of initial interest in the transcript, identifying the way a participant thinks about an issue. These initial notes and comments on the data focus on key objects and the meaning to the participant (using descriptive, linguistic, and conceptual comments). The researcher used NVivo quotes directly from the transcript as the first level of coding.
3. Developing emergent themes: this involved looking at the initial notes/codes and mapping patterns. This included phrases with both the participant's words and thoughts and the researcher's interpretation. The researcher did this for each individual transcript.
4. Searching for connections across emergent themes: this involved a listing of how the researcher thought the themes fit together. At this point, some themes are discarded.
5. Looking patterns across cases: once all the initial five steps had been done for each interview, this step grouped larger themes (Smith et al., 2009). The researcher took and cut up pieces of paper with each theme and emergent theme for each interview and looked for grouping them across all eight interviews transcribed. These were then put into tables (See Appendix D). Then they were grouped into the final superordinate and subordinate themes.

Reliability and Credibility

IPA demonstrates credibility using multiple layers of interpretation, bracketing, and reflexivity. The details and experiences are captured in the in-depth process with the text in a way that accurately describes the lived experience (Laverty, 2003). The analysis process is purposefully repetitive, with layers of capturing the details to ensure the true experience of the participants. Bracketing and reflexivity were demonstrated throughout the research process as the researcher tried to put aside assumptions to objectively capture the participant's experience. Bracketing and reflexivity were done in this study by using a “reflective diary” to write down the researcher’s thoughts and feelings after each interview (Oxley, 2016). Summary notes were written in this reflective diary after each interview and throughout the project. This also included pre-existing assumptions before data collection and analysis. Validity was also done in this process by writing down verbatim the extracts from transcripts in the written project (Creswell, 2013).

The Researcher

Qualitative research, and IPA, views the researcher as a part of the interview process; often viewed as another participant. However, the participant is still considered to be the expert in the study. I, the principal researcher, am in a secular APA accredited doctoral clinical psychology program in Seattle, WA. I do not have personal experience with teaching religion and spirituality in doctoral programs. I have little professional training in religious and spiritual competencies. I do come from a protestant Christian family background and studied briefly some eastern philosophical and spiritual practices that have influenced my worldview. I am also influenced by relational, humanistic, and ecological theories that also shape the way I see the world. I became interested in the topic of training in religion and spirituality based on my lived

experience in a diversity class the first year of my doctoral psychology program. I noticed the focus of the literature and course in this diversity series was mostly on race and ethnicity. Religion and spirituality are important aspects of my worldview and how I view other human beings. After my doctoral diversity course experience, I started on a journey in an attempt to make meaning of why religion and spirituality were not brought up in any of my courses. What started with looking at this study through a critical lens with my assumptions, developed into a more curious, open, and flexible process to discover the stories of these instructors. I believe that religion and spirituality are important to so many people's lives and identities, especially when looked at from a holistic perspective and also as an aspect of diversity. I believe that because of this, psychologists need a more of a focus on character development and critical conversations discussions in their training so that they can increase their awareness and biases around religion and spirituality. With a training space that goes beyond cognitive knowledge and skills, they can then model a more welcoming, empathic, and inclusive experience for their clients that might often be different from their own. This study and process revealed some of the personal and professional experiences of doctoral psychology instructors that may produce some guidance to support teaching and training.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

The analysis revealed three major superordinate themes, and eight subordinate themes to describe the story shared by the eight instructors interviewed (See Appendix E). The three superordinate themes of these instructors around the experience of religion and spirituality were: [religion and spirituality as a] diverse interrelated evolving process, the [importance of] finding space in the tension, and the [importance of understanding] biases shaped by support and struggles. These superordinate themes were identified when half or more of the participants talked personally about these topics. The nature of the topic and methodology entailed a very hermeneutic and iterative process and therefore made it difficult to compartmentalize them into separate themes. The value of qualitative data is that you can gain the essence of the journey through all the levels of themes. Throughout each interview, I found myself resonating with parts of each of their shared journeys. The following section will help the reader get to know these individuals more just as I was able to.

Introductions to the Participants

The superordinate themes subordinate themes below were derived from excerpts of the interviews and subsequent codes. However, keeping with the spirit of IPA, this was also a co-created experience with me as the researcher interpreting what they were saying. The following will describe the participants with a little more detail that will help to paint the essence and story that resulted in the outcome of this project.

Participant 1 was a 53-year-old, identified as a white female located in the Midwest. She has been an instructor in a doctoral clinical psychology program for twenty years. She was very knowledgeable in religious and spiritual competencies and struggles. I experienced her wealth of experience and knowledge as a bit intimidating. This feeling could also relate to the fact that it

was my first interview. She discussed about there being a lot of demands on the instructors to teach a certain curriculum. She mentioned that this left little room for teaching religion and spirituality except for lectures in her program's current diversity course. She teaches a specific course in religion and spirituality at the undergraduate level. One observation she made was that her colleagues did not share the same value for the importance of religion and spirituality. She was very open to sharing her personal experiences. What came out while sharing her process was also a specific focus on the hurt caused by religious experiences. The experience of religious hurt resonated with me.

Participant 2 was a 60-year-old, identified as a white female located in the West. She has been an instructor in a clinical psychology program for five years. I experienced her as very open and excited to share. She has had long experience teaching religion and spirituality before her current doctoral program. She came across as very self-aware of her evolving process, emphasizing the desire for inclusivity and social justice aspects of religion and spirituality. She talked about this desire for inclusivity and social justice values that led her choose to teach at a non-faith-based school currently, despite her vast experience at faith-based institutions. I resonated with her experiences and values, and how her research on the topic of grace is connected to a relationship with spirituality. She shared her thoughts about the field of clinical psychology is trying to find its place within the greater field of psychology, and how this effort to be science and evidenced based contributes to the bias against teaching religion and spirituality. It was easy to flow with conversation and questions, even her observations that the questions were thought-provoking for her.

Participant 3 was excluded from the study due to coming from a faith-based institution and all others were at secular institutions.

Participant 4 was a 35-year-old identified as a white female located in the East. She has been an instructor in the clinical psychology program for one year. She seemed to initially struggle with the question of defining religion and spirituality using another person's definition and then bravely sharing her growing definitions. It was notable that she separated her role as an instructor and how she operates as a clinician. She shared her journey with how culture, religion and spirituality shape important aspects of people's identities and influences how she brings this into her work. I really appreciated her questioning between teaching religion and spirituality versus creating space to discuss it. She expressed curiosity in whether it was the cultural values of more western countries views that might shape why there is not as much space to talk about religion and spirituality. She shared her thoughts about both eastern and western philosophies that have shaped her research endeavors and unfortunately were not received well in her graduate school experience. We shared in our similar experiences in graduate school with wanting to bring in a focus on religion and spirituality as an uphill battle.

Participant 5 was a 42-year-old, identified as a white male located in the South. He has been an instructor in a combined clinical and counseling psychology program for eight years. He shared his views of spirituality as a process of cultural identity to seek transcendence and his vast personal background with religion and spirituality. His family history and background of training in the Christian faith helped to shape his interest in bringing religion and spirituality into his program and the field of clinical psychology, to make it more formal and systematic. He has dedicated a lot of time through his teaching and research. One thing that stood out to me was when he shared "research is me search," indicating that we often research the things that are meaningful to our lives and teach us about ourselves. This participant shared how despite his significant background within faith communities, he has found more freedom and flourishing in

a secular environment. He expressed how he finds his fellow psychologists as less religious, but more open-minded and culturally sensitive. Throughout the interview, I felt connected, excited, and encouraged. The interview very much had a collaborative and mentorship-like essence.

Participant 6 was a 40-year-old, identified as a white female located in the Midwest. She has taught in the clinical psychology program for eight years. Her responses highlighted the tension that exists within the classroom and gave examples of negative responses from students when the topic of religion and spirituality has been brought up. Shaped by her experience of students' reactions to bringing up the topic, she expressed a desire to create a space for discussions in her classroom for witnessing the negative bias, fear, uncertainty, and uncomfortableness around exploring different religious experiences and beliefs. She emphasized the desire for religion and spirituality to be connected to clinical training, adding that evidence-based research should be used to teach this topic. She shared her background from another country where her family experienced having to hide their Jewish identity as her ethnic background to avoid religious persecution. Despite her family's cultural history, she seemed to be a bit disconnected from it now, when sharing she does not engage in daily religious practices. I found a common connection point, when she described her experience with teaching addictions and 12 steps, where it was clear spirituality was a part of that discussion.

Participant 7 was a 53-year-old, identified as a white male located in the Midwest. He has taught in a clinical psychology program for 10 years. He mentioned the majority of his teaching experience is in a master's program but tried to focus his answers related to his doctoral teaching experiences and was even able to compare and contrast. This interview felt fun and energetic, and I felt the eclectic style he described. He was very detailed in his responses and had no reservations about answering the questions. He bravely shared about his recovery journey with

12 steps as a spiritual experience that has shaped his views and relationship to a higher power and his community. His value of Humanistic and existential theories, in addition to sharing some philosophical perspectives, was a point of connection for us.

Participant 8 was a 75-year-old, identified as a white male located in the Midwest. He is currently a professor emeritus at the school he has taught at for 40 years and was a founding faculty member. He had a great sense of humor from the beginning of the interview and was happy to share much background information that often deviated from the questions. He emphasized the desire for more conversations and acceptance of religious diversity. It was clear to me his desire for unity and the tensions he experiences or witnesses where there is not. He shared much of his experience of religion and spirituality was with forensic psychology and divorce mitigations. He shared he only teaches religion and spirituality as components of this special topic related to forensic psychology. He was consistent in his support and assumptions around having the moral foundations of religious upbringing. I was honored to hear stories of his Hungarian family history, which included the reality of many of them being killed in the Holocaust. Through his sharing, I was able to learn a lot not only about his life and background but also an area I have little experience in. Even after the questions were all asked, we were able to engage in continued dialogue which was treasured.

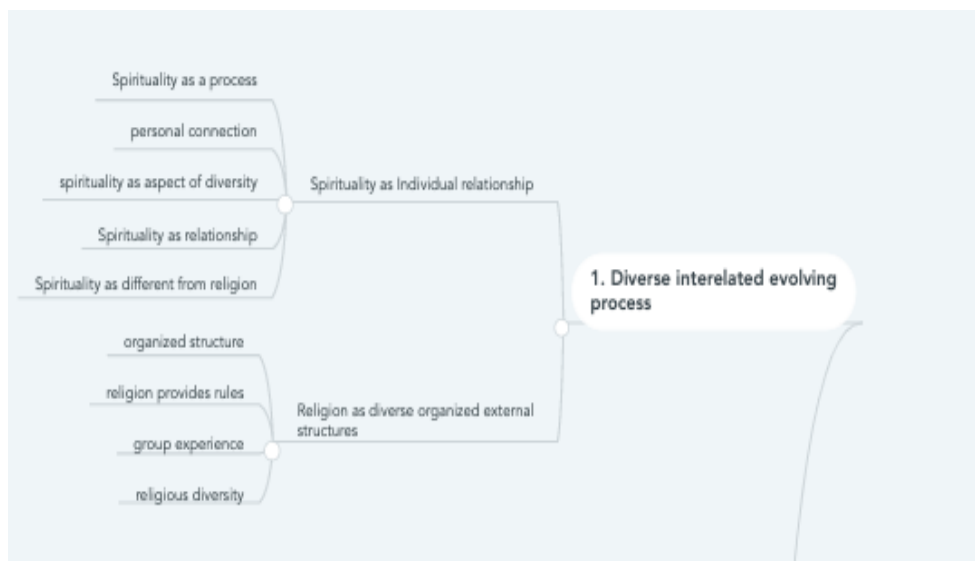
Participant 9 was a 57-year-old, who identified as a white female located in the Midwest. She expressed her interest in religion and spirituality was related to her dissertation research interests that never came to fruition. She said this was due to the subject of religion and spirituality being dropped on the intake questionnaire. She has been teaching in the doctoral program for two and a half years. She expressed ways she can incorporate spirituality and religion as informal and relevant to a course she teaches on assessment. She was aware of her

background in Christianity and how this shapes her desire to connect with religion and spirituality in her clinical work. She has experienced openness and informal influences within her program and community to the topic of religion and spirituality and how it connects to people's lives through positive and negative experiences. She has found students discuss religion and spirituality more in supervision but demonstrate their uncomfortableness with the topic in that context. She mentioned geographic location and the culture of people sharing that space might influence the focus on teaching religion and spirituality. In addition, she vulnerably shared her tension of practicing her spirituality within a certain religion but also not agreeing with all the tenants that seem discriminating or oppressive towards certain groups of people. She also expressed the desire to integrate aspects of Buddhism, and this resonated with my experiences. Now that there is increased understanding of the participants in the study and our shared experiences, the reader can better make sense of the following superordinate and subordinate themes that resulted from the interviews.

Diverse Interrelated Evolving Process

Figure 1

Superordinate Theme, Subordinate, and Emergent Themes 1



The participants were asked first to come up with their own definitions of religion and spirituality versus having to use one that is predefined. Some had an easier time sharing their thoughts versus others who struggled a bit. The analysis showed that many of the participants discussed spirituality as different from religion but related. In addition, because each person defined the terms, there was a range of diverse perspectives. The questions were also shaped by the theoretical lens of this study, viewing religion and spirituality as an aspect of diversity. The following are the two subordinate themes that made up the larger superordinate theme of [religion and spirituality as] a diverse interrelated evolving process.

Spirituality as an Individual Relationship

Most of the participants defined spirituality as more of an evolving individual relationship with something higher than themselves. This was one of two subordinate themes under diverse interrelated evolving process. This evolving interrelated process is captured by the statements shared by a participant after being asked to define religion and spirituality:

I feel that even within my own teaching I've been going through kind of some shifts and changes in how I'm thinking so some of my responses may reflect kind of where I feel I am now.....my conceptualization of it is that it actually does fall into two different camps and you mention religion and spirituality, and I do see some distinctions between those....more nature-focused and more intrinsic humanistic experiential view of spirituality and that side of ourselves which seeks to connect with places that are grounded yet uplifting spirituality is a term brings to mind. A lived sense of something as opposed to an organized and integrative with other people kind of experience. (P2)

Another participant shared a metaphor that also describes this interrelated but separate relationship between religion and spirituality:

I often find it sort of the distinction between romantic love and marriage, you know to fit the interrelationship between spirituality and religion, you know, so romantic love is to marriage as spirituality is to religion. (P5)

To highlight further the interconnected relationship, one other participant shared their thoughts: “Spirituality is really this threefold relationship between myself, others, and then whatever we put up here at the top, the universe, it could be a God, Allah, creative intelligence” (P7).

Religion as Diverse Organized External Structures

Most of the participants referred to religion as more of the structure and rules that can encompass the spiritual relationship. This is the second subordinate theme. The diversity, relationship, and more organized nature of religion is described well by the following participant:

Whereas religion, you know is a formalized practice associated with some type of spiritual belief right, and we know that there are lots of different religions and how they describe that practice how they describe, you know, the structure of the deities in that religion rights and the relationships that people have with the deity with people, you know is very very different depending on where you are. (P6)

Another participant valued the commonality of different religions and highlighted the benefits of the organized structure of religion:

I think that religion, in general, is something that gives us a strong, moral, and ethical base....I believe that it is important for people to have a religion and to follow the principles of that religion because basically if you look at all religions, they have some form of rules. (P8)

Finding Space in the Tension

Figure 2

Superordinate, Subordinate, and Emergent Themes 2



The participants were asked to discuss their perspectives on if they thought religion and spirituality were important and to give ideas as to what might prevent instructors from teaching it. Here there were some prompts to have participants describe their experience using the layers of the ecological model (historical, cultural, systemic). Here they describe the tension of valuing religion and spirituality as an important aspect and yet trying to find ways to incorporate it into their work. Many participants captured ways they currently informally bring religion and spirituality into their teaching and professional work. Several of the participants also emphasized the importance or need to teach religion and spirituality as it relates to clinical aspects. All of the participants discussed what they perceive as systemic requirement barriers associated with teaching and training. The following three subordinate themes reflect the [importance of] finding space in the tension.

Important When Tied to Clinical Work

Here the participants discussed that religion and spirituality may be taught more based on how important that person sees religion and spirituality and their comfort level. All the participants shared their views of high importance when it comes to religion and spirituality. They shared how it is a part of their lives informally, whether through courses, supervision, or personal research, and where they experience tension doing so. Many of the participants talked about how it is currently connected to their personal research and life that biases their importance and even comfort level in focusing on the topics, which is captured by the following statement:

I am very comfortable talking about it. I don't feel a hesitation to delve into that kind of material. I think that our field struggles with so hard with trying to be a science that, that's part of the reason we've excluded religion and spirituality as part of our field in many ways, and some of my own past research has this touched on this field, to a degree. (P2)

Here the participant highlighted the informal nature of focusing on religion and spirituality:

I try to bring in, you know, religion/spirituality kind of implicitly in everything that I do. You know, whether it's clinical supervision or teaching courses most of my research is in applied religion spirituality related topics. So, this is kind of you know, just a big big part of my work. (P5)

This participant struggled to find ways to incorporate it into the courses they teach but was able to link it to their work as a clinician. “As a clinician, I find that it’s very important to the therapy clients that I work with and even the assessment clients that I work with and even if it’s not, it’s worth asking and exploring.” (P9)

Need for Competency Training

Here the participants highlighted that despite their agreement of importance that there was more support needed to teach the topic of religion and spirituality. The participants shared that training requirements and competency in religion and spirituality play a role in whether or not it is taught, some of them including their previous graduate training experiences. The

participant shared this after being asked if they think it's important and what contributes to whether it is taught or not the following:

One thing that's helped a little bit with paying attention to religion and spirituality is that now that there is some requirement for diversity training. This is an area where religion and spirituality can come in, but it depends a lot on the instructor and whether or not they're comfortable and have time to bring in religion and spirituality. But back when I was in graduate school, back in the 1990s. There was no attention to religion and spirituality, and I felt like there was a very strong bias against it. (P1)

Further, one might assume having training from attending a faith-based institution would prepare you for teaching it. This participant highlighted that this is not always the case:

I have a master's degree from _____ University, which is in (faith-based) Jesuit Affiliated University. And in that, that was a two-year master's degree in applied psychology and that degree had noticed no courses or no credit hours around the intersection of Faith or spirituality and religion. (P2)

This participant highlighted the gap in training and the need for more multicultural competency training for people as they carry out their roles of clinician:

I think to the degree to which you know, we're trained clinicians who are going to be working with clients from different backgrounds, you know, we need to be including it in any class that tackles some type of clinical work or clinical practice, you know, or skills associated with working with different people. People just don't know what to do if religious and spiritual issues come up in therapy, I just don't have the materials, you know, I don't have the training to work with that. (P6)

Requirement Barriers

Most of the participants discussed the limitations of the requirements of APA accreditation, program, and course objectives. These requirements limit the space in the curriculum to teach topics on spirituality and religion and therefore the instructors lack the time to teach it.

I think a big a big institution the barrier would just be just practical limitations that there's all faculty are already working so hard, you know, most curriculum or curricula are jammed up already with so many things. I think a big one for accredited programs is the demands are really really high already for programs. (P5)

This participant also acknowledges accreditation requirements shaping what is taught or not.

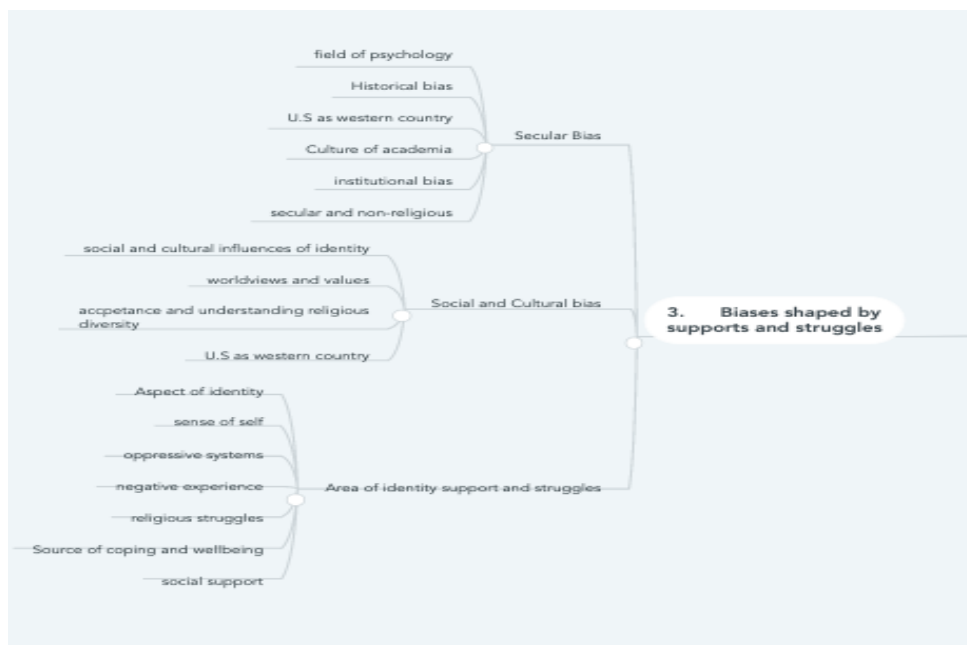
My school's, you know, getting APA accreditation was not without some changes, and some of them are really good right? and necessary. So when people graduate, they have many more skills, but then some of them are like APA wants you to jump through these hoops. (P7)

These participants share the common agreement of the importance of building competency in this area but lack direction on where to teach it. One participant shared their thoughts on whether it should be taught and highlighted the tension that is felt: "I absolutely believe that they should be included, I think you know, there's a little bit of a tension, and that I think many people and programs more broadly aren't sure where they should be included" (P6).

Biases Shaped by Support and Struggle

Figure 3

Superordinate, Subordinate, and Theme 3



Here the participants were asked to share their personal experiences with religion and spirituality. To further highlight the tension around the journey and process of teaching religion and spirituality, the participants discussed the experience of religion and spirituality both being a

positive source of support as well as negative experiences in history, culture, academic institutions, community, and people's individual lives. They highlighted how these social, cultural, and historical experiences shaped their worldviews, values, and identities. The following three subordinate themes help to understand how these have shaped their decision-making around teaching religion and spirituality and the [importance of understanding] biases shaped by support and struggle.

Social and Cultural Bias

The participants shared their personal experiences within social and cultural influences and in their personal lives that have shaped their views, for better or for worse. Here the participants shared the importance of recognizing the diversity and how biased attitudes and systems are part of the struggle experienced when it comes to religion and spirituality. The following participant acknowledged how colonized history has shaped systems of teaching in clinical psychology and can be harmful:

In my view, we're very colonized in our view of teaching, you know, there's very much a sense of this is what the field says, and this is what you know, this is how I was taught in and this is how you should be taught... religion and spirituality have been the source of oppression and persecution...there are aspects of religion and spirituality that can be included in a social justice focus in that way of inclusion in that way diversity and that way of justice (P2).

Further, another participant highlighted how her experience in a different country brought persecution and how that cultural influence has influenced her sense of identity and values:

I'm from _____ originally and in _____ under communism religion was you know, considered bad and communist society was meant to not have religion as if the prominent factor...when I was growing up, I was raised to believe that in our family was only Russian Orthodox because there's also a lot of anti-Semitism in _____ and my family were concerned that if you know, so especially the many members of the Jewish side of the family were in hiding about their Jewish identity...I think I identify as Jewish more because again, like especially coming out of this kind of culture of hardship, you learn to appreciate I think to me like Judaism is really more ethnic, ethnic background and

cultural background than my religious background...it's an important part of my own cultural identity and you know little bit of kind of my value system (P6).

Secular Bias

Here, the participants discussed the context of the secular field of psychology and universities that are more biased against religion and spirituality. The following participant highlighted the historical relationship with the separation of religion and spirituality and clinical psychology and how that may influence one's capacity to teach the topic.

It's personal comfortability, that I think to be able to be open to other forms of spiritual experience. I mean, I think about William James like he was the first guy to break the mold and go, oh no, we can go there, at least in my short knowledge of history of psych. Other people wanted to, but but you know way back in our origins there was a sense of no, no, that's for the church. Let's just focus on and you know the very dynamic or experimental process about psychology, so you either/or, either you have certain professors that are going to be willing to go there, and you have certain courses that lineup that you actually have to go there. (P7)

This participant further highlights the historical efforts of separation in the U.S. culture, while struggling to share their own experience of this bias during their own graduate experience.

I think in public schools, like in the U.S. there this idea of separation between church and state, whether or not that's practiced ... In my graduate program I did feel more pressure to not have political opinions or share them or share religion ... it was not something that was easily accepted by the faculty and staff. And eventually, they agreed and were willing to do the work and on board and very supportive, but They were saying that if you want to study Buddhism you need to go into a Buddhist program, that is not what we do here, we are in psychology, and you need to learn the language of psychology. So that was a real experience for me. (P4)

Despite, their background and biased importance of religion and spirituality, several of the instructors discussed the limits of working at a religious institution as something they specifically did not want, especially due to having to sign faith-based statements upon being hired. These participants expressed choosing to teach in non-faith-based (secular) environments and feeling more open to focusing on the things that are important to them. The following participants explicitly said this:

I was trying to discern whether I felt I was being called more to a secular environment or to more of a Christian environment, I believed and still believe that I was called more to be in a secular environment. So, there was one day where I withdrew my application from all the Christian schools and that was hard to do because they were the ones who were mostly interested in me. I was very grateful to get to be able to get a job at a research University. Where I didn't have to sign a faith statement, for example. Because my beliefs are bit of a moving target. So those Faith statements really make me nervous. (P1)

And another participant stated despite a strong family background of religion and training at faith-based institutions, (P2) "a factor teaching at non-religiously affiliated institution was a choice." The following participant further expands the choice to specifically not teach at faith-based institutions.

I teach at a private institution that isn't subscribing to a particular religion. The way I draw the line as some institutions ask faculty and students to sign like a statement of agreement, you know to a certain type of code and you know, I've read some of those and like if I disagree with that, I'm not going to sign it. (P6)

Area of Identity Support and Struggle

Here, the participants discussed how the process and experience around religion and spirituality are involved in shaping their identity in a positive way and also can be a source of struggle. This participant sharing the positive influence of her cultural identity: "I grew up Jewish. But I think there's an inquisitiveness or a Jewish cultural identity around asking questions and that I think is relating to how I hold space when asking about things" (P4).

Many of the participants shared their process to include a struggle with religion and how that influenced their relationship to spirituality and religion. This really highlights the experienced tension.

That was an abusive relationship. And when I decided to leave him a few years later ... I got a lot of flak from my Christian friends and family because even if there's abuse, they weren't sure that that fit in the criteria of somebody being allowed to get a divorce. So, I got very angry at my Christian friends and family and at the church. And went through what I would call a spiritual but not religious period ... when I started graduate school, I was identifying as spiritual but not religious. And kind of gradually came back to Christianity but wasn't sure where to find my place within Christianity. (P1)

This participant shares in the positive aspects of spirituality and the tension that exists on how to express that individuality while being connected to a church.

I have more of an eclectic value system based off that. So, while on paper I could be one thing, I would say in practice in terms of my spirituality and my faith system. It's a much different thing than what most others would say who go to the same church as me ... I went through this period of getting sober and you know, it's on a 12-step emphasis, really, pushing you know, some of my thoughts about spirituality as opposed to religion in really help that the AA Fellowship primarily helped me really develop that you know. (P7)

This participant shared her felt tension and how it also relates to her work as a clinician in the field.

I'm also biased because I'm a practicing Christian. So, I think that because it forms more of a foundation for my own sense of well-being and even a source of frustration or conflict for me...as a profession, we don't do a good job of acknowledging that plays a role in an individual's overall well-being. For better or for worse. And it gives us some information into how they might relate to others, how they might conceptualize reality themselves, others, meaning and life, life after death, and how they can reframe adversity and triumph and resiliency and all those things. (P9)

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

This study sought out to inquire about the journeys of instructors in secular APA accredited doctoral psychology programs around the topic of religion and spirituality, and the things that contribute to teaching the topic or not. Keeping with the spirit of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), there are numerous ways one can see and interpret this data. This study looked at the instructor's experiences around the topic of religion and spirituality in secular APA accredited clinical psychology doctoral programs and how they made sense of these experiences. The participants were eight instructors from secular APA accredited doctoral clinical psychology programs (one mixed counseling and clinical) from all regions of the U.S., and had a range of years from 2–20 years of teaching in their programs. They each participated in the semi-structured interview. The analysis revealed three superordinate themes and eight subordinate themes. These results included the main themes of: [religion and spirituality as a] diverse interrelated evolving process, [the importance of] finding space in the tension, and [the importance of understanding] biases shaped by support and struggles. The frame of these results is influenced by the researcher's background using a relational, spiritual, humanistic, ecological, and multicultural diversity lens.

Many people agree that religion and spirituality are important topics, especially as an aspect of diversity. Diversity is defined as factors of difference within an ecosystem, cultures, and individuals, and parts that make up a whole (APA, 2017). Religion and spirituality are aspects of diversity and are written into many of the core APA guidelines for psychologists (ethics, multicultural, and competency guidelines). However, these topics are still inconsistently taught across APA accredited health service psychology doctoral programs. The questions for this study examined the experiences of instructors who were asked to define religion and

spirituality, experiences with teaching religion and spirituality, the barriers to teaching, and their personal experiences with religion and spirituality.

As discussed earlier, the APA Multicultural guidelines expanded Bronfenbrenner's ecological model and created the most aligned context to make sense of this complex yet connected relationship with religion and spirituality. The model uses concepts of bi-directional relationship, diversity, intersectionality, identity, culture, and ecological layers that help to understand the relationship these instructors had to religion and spirituality. These historical, cultural, and system layers describe the interrelated relationship with religion and spirituality, how it influences someone's views of the world, and subsequent actions. Further, it highlights that "tensions between and among the levels are dynamic and contextual and may result through intersections between and among the various levels" (Claus-Ehlers et al., 2019).

The results in this study revealed the tension showing up in how the instructors defined the term, the diverse and dynamic changing developmental process of their relationship to religion and spirituality, as well as the various experiences on multiple levels, including systemic, that shaped their worldviews, biases, and subsequently guide the behaviors in their personal and professional life. These experiences of tension and how instructors navigate them, could be contributing to the inconsistencies in teaching religion and spirituality. Many of the results were supported by previously mentioned literature.

Participant 4 had a pivotal question that frames this discussion by asking, "I think there is a question like do you teach, or do you hold space for and how do you hold space for?" Many of the participants used the word "tension" in their answers. The themes demonstrate what contributed to these instructor's relationship to teaching religion and spirituality and how they navigated the dynamics that demonstrated a need for more "space." As discussed, earlier tension

is defined as: the experience of internal and external distress caused by seemingly different or conflicting views. Space is defined as: the process, experiential avoidance strategies to deal with distress, and a proposed new paradigm for relational, culturally humble pedagogy in classrooms to be honest, curious, and compassionate that create room for the distress and differences (Luoma et al., 2007; Naidoo, 2019; Sapon-Shevin & SooHoo, 2020; Schwartz, 2013).

Acknowledging that there are multiple ecological levels of historical, cultural, systemic, and individual things that influence on each other, and considering these dynamics and in context of whether religion and spirituality is taught or not, is crucial. The instructors in this study thought that religion and spirituality were different but connected concepts; were important to address as diversity variables in doctoral education even though they had their own personal struggles and training (or lack thereof); and some found ways to informally teach or discuss them despite systemic barriers.

Further, there is both a need to focus on competency skill building and adding a focus both on character development and cultural humility in the classroom. This focus could bridge the gap with inconsistencies in covering the topic of religion and spirituality in multicultural training that exist now. Having these honest critical conversations in the training of psychologists will assist in increasing their awareness and biases around religion and spirituality. With a training space that goes beyond cognitive knowledge and skills (competency model), the instructors can then model a more welcoming, empathic, and inclusive experience for their students and also for clients that might often be different from their own. This new paradigm shift would change the pedagogy in academic classrooms that currently perpetuate colonized hierarchical power dynamics and polarization.

The discussion will share more suggestions for how instructors can shape the classroom space to have more needed discussions around religion and spirituality. Also, crucial to this process is to have dialogue addressing the systems that consciously or unconsciously perpetuate biases and power dynamics that can be harmful by seeing things through a limited and/or colonized western view. The following section will discuss how the results relate to current literature, implications, future directions, and limitations of the study.

Research Findings

The following sections discuss the tension and experiences that the instructors in this study had in: defining religion and spirituality, teaching and training on systemic levels, and personal levels. These tensions exist between and among historical, cultural, system, and individual levels are often influenced bi-directionally both by the individual, cultural and systemic biases. It will highlight the instructors' thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of what contributes to creating "space" (or lack thereof) for religion and spirituality in the classroom and ways they navigated this process.

Tension on Multiple Levels

The following sections are labeled as juxtapositions, placing two seemingly opposite things side by side. The literature supports the history and relationship with the fields of psychology and religion and spirituality can be very polarized at times, and also there have been efforts to integrate them. The discussion below will include the experiences of the instructor's and research that can help to support more holistic integration and create spaces where both can meet.

Define or Not to Define?

The relationship between religion and spirituality can be hard to define and full of tension. The participants were asked to define their meaning of religion and spirituality. Adding another aspect of tension, the researcher also struggled with whether to include a working definition for the study or allow the participants to define it for themselves. The ability to define things for oneself can be more meaningful, and on the other hand, having a definition may make it more likely to discuss and focus on specific topics.

The results indicated that most of the participants thought of these terms as separate but related and that the relationship with religion and spirituality was a diverse evolving process. They also varied in their ability to spontaneously define what it means for them. Most of the participants had a fairly easy time defining religion and spirituality while some struggled. One participant even said, “I have never been asked that question before” (P8).

The literature supports that there is a connection between the terms of religion and spirituality but also that there are differences, it is difficult to define, and shows that various points of history and people think about it differently (Ames, 2012; Fowler, 1981; Koenig, 2008; Pargament, 2007; Russell et al., 2006). When it is difficult to find a common definition, it can be easy to avoid the topic due to ambiguity. On the other hand, when there is a definition, it can also seem too limiting when describing a person’s experience accurately and dismissing the diversity. This is evidenced in the tension that was shared by instructors. Milton Yinger said that “any definition of religion is likely to be satisfactory only to its author” (Yinger, 1967, p. 108). The new APA multicultural diversity framework offers support for the evolving process of change in development in how they think about religion and spirituality because it is shaped by all the various levels (historical, cultural, systemic, and individual).

However, more exposure to the topic might also account for what shaped the participant's ability to define the terms. Some of the instructors talked about their previous training and various levels of focus on it with their research. It seems that there were varying degrees of exposure to the topic of religion and spirituality on systemic and personal levels. The exposure to the topic of religion and spirituality may have played a role in the participant's ability to have an easier time defining the terms.

There are lots of factors that could contribute to how a person defines religion and spirituality that are influenced by historical, cultural, systemic factors that shape how they view themselves and others. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) shares that taking into context and experiences of the person can help to understand how language is used (Luoma et al., 2007). The relationship to religion and spirituality is developmental process and people will inevitably have differences while also commonalities, especially when they are from similar cultural communities or backgrounds. In this study, the words the instructors used to describe their relationship with religion and spirituality, demonstrated the common experience of tension and ways they navigated it as instructors at secular doctoral clinical psychology programs in the U.S.

Teach or Not to Teach?

The participants were asked to discuss their current efforts to teach religion and spirituality if it was important to teach, and what things might contribute to teaching it or not. All the participants shared that they believe religion and spirituality was an important topic to cover in their professional work. Some mentioned also that they were comfortable teaching informally but both prior and current training and program requirements played a role in how they chose to integrate religion and spirituality in their current roles. Most of the participants shared that they

teach informally, while others shared that they make it a part of their clinical work or research. The APA multicultural framework again offers some support for understanding the things that contribute to teaching on religion and spirituality or not by sharing that historical, cultural, and systemic dynamics influence their training and structures in place that dictate the requirements.

Training. Some discussed that they didn't have a lot of prior training on the topic of religion and spirituality, even when attending religious institutions for their graduate experiences. Others shared that they do research, teach as a part of a class, have conversations with colleagues, or as a supervisor to integrate the importance. Regardless of their previous training, exposure to the topic, or level of importance, there was a desire for more structure and training. The instructors' shared that they experience a lot of tension at the individual and systemic levels.

The secularization that is evident in the history of psychology, religion, and spirituality can shape the systemic and academic experiences that people have. The participant (that shared earlier) about their graduate experience at a secular school expressed something worth paying attention to. In her strong language, she describes her experience with her program not being supportive of her interest in exploring religion and spirituality: "this is part of the *indoctrination* process in psychology programs that is just so palpable. So, you know, it's like passing on the *trauma* from their experiences and also the boundaries from their experiences" (P4). Prior training and experiences, especially negative ones, in graduate education systems may have played a factor in what and how the instructors chose to teach or not (Crook-Lyon et al., 2012; McMinn, 2015; Shafranske & Maloney, 1990).

It is also worth noting the importance of identifying when there may be biases that are causing harm. For example, Participant 2 highlighted in her experience of being taught and

awareness that the field of clinical psychology is “colonized in its way of teaching” that does not include discussion on social justice, diversity, and religion and spirituality as a source of oppression and persecution. Further, the study by Sloan and Petra (2021) discussed earlier in this paper, shared the impact of student’s biases and experiences with religious discrimination. This demonstrates how individual and systemic experiences around religion and spirituality can shape biases and show up in the teaching and training of psychologists. The dynamics of power and privilege within systems that shape classroom structure needs to be named and discussed.

Secular Bias. The participants were asked whether religion and spirituality were a factor in where they chose to teach. The most unexpected results were that many of the participants highly valued religion and spirituality and yet chose to be at secular universities intentionally over faith-based. They described the requirement of having to sign a faith-based statement as a deterring factor. Some described having more freedom to focus on religion and spirituality at secular schools and one person even mentioned a calling to be at secular institutions. This highlights the tension of decisions and pressure to choose between secular and faith-based institutions. What would make an instructor teach at an institution that is perceived to be different from their worldview?

The historical context provides a backdrop of the efforts to separate psychology from religion and spirituality and secular institutions may have shaped the dynamic to split, and yet the professors who all agreed religion and spirituality were important, chose to teach at non-faith-based institutions. Beth McMurtlie, in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, captured the issue of faith statements and their language can be impeding on instructor’s academic freedom. (2002). Many of the participants have gone to, or worked at, faith-based institutions before their current teaching role. It seems that many of these participants may have felt the lack of freedom

or being able to teach or research in a way that was more meaningful to them at faith-based institutions.

Most of the participants shared that religion and spirituality were important to them in their lives as well as teaching. Participant 1 shared their tension of choosing secular over faith-based institutions and the sense of calling saying, “I was trying to discern whether I felt I was being called more to a secular environment or to more of a Christian environment” while ultimately choosing to be at the secular school. Swezey (2009) shares that the sense of calling is often related historically and socially to “a summons,” “spiritual process or endeavor,” or “service to others” that is connected to a higher power and even “chosen” to do the work and creates a sense of purpose or meaning. One reference even stated that teaching specifically was an “inherent spiritual endeavor” (Swezey, 2009). This study was conducted using a small sample of instructors at faith-based institutions. I wonder how much this “sense of calling” also shaped decisions to teach specifically at the secular university is connected to one’s sense it is a calling?

Religion and spirituality can influence one’s roles or identity. Some instructors mentioned their roles as researchers, clinicians, among other identity variables in their personal lives. Paragament et al. (2013) highlights a systemic shift in psychology over the past 30 years from research to practice that shows up as the tension between science and practice again with roots related to clinical psychologies identity as wanting to be a more “hard science,” history of psychologist pathologizing religion and spirituality, and psychologists being far less religious or believing in God that is counter to the U.S. culture which highly value religion and spirituality. The historical and cultural relationship between psychology and religion and spirituality may have played a role in the collective identity of these instructors and the tension of navigating these various roles while having an individual favorable bias of religion and spirituality, is

evident in this study.

Rob Bell (2013), in his book *What We Talk about When We Talk about God*, shared that the history of efforts to divide the secular and the sacred is a reductionistic view and that we need to hold that some things happen without a rational or intellectual explanation, holding science and faith as dance partners. The tension here is felt in the complex relationship with the historically divided relationship with religion and spirituality, psychology, and clinical psychology. The outcome of this historical dynamic resulted in the creation of secular spaces and a further opposing side's way of thinking that might explain how to make sense of the instructor's tension experiences. Also, a challenge to the field of clinical psychology is what Rob Bell shared: Can we (clinical psychology) see our relationship to religion and spirituality as a dance partner instead of an opponent?

Competency or Cultural Humility?

The participants discussed the increased program and APA accreditation requirements that impact their capacity to teach religion and spirituality. The current competency requirements left little room for a formal class on religion and spirituality. Many participants commented there is a needed space for more discussion on the topic of religion and spirituality, especially as diversity factor. The research supports that most people agree it is important and there are a lot of current efforts to offer systemic training in the area of religious and spiritual competencies (Pearce et al., 2020; Plante, 2008; Vieten et al., 2013).

Even with more competency training, there might still exist tension being under the APA accreditation system that already has numerous requirements. Requiring more competencies would increase more requirements in an already overwhelmed system. This was evidenced in the instructors all highlighting the little "time" they had and the pressure for competencies.

Examining the systems that create academic and competency guidelines and naming the power/privilege dynamics within the structures might help to understand even more how systemic biases contribute to the tension. “The APA multicultural guidelines highlight psychologists aspire to recognize and understand historical and contemporary experiences with power, privilege, and oppression and seek to address institutional barriers and inequities” (Clauss-Ehlers et al., 2019). Discussions on the systemic level to ensure we are aspiring to this guideline would continue to help hold the people involved accountable for carrying this out.

Instructors are in a position of responsibility in the classroom. A few of the participants did comment on wanting to avoid harm and oppression in teaching, as stated by the APA (2016) ethics code, thus also supporting the desire for more training and guidance in how to approach the topic of religion and spirituality without adding more competencies and requirements. Instructors need additional support to learn how to navigate complex and difficult topics like religion and spirituality that include personal and sensitive experiences. Mintz and Bieschke (2011), Savage (2011), and Pearce et al. (2020) are all examples of models of training that help to navigate discussions on differences in religious and spiritual values while still honoring their personal faith traditions. Further, instructors can be intentional to name power/privilege and work on anti-oppressive strategies in the classroom. The implications sections in this paper will highlight work from Sapon-Shevin and SooHoo (2020) which include suggestions on how to embody social justice and anti-oppressive strategies in classroom settings.

The previous focus for academic programs has been on building multicultural competency by increasing skills, awareness, and knowledge (Rodolfa et al., 2005). The current standards for accredited health service psychology doctoral programs have several areas of competency. Having a focus on achieving competencies can lead to increased additional pressure

to cover all of these requirements in an already demanding program. All of the instructors emphasized too little time to be able to focus on religion and spirituality and pressure to support competency skills for graduation. The attitude and structure around the competency framework may be lending itself to increase stress and pressure for instructors and also re-create systems of hierarchical power dynamics that can lead to discrimination and oppression. A focus solely on competencies can also risk just checking boxes versus creating conditions for a more welcoming environment in the classroom that supports more character development. In this study and dialogue on what space in classrooms can look like that support multicultural competency around religion and spirituality, it's important to consider each unique context and adapting it to the specific student population and programs. However, adding a focus on conversations and cultural humility is a helpful frame to start with.

One question to aid in the discussion of creating supportive and anti-oppressive classrooms is, what would it be like to approach discussing religion and spirituality in classrooms as creating space for conversation versus having a directive to teach these topics? One of the participants in this study highlighted some of the tension around thinking of teaching religion and spirituality saying, "I think there is a question like do you teach, or do you hold space for and how do you hold space for?" (P4). This participant is pointing out that there is a difference between having the responsibility to teach a topic versus creating room for discussion to happen around religion and spirituality. The way teaching, especially around a complex and sensitive topic as religion and spirituality, is approached is vital to consider. It is not just about whether it is taught but how they are approached.

All the participants were asked how/if they integrate religion and spirituality into their current teaching. Some instructors in this study shared they do more direct classroom approach

with the following strategies: assign articles related to religion and spirituality on attachment, social psychology as a part of diversity course, share their own research in this area, discuss in special courses on inpatient psychiatry, history and systems, existential/humanistic theories, addictions, and interventions. Others discussed more informal ways they include religion and spirituality by discussing in supervision, making sure it is a part of intake/assessment process, modeling discussions of assumptions, biases, and structural racism with colleagues, presentation to staff and colleagues, cultural religious experiences of how to dialogue by asking questions, and sharing personal experiences of religion and views that are outside of mainstream American values.

Some of the instructors also gave some specific suggestions for how someone could create more space for deeper discussions of religion and spirituality. Participant 1 shared that it is important for the instructor to be open, and balanced presenting multiple viewpoints that is not solely based on their views or try to indoctrinate and create a mini course or workshop to ask questions. Participant 7 shared the importance of looking at the community and culture where he teaches and pick a book or article related to religion and spirituality for a small experiential group discussion for several weeks (like group therapy). In addition, a way to not add to current course load and requirements for students or instructors can be a shift in attitude and focus on cultural humility.

New literature focuses on increasing cultural humility. Hook et al. (2013) conceptualize cultural humility as an ongoing relational process that involves having both a self-reflection and ability to be open to another's cultural identity that they see as important. Having a focus on cultural humility might provide a better framework for developing a posture of being able to sit with people who have different worldviews and experiences. Sloane and Petra (2021) pose that

cultural humility may be the very opposite of having unconscious prejudicial thoughts about a marginalized group.

Winkeljohn Black and Gold (2019) did a study assessing for cultural humility with feedback related to religious, areligious, and spiritual (RAS) attitudes among 10 master's students in counseling. Using a mixed-methods approach, the results indicated no association between implicit and explicit forms of cultural humility and their RAS attitudes. Other findings and observations of importance in this study are that the students were surprised at their implicit bias around religion and spirituality and initially attributed the results of the testing to external reasons instead inside of themselves. This attribution later shifted when in a focus group when others verbalized and demonstrated more internal acceptance. Also, the students expressed a desire for both competency (mastering skills) and cultural humility (intra/interpersonal) training, suggesting there might be a preference for both. Having a focus on cultural humility in the classrooms would support increased embodied (focusing on the whole body) experience of empathy, awareness, and knowledge without the pressure to achieve a specific task. Having this approach would buffer against adding additional time and requirements that need to be achieved. One model that instructors could use to increase cultural humility is Hook et al.'s (2016, as cited in Winkeljohn Black & Gold, 2019) Assess-Build-Connect.

Connect or Disconnect?

The instructors were asked to describe their personal experiences with religion and spirituality. The instructors describe the tension that shows up in their processes and their family and community experiences that have shaped their views and behaviors. They expressed their current efforts to find a connection with religion and spirituality that was different from their past experiences and/or included pieces of their past experiences that were meaningful. In the process

of this, they shared both support and struggles in their experiences with religion and spirituality. The APA multicultural framework supports that the levels of community and family influence a person's development, and there is a bi-directional process where that person's beliefs and biases then influence their community.

The experiences the instructors shared demonstrates the process and personal relationship with religion and spirituality is full of tension. The tension can be captured somewhat in the developmental theories of faith (Day, 2010; Fowler, 1981; McLaren, 2021; Osler et al., 2006), sharing in the process of going from more dependent on external beliefs from family and community to developing more autonomy and differentiation. While having these developmental models are helpful to understand that there are developmental processes around religion, spirituality, and faith which includes some tension, it can also create an illusion of a linear process. The multicultural ecological model would suggest and support a more bi-directional cyclical process.

The tension experienced could be explained by the distressing side of healing and growth processes. The Dark Night of the Soul is a metaphor that is used to describe a "crisis" of faith and experiences of transitioning from a faith tradition that a person grew up in (Durà-Vilà & Dein, 2009). This is a process and often the person going through it will attribute a meaning of natural, and positive maturation in their spiritual life, despite the distress (Durà-Vilà & Dein, 2009). The participants did describe distress at various parts of their experiences with religion and spirituality. This concept could capture the meaning of the instructors' change and struggle with how they are making sense of and displaying their religious and spiritual beliefs. This also is an on-going-evolving process of reconciling tension and making sense of it, while following something meaningful to them. This also limits the view to the individual and can leave out the

systemic, community, and cultural aspects.

This journey to wholeness and what it looks like to live within the tension can also be supported by Carl Jung's work. Jung was a psychoanalyst in Europe in the 1930s who witnessed the impact of what can happen when religion (Christianity in this case) becomes systematically externally focused, leading people to deal with tension using denial, moralizing, and projection of the distressing things (Rohr, 2019). The participants in this current study began to discuss the negative aspects, many belonging to a Judeo-Christian heritage, along with the effort to maintain a relationship with religion and spirituality that may or may not include their past. These biases did show up in their individual lives and process and no doubt impacted their decisions. These professors were biased in favor of religion and spirituality being important which is the minority of clinical psychologists. Research demonstrates that clinical psychologists generally do not personally identify as religious and even less spiritually inclined than other professionals (Oxhandler & Parrish, 2018; Shafranke & Maloney, 1990).

Jung challenges us to question ourselves both individually and collectively. What if we held more space for discussions and embodied practices in the classroom that honor the unique differences of a person's journey towards wholeness, which include discussions of both suffering (the shadow side) of religion as well as the positive? Would religion and spirituality be taught more consistently? The historical, cultural, systemic, and individual experiences around religion and spirituality, that include power and privilege dynamics and tensions, drive the choices and behavior of individuals that make up the field of clinical psychology. These collective experiences impact the instructors and students in the classroom, which can be a great opportunity to discuss these tensions and examine biases. The following section summarizes the study results and gives some examples of how this could look for instructors to integrate religion

and spirituality in the classroom in a way that honors different worldviews while supporting the multicultural growth of doctoral health service psychology trainees and psychologists.

Implications

Religion and spirituality can be difficult and sensitive topics to discuss. They are complex, deeply meaningful, and personal. It crosses fields of study that all explore what it means to be human. Discussing religion and spirituality challenges us to not just look at these topics through a reductionistic and scientific process of rationalizing and being able to explain everything. The results of this study supported what is in the current literature that discusses the tensions around religion and spirituality and inconsistencies in the areas of: language and defining, lack of systemic and consistent doctoral training, importance, and efforts to teach, support, struggles, evolving developmental process, and the historical biases. The results expanded on: highlighting the accreditation and program requirements that leave little time, whether to teach with a focus on competency versus holding space for discussion that builds cultural humility, and instructors feeling more support at secular institutions in their focus of religion and spirituality. In addition, a person's diverse experiences with religion and spirituality can be bi-directional, being influenced by wider ecological levels, tension, and power/privilege dynamics. The APA multicultural guidelines help to create a larger framework to understand the dynamics within and between multiple ecological layers (Clauss-Ehlers et al., 2019). Taken together in context, these things subsequently influence the choices the instructors make around discussing the topic of religion and spirituality.

Religion and spirituality are important concepts for many individuals but impact them in diverse ways, often resulting in experiences of internal and external tension. Instructors can play an important role in modeling cultural humility and creating room for discussion around religion

and spirituality that otherwise is easier to avoid. The classroom is where history, culture, intersecting identities and experiences converge together. With systemic pressure to cover multiple competencies, and personal biases; religion and spirituality often gets overlooked as an important part of what moves a person and/or culture towards wholeness. The instructors in this study agreed that religion and spirituality was an important topic, especially as an aspect of diversity. However, they did experience tension in relation to religion and spirituality on individual, interpersonal, and systemic levels. The instructors seemed to experience tension with how to frame and teach the topics, balancing the systemic competency requirements and their personal lived experiences in a way that would be helpful. Many were able to find ways to integrate this, but these ways were not consistent. Many of the instructors also found secular institutions to be more open to more flexibility in how to integrate religion and spirituality but they all still desired more training.

Borrowing from cultures outside of the U.S. and the field of psychology, can provide a different approach that wouldn't add to the stress and pressure. What if we aspired to create a space in the classroom where we can acknowledge: that we all have judgements and assumptions, which can be around religion and spirituality, ones that can cause harm if not made explicit, and the strengths and meaning that religion and spirituality can have on a person's character development? A place in the classroom that would have time to integrate the mind and body knowledge. Further, that change would come from acceptance of these parts (and each other) as they are in the moment verses avoiding, shutting down or trying to strive for new knowledge to try and change them?

Formational learning is a model often used in theological academic institutions that have more initiatives and mandates, which "attends to the relational skills, integrity, and character

development of the professional,” supporting the focus on human development instead of gaining new information (Naidoo, 2019). In her study, Naidoo (2019) looked at how to create a formational learning environment with online and distance learning in South Africa. This formational learning includes a constructivist lens where students learn by interacting with their current environment with relational engagement and participation and using that to transform them. The instructor is key in their supportive presence by sharing in their own struggles as a mentor. Formational learning also requires that the academic institutions are held accountable for their objectives. This shows the possibility of having a relational, student-centered, supportive, engaging and active participating classroom environment that builds cultural humility, acceptance and embodied knowledge.

Focusing on cultural humility and the character development of the professional in the classroom would create more intentional space and openness to discuss and learn to be with tensions and differences around religion and spirituality without dismissing them. It would create a more integrated environment to ask questions and dialogue about both the supportive as well as unjust and harmful historical, cultural, and individual experiences within the field of psychology, spirituality, and religion. This then can lead to more connection and learning on a deeper level and those experiences can transform the character and impact behaviors of psychologists (instructors and students) inside and outside of the classroom.

Sapon-Shevin and SooHoo (2020) are professors, researchers and social justice advocates who suggest a more embodied teaching pedagogy that is different from the current academic practice to address social justice issues. They describe the current practice as gaining knowledge “through the mind, through intellectual discourse and reasoning ... treating education as though it is something that happened in the head, a location separate from the rest of the body”

(Sapon-Shevin & SooHoo, 2020). They suggest, especially in this current time of the COVID-19 pandemic and more online teaching, that instructors need to be intentional having discussions with their students about the body, touch, and impactful relational experiences as a way to take action with their whole selves (Sapon-Shevin & SooHoo, 2020). Embodied teaching includes: a focus on asking questions that get students to look inward at their body responses, normalizing ability to tolerate discomfort, inviting openness to understand others' experiences, naming the impact of systems of power and control, using guidelines that include honesty, humility, respect, and courage. This strategy will help cultivate even more empathy for students that will transfer to their lives and work with clients. It also could help reduce the power dynamic with students and instructors. It may also help the instructors not feel as much pressure to be the “expert” on diverse topics such as religion and spirituality. The instructors when willing to relate and share their human experiences, model these attributes, and create a braver space if a student wants to share. Further, instructors would benefit from co-creating agreed upon guidelines and plans for when sharing would be unhelpful and even harmful. It can take time to create this type of culture and discussing the topic from a distance could be more helpful at first.

Creating more consistent spaces for conversations around religion and spirituality has improved over time, especially in the context of supervision (Schafer et al., 2011; Schafranske, 2016). More research and resources are being provided in the area of competencies around religion and spirituality (Mintz & Bieschke, 2011; Pearce et al., 2020; Savage, 2011). In addition, framing the approach in training as welcoming more intentional and critical conversation in the classroom around the topic of religion and spirituality, without pressure to be an expert or teach a competency, could build more cultural humility in the character of the psychologist and trainees. It could create embodied awareness and experience for the students

and instructors alike to acknowledge their biases and be more prepared for these complex conversations in the therapy room. It is important for the clients to have choices to heal in a way that is based on their values that often include experiences with religion and spirituality. This approach could also reduce the power dynamic in the relationship between instructors and students. With support, modeling, and initiatives with more of a focus on character development and cultural humility training, from institutions like APA and/or doctoral health service psychology programs themselves, instructors might feel more comfortable bringing the topic of religion and spirituality (and even other diversity variables) into the classroom. In the book *Embodying Integration*, Drs. McMinn and Neff model integration of religion and spirituality with questions for discussion and diverse perspectives. This book gives further examples of how professionals interested in integrating religion and spirituality and psychology might have these conversations.

Limitations

As hoped, the attained sample was a fairly diverse group of individuals based on gender, age, teaching experience, and region, but also a small group with common homogeneous factors that included instructors, teaching in the doctoral clinical psychology programs at secular schools, all being white/caucasian. Qualitative data is not meant to be generalizable, but it is important to point out things that may have biased the results. Getting some of the participant samples from APA Division 36 (Religion and Spirituality) might have skewed the results of those who have some interest in this topic. A lot of the results focused on the importance and agreement that religion and spirituality are important. The members of this division most likely joined because they have biases in favor of this topic. Further, this limited the demographic range to largely include Judeo-Christian perspectives. Abu-Raiya (2017) suggests that there have

been biases in the field of psychological research that mostly uses Christian belief can bias the psychological research, often leaving out other faith traditions.

Despite similarities, participants did come from different regions of the United States. Although, several of them resided in the Midwest. Further, the use of clinical psychology in the participant selection gave a more homogenous sample but also may have biased the results based on the history of the field being shaped as more science based. Future research could include comparing and contrasting instructors' experiences from different fields of psychology. The instructors also had overlapping identities and roles as researchers and clinicians too. Previous studies did look at psychologists and important to acknowledge it may not be so easy to separate instructors from their other intersecting roles and identities. This might make it hard to know for sure what was specific to their experience as an instructor.

Further, while qualitative studies are designed to have more open-ended questions, the researcher did have some directive prompts and language that may have shaped how they answered the questions. For example, I started with some implicit assumptions about barriers and used the APA multicultural ecological framework to prompt for the layers. I also shaped the questions using religion and spirituality as a diversity variable. This shaped the way the participants answered the questions and how the results were framed. Even though the results did support that there were some barriers, and their answers were based on the participant's understanding of diversity, I did not anticipate finding the many creative ways the instructors were integrating religion and spirituality and the common experience of tension that were discussed. This includes the most surprising results that several of the instructors chose to teach at secular schools because they felt more open to integrating religion and spirituality.

Future Directions

Further studies could explore different types of psychology programs, comparing other programs like counseling, faith-based schools, master's program, other fields outside of psychology. As this study highlighted, this subject is interdisciplinary, and adding other voices outside of psychology can greatly add to the perspectives and discussions. Surprisingly in this study, the instructors seemed to feel more supported at non-faith-based institutions. Being able to compare and look at faith-based institutions would provide further insight into what might be happening in this dynamic. It may even be beneficial to look at institutions in other parts of the world. This would help gain an even deeper understanding of how the relationship between religion and spirituality in the U.S may be similar or different internationally in classrooms for training psychologists and add to the discussion of western biases. Also, recruiting specifically to interview people that do not think religion and spirituality are important would be a worthwhile endeavor. It would be good to challenge the biases in favor of teaching religion and spirituality and balance the conversations with more of the darker side of religious and spiritual experiences. Last, finding doctoral psychology programs that are already focused on creating character formation and cultural humility and comparing it to competency-based models around the topic of religion and spirituality would provide valuable information for training programs.

The phenomenological and hermeneutic nature of IPA set the stage for more interpretation that included the researcher's biases to be integrated into the study. Phenomenological studies focus on the participant's story and lived experience, but the results and discussion of this study ended up being shaped similar to a grounded theory approach. The aspects of a grounded theory include using a framework and focusing on processes to make sense of the context of the lived experiences in the study. Magaldi-Dopmen et al. (2011)

demonstrated a great model that could be used in the future when they studied psychologists from various backgrounds to look out how their identity background with religion and spirituality shapes how they are in session with clients. The findings supported the research that the lack of training in the area of religion and spirituality exists and that they experienced tension when presented with their client's inner and external "conflicts" around religion and spirituality. Future studies might continue to benefit from more qualitative approaches to look at instructors' experiences with religion and spirituality to get a better sense of what factors contribute to teaching and training in psychology doctoral programs around religion and spirituality.

Conclusions

Religion and spirituality are often difficult and complex topics to discuss. There is strong evidence to demonstrate that religion and spirituality are aspects of individuals' diverse and multifaceted identities that have been shaped by experiences on the individual, family, community, systems, and cultural contexts. These experiences can be supportive and harmful. The instructors in this study highlighted these complex dynamics in their experiences related to religion and spirituality and that the process is full of tension. In addition, it supported that power and privilege dynamics influence training experiences and classroom settings, and if not addressed can lead to further harm. Psychologists, psychologists in training, and instructors would benefit from continued systematic guidance to evolve, learn, and grow around the topic of religion and spirituality in a way that values our relational humanity. This guidance can involve both using competency frameworks as well as embracing a cultural humility paradigm for critical conversations in classrooms. Initiatives and support from governing and programs for experiential and embodied conversation spaces that increase self-awareness of their biases, beliefs, and values are needed. With this frame, instructors may feel increased confidence to

create these spaces for both students and clients. ACT and IFS psychological frameworks would encourage learning strategies in a way that enables people to sit with tension and practice acceptance, verses avoiding. These strategies lead to more compassion, curiosity, and confidence. The field of psychology, especially clinical psychology, would benefit from creating a classroom space that has the values of inclusivity, collaboration, humility, and curiosity; creating brave spaces to no longer avoid the topic of religion and spirituality that is needed across doctoral health service psychology training programs. Arao and Clemens (2013) share a “brave space” framework that moves away from the idea of safe spaces to engage in social justice dialogue and facilitate discussions that still promote honesty, sensitivity, and respect. I would like to end with the following poem written by Beth Strano, who is a coordinator of asylum seekers and families for the International Rescue Committee. This poem was later adapted and expanded on by other groups for use in dialogue at the political event “The People’s Supper”:

There is no such thing as a “safe space.” We exist in the real world. We all carry scars and have caused wounds. This space seeks to turn down the volume of the world outside, and amplify voices that have to fight to be heard elsewhere. This space will not be perfect. It will not always be what we wish it to be, but it will be our space together, and we will work on it side by side. (Facing History and Ourselves, n.d)

References

- Abu-Raiya, H. (2017). A critique from within: Some important research issues that psychologists of religion and spirituality should further work on. *Mental Health, Religion & Culture, 20*(6), 544–551. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13674676.2017.1377945>
- Adams, C. M., Puig, A., Baggs, A., & Wolf, C. P. (2015). Integrating religion and spirituality into counselor education: Barriers and strategies. *Counselor Education and Supervision, 54*(1), 44–56. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6978.2015.00069.x>
- American Psychological Association, Commission on Accreditation. (2015). *Standards of Accreditation for Health Service Psychology*. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/ed/accreditation/about/policies/standards-of-accreditation.pdf>
- American Psychological Association. (2017). *Multicultural guidelines: An ecological approach to context, identity, and intersectionality*. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/about/policy/multicultural-guidelines.pdf>
- American Psychological Association. (2016). Revision of ethical standard 3.04 of the “Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct” (2002, as amended 2010). *American Psychologist, 71*, 900. [10.1037/amp0000102](https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000102)
- Ames, C. C. (2012). Medieval religious, religions, religion. *History Compass, 10*(4), 334–352. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1478-0542.2012.00836.x>
- Arao, B., & Clemens, K. (2013). From safe spaces to brave spaces: A new way to frame dialogue around diversity and social justice. In L. Landreman (Ed.), *The art of effective facilitation: Reflections from social justice educators* (pp.135–150). Stylus.
- Association of Black Psychologists. (2021). *No Title*. <https://abpsi.org/wpcontent/uploads/2021/11/ABPsi-Full-Statement.pdf>
- Barnett, J. E., & Johnson, W. B. (2011). Integrating spirituality and religion into psychotherapy: Persistent dilemmas, ethical issues, and a proposed decision-making process. *Ethics & Behavior, 21*(2), 147–164. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10508422.2011.551471>
- Bart, C. (2007). A comparative analysis of mission statement content in secular and faith-based hospitals. *Journal of Intellectual Capital, 10*(4), 334–352. <https://doi.org/10.1108/14691930710830837>
- Brawer, P., Handal, P. J., Fabricatore, A., Roberts, R., & Wajda-Johnston, V. (2002). Training and education in religion/spirituality within APA-accredited clinical psychology programs. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, 33*(2), 203–206. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0735-7028.33.2.203>
- Bell, R. (2013). *What we talk about when we talk about God*. HarperOne.

- Brown, O., Elkoinin, D., & Naicker, S. (2013). The use of religion and spirituality in psychotherapy: Enablers and barriers. *Journal of Religion and Health, 52*(4), 1131–1146. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-011-9551-z>
- Bootzin, R. R. (2012). Psychological clinical science: Why and how we got to where we are. *Psychological Clinical Science* (pp. 26–51).
- Campbell, C. D. (2011). APA accreditation of doctoral psychology programs in Christian universities. *Journal of Psychology and Theology, 39*(1), 59–67. <https://doi.org/10.1177/009164711103900105>
- Caplan, E. (1998). Popularizing american psychotherapy: The Emmanuel movement, 1906–1910. *History of Psychology, 1*(4), 289–314. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1093-4510.1.4.289>
- Cassidy, E. J. H. (2006). *Religion and spirituality in professional psychologist training: A survey of interns* [Doctoral dissertation, West Virginia University Libraries].
- Clauss-Ehlers, C. S., Chiriboga, D. A., Hunter, S. J., Roysircar, G., & Tummala-Narra, P. (2019). APA multicultural guidelines executive summary: Ecological approach to context, identity, and intersectionality. *American Psychologist, 74*(2), 232. <https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000382>
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches*. SAGE Publications.
- Crook-Lyon, R. E., O’Grady, K. A., Smith, T. B., Jensen, D. R., Golightly, T., & Potkar, K. A. (2012). Addressing religious and spiritual diversity in graduate training and multicultural education for professional psychologists. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality, 4*(3), 169. <https://psycnet.apa.org/buy/2011-28150-001>
- Day, J. M. (2010). Religion, spirituality, and positive psychology in adulthood: A developmental view. *Journal of Adult Development, 17*(4), 215–229. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10804-009-9086-7>
- De Houwer, J., & Hermans, D. (Eds.). (2010). *Cognition and emotion: Reviews of current research and theories*. Psychology Press.
- Durà-Vilà, G., & Dein, S. (2009). The dark night of the soul: spiritual distress and its psychiatric implications. *Mental Health, Religion and Culture, 12*(6), 543–559. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13674670902858800>.
- Exline, J. J., Przeworski, A., Peterson, E. K., Turnamian, M. R., Stauner, N., & Uzdavines, A. (2021). Religious and spiritual struggles among transgender and gender-nonconforming adults. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality, 13*(3), 276. <https://doi.org/10.1037/rel0000404>
- Facing History and Ourselves (n.d). *Untitled Poem*. <https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/untitled-poem-beth-strano>.

- Faigin, C. A., Pargament, K. I., & Abu-Raiya, H. (2014). Spiritual struggles as a possible risk factor for addictive behaviors: An initial empirical investigation. *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 24(3), 201–214. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10508619.2013.837661>
- Fowler, J. W. (1981). *Stages of faith: The psychology of human development and the quest for meaning*. Harper & Row.
- Greenfield, E. A., Vaillant, G. E., & Marks, N. F. (2009). Do formal religious participation and spiritual perceptions have independent linkages with diverse dimensions of psychological well-being? *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 50(2), 196–212. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002214650905000206>
- Hathaway, W. (2013). Pathways toward graduate training in the clinical psychology of religion and spirituality: A spiritual competencies model. In K. I. Pargament, A. Mahoney, & E. P. Shafranske (Eds.), *APA handbook of psychology, religion, and spirituality* (Vol. 2): An applied psychology of religion and spirituality (pp. 635–649). American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/14046-033>
- Hays, P. A. (1996). Addressing the complexities of culture and gender in counseling. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 74(4), 332–338. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6676.1996.tb01876.x>
- Heinrich, J. (2015). The devil is in the details: in America, can you really say “God” in school? *Educational Review*, 67(1), 64–78. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2013.826179>
- Henderson, A. K. (2016). The long arm of religion: Childhood adversity, religion, and self-perception among Black Americans. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 55(2), 324–348. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jssr.12262>
- Hook, J. N., Davis, D. E., Owen, J., Worthington Jr., E. L., & Utsey, S. O. (2013). Cultural humility: Measuring openness to culturally diverse clients. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*. [doi:10.1037/a0032595](https://doi.org/10.1037/a0032595)
- Jafari, S. (2016). Religion and spirituality within counselling/clinical psychology training programmes: A systematic review. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 44(3), 257–267. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03069885.2016.1153038>
- Johnson, W. B., & McMinn, M. R. (2003). Thirty years of integrative doctoral training: Historic developments, assessment of outcomes, and recommendations for the future. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 31(2), 83–96. <https://doi.org/10.1177/009164710303100201>
- Koenig, H. G. (2012). Commentary: Why do research on spirituality and health, and what do the results mean? *Journal of Religion and Health*, 51(2), 460–467. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-012-9568-y>

- Laverty, S. (2003). Hermeneutic phenomenology and phenomenology: A comparison of historical and methodological considerations. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 2(3), 21-35. <https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690300200303>
- Luoma, J. B., Hayes, S. C., & Walser, R. D. (2007). *Learning ACT: An acceptance & commitment therapy skills-training manual for therapists*. New Harbinger Publications.
- Lun, V. M. C., & Bond, M. H. (2013). Examining the relation of religion and spirituality to subjective well-being across national cultures. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 5(4), 304. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0033641>
- Magaldi-Dopman, D., Park-Taylor, J., & Ponterotto, J. G. (2011). Psychotherapists' spiritual, religious, atheist or agnostic identity and their practice of psychotherapy: A grounded theory study. *Psychotherapy Research*, 21(3), 286–303. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10503307.2011.565488>
- Masters, K. S., & Hooker, S. A. (2013). Religiousness/spirituality, cardiovascular disease, and cancer: Cultural integration for health research and intervention. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 81(2), 206. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0030813>
- McLaren, B. D. (2021). *Faith after doubt: Why your beliefs stopped working and what to do about it*. Hachette UK.
- McMinn, M. R., Vogel, M. J., Hall, M. E. L., Abernethy, A. D., Birch, R., Galuza, T. & Putman, K. (2015). Religious and spiritual diversity training in clinical psychology doctoral programs: Do explicitly christian programs differ from other programs? *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 43(3), 155–164. <https://doi.org/10.1177/009164711504300301>
- McMurtlie, B. (2002). Do professors lose academic freedom by signing statements of faith? *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 48(37). <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ647476>
- Naidoo, M. (2019). The nature and application of formational learning in the distance medium. *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, 75(1).
- Neff, M. A., & McMinn, M. R. (2020). *Embodying integration: A fresh look at Christianity in the therapy room*. InterVarsity Press.
- Newport, F. (2016). Most Americans still believe in God. Retrieved from <https://news.gallup.com/poll/193271/americans-believe-god.aspx>
- Oser, F. K., Scarlett, W. G., & Bucher, A. (2006). *Religious and spiritual development throughout the life span*. In R. M. Lerner & W. Damon (Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology: Theoretical models of human development* (pp. 942–998). John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Oxhandler, H. K., & Parrish, D. E. (2018). Integrating clients' religion/spirituality in clinical practice: A comparison among social workers, psychologists, counselors, marriage and

- family therapists, and nurses. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 74(4), 680–694. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.22539>
- Oxhandler, H. K., Moffatt, K. M., & Giardina, T. D. (2019). Clinical helping professionals' perceived support, barriers, and training to integrate clients' religion/spirituality in practice. *Spirituality in Clinical Practice*, 6(4), 279. <https://doi.org/10.1037/scp0000189>
- Oxley, L. (2016). An examination of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). *Educational & Child Psychology*, 33(3), 55–62.
- Paris, J. (2013). How the history of psychotherapy interferes with integration. *Journal of Psychotherapy Integration*, 23(2), 99. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0031419>
- Piedmont, R. L. (2013). A short history of the psychology of religion and spirituality: Providing growth and meaning for Division 36. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 5(1), 1. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0030878>
- Plante, T. G. (2008). What do the spiritual and religious traditions offer the practicing psychologist? *Pastoral Psychology*, 56(4), 429–444. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11089-008-0119-0>
- Ponti Venter, J. J. (2020). Western “Supremacy” and the “Renaissance” issue: Decolonising as imitative reaction. *Phronimon*, 21(1), 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.25159/2413-3086/7067>
- Reedy, E. (2016) *Exploring training experiences in religion and spirituality among clinical psychologists: A qualitative case study* (Publication No. 10142051) [Doctoral Dissertation, Northcentral University]. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing. <https://www.proquest.com/openview/9c27921d3e30898b4a78c70ee3eab37d/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750>
- Rodolfa, E., Bent, R., Eisman, E., Nelson, P., Rehm, L., & Ritchie, P. (2005). A cube model for competency development: Implications for psychology educators and regulators. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 36(4), 347–354. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0735-7028.36.4.347>
- Rohr, R. (2019). *The universal Christ: How a forgotten reality can change everything we see, hope for, and believe*. Convergent Books.
- Russell, S. R., & Yarhouse, M. A. (2006). Training in religion/spirituality within APA-accredited psychology pre-doctoral internships. *Professional Psychology: Research and practice*, 37(4), 430. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0735-7028.37.4.430>
- Saunders, S. M., Petrik, M. L., & Miller, M. L. (2014). Psychology doctoral students' perspectives on addressing spirituality and religion with clients: Associations with personal preferences and training. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 6(1), 1.

- Schulte, D. L., Skinner, T. A., & Claiborn, C. D. (2002). Religious and spiritual issues in counseling psychology training. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 30(1), 118–134. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000002301009>
- Schwartz, R. C. (2013). Moving from acceptance toward transformation with internal family systems therapy (IFS). *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 69(8), 805–816. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.22016>
- Shafranske, E. P., & Malony, H. N. (1990). Clinical psychologists' religious and spiritual orientations and their practice of psychotherapy. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training*, 27(1), 72.
- Shafranske, E. P. (2016). Finding a place for spirituality in psychology training: Use of competency-based clinical supervision. *Spirituality in Clinical Practice*, 3(1), 18. <https://doi.org/10.1037/scp0000098>
- Schafer, R. M., Handal, P. J., & Brawer, P. A. (2011). Training and education in religion/spirituality within APA-accredited clinical psychology programs: 8 years later. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 50, 232–239. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10656210903333400>
- Sapon-Shevin, M., & SooHoo, S. (2020). Embodied social justice pedagogy in a time of 'no touch'. *Postdigital Science and Education*, 2(3), 675–680. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42438-020-00177-6>
- Sloan, A., & Bowe, B. (2014). Phenomenology and hermeneutic phenomenology: The philosophy, the methodologies and using hermeneutic phenomenology to investigate lecturers' experiences of curriculum design. *Quality & Quantity*, 48(3), 1291–1303. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-013-9835-3>
- Sloane, H., & Petra, M. (2021). Modeling cultural humility: Listening to students' stories of religious identity. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 57(1), 28–39. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10437797.2019.1662863>
- Smith, J. A., & Osborn, M. (2008). Interpretative phenomenological analysis. In J. Smith (Ed.), *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods* (pp. 53–80). Sage.
- Smith, J. A., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2009). The theoretical foundations of IPA. In J. A. Smith, P. Flowers, & M. Larkin, *Interpretive phenomenological analysis: Theory, method and research* (pp. 11–39). SAGE Publications.
- Swezey, J. A. (2009) Faculty sense of religious calling at a Christian University, *Journal of Research on Christian Education*, 18(3), 316–332. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10656210903333400>

- Taylor, E. (2000). Psychotherapeutics and the problematic origins of clinical psychology in America. *American Psychologist*, 55(9), 1029. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.9.1029>.
- Tillman, D. R., Dinsmore, J. A., Hof, D. D., & Chasek, C. L. (2013). Becoming confident in addressing client spiritual or religious orientation in counseling: A grounded theory understanding. *Journal of Spirituality in Mental Health*, 15(4), 239–255. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19349637.2013.799411>
- U.S. Const. amend. I.
- Vesilind, P. A. (1999). *So you want to be a professor?: A handbook for graduate students*. Sage Publications.
- Vieten, C., Scammell, S., Pilato, R., Ammondson, I., Pargament, K. I., & Lukoff, D. (2013). Spiritual and religious competencies for psychologists. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 5(3), 129. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0032699>
- Vogel, M. J., McMinn, M. R., Peterson, M. A., & Gathercoal, K. A. (2013). Examining religion and spirituality as diversity training: A multidimensional look at training in the American Psychological Association. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 44(3), 158. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0032472>
- Wachholtz, A., & Sambamoorthi, U. (2011). National trends in prayer use as a coping mechanism for health concerns: Changes from 2002 to 2007. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 3(2), 67. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-012-9649-y>
- Winkeljohn Black, S., & Gold, A. P. (2019). Trainees' cultural humility and implicit associations about clients and religious, areligious, and spiritual identities: A mixed-method investigation. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 47(3), 202–216. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0091647119837019>
- Worthington Jr, E. L., Hook, J. N., Davis, D. E., & McDaniel, M. A. (2011). Religion and spirituality. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 67(2), 204–214. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.20760>
- Zinnbauer, B. J. (2013). Models of healthy and unhealthy religion and spirituality. In K. I. Pargament, A. Mahoney, & E. P. Shafranske (Eds.), *APA handbook of psychology, religion, and spirituality (Vol. 2): An applied psychology of religion and spirituality* (pp. 71–89). American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/14046-004>

Appendix A

Interview Questions

Demographic Questions

1. What is your age?
2. What is your identified gender?
3. What is your identified race/ethnicity?
4. What state/city are you currently teaching at? Or have taught at?
5. Is it a Clinical or Counseling based program?
6. How long have you been an instructor in this doctoral psychology program? In general, how long have you been an instructor?

Semi-structured interview questions:

1. How do you conceptualize Religion/Spirituality? Do you include Religion/Spirituality or concepts of Religion/Spirituality into your courses? (How) (Any definition of Religion/Spirituality). If not, have you ever considered it? Why or why not
2. Do you believe that Religion/Spirituality should be included in doctoral psychology education like any other diversity variable? Why or why not?
3. What factors do you think might influence your teaching Religion/Spirituality in your courses (Historical, personal, systematic)?
4. Can I ask what your personal background is with Religion/Spirituality (history/personal importance)
5. Has/was Religion/Spirituality of importance in choosing the institution you are teaching at?
6. Who should I turn to learn more about this topic?
7. What is your perspective on whether or not Religion/Spirituality should be taught more?

Appendix B
Consent Form

Project: Teaching Religion and Spirituality in Doctoral Psychology Programs:
An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
Researcher: Samantha McGee, PsyD student in Clinical Psychology at Antioch
University, Seattle.

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this research study is to explore the experience of teaching religion and spirituality in doctoral clinical psychology programs. You are being asked to participate because you are over age 18 and meet the criteria for being an instructor in a doctoral clinical psychology program at a secular university.

If you choose to participate in this research project, you will be asked to partake in a 60-90 minute audio-taped interview. Interviews will be held either in person or via Zoom conferencing in a quiet, private setting. The content of this interview will consist of topics relevant to your personal and professional experiences of teaching Religion and Spirituality. You will be asked demographic questions.

The benefit of participation in this study can include the satisfaction in sharing your experiences with others and potential contribution to positive changes in training around Religion and Spirituality. The risks for this study include the emotional and potential stress of the interview process and questions related to Religion and spirituality. Sharing these experiences can be uncomfortable or overwhelming for some people. Should you find yourself experiencing these things you are encouraged to reach out to a psychotherapist, your local crisis hotline, or the National suicide hotline at 1-800-273-8255.

Your participation is voluntary. You may refuse to participate at all or choose to stop your participation at any point in the research, without fear of negative consequences. You will be entered to win the option of donating to a charitable cause of your choosing, as a small token of appreciation for your time.

The information you provide for this study will be treated confidentially. All raw data will be kept in a secured file by the principal researcher. Results of the research will be reported without individually identifiable information by using pseudonyms.

You have the right to review the results of the research. A copy of the results may be obtained by contacting the principal researcher at the address below:

Samantha McGee

smcgee@antioch.edu

I understand that this research study has been reviewed and certified by the Institutional Review Board (IRB), Antioch University Seattle. For research-related questions or issues regarding participants rights, contact the IRB chair, Mark Russell, PhD at

The primary researcher conducting this dissertation study is Samantha McGee, PsyD student. The supervising dissertation chair is Michael Sakuma, PhD, who can be contacted at

I have read and understand the information explaining the purpose of this research and my rights and responsibilities as a participant. My signature below designates my consent to participate in this study according to the terms and conditions above.

Participant Name (printed): _____

Participant Signature: _____

Participant Phone: _____

Is it okay to leave a voicemail on this phone? _____

Participant email _____

Appendix C
Recruitment Flyer

Greetings, Doctoral Psychology Training faculty,

I invite you to participate in a research study looking at teaching in secular, APA doctoral psychology programs.

As a part of my dissertation research, I am looking to hear the experiences of current/previous instructors teaching at secular (non-religious) affiliated institutions in the U.S. I am looking to investigate if and how spirituality/religion, as an aspect of diversity, may or may not be being integrated into the content of psychology courses.

If you are 18 years or older, a current/previous instructor, in an APA doctoral psychology program, **regardless of personal religious/spiritual beliefs or whether you have taught any courses on religion/spirituality**, I would appreciate the opportunity to interview you. Participation includes a telephone or video-conferencing interview lasting approximately 45-60 minutes.

Thank you for your willingness to share this and/or be a part of understanding experiences in teaching. Your participation could contribute to changes within the teaching and training of doctoral psychology courses.

Participants will have a chance to enter a drawing for \$100 to be donated to the charity of their choice.

If interested, please contact Samantha McGee at

Appendix D

Third-Party Confidentiality Waiver for Study

Teaching Religion/Spirituality in APA Doctoral Psychology Programs: An instructor's perspective

Samantha McGee

Antioch University Seattle

As a third party, you are taking part in the research process that involves participants and contains confidential and sensitive information. The purpose of this study is to explore how instructors experience teaching religion/spirituality (or not) in their doctoral psychology programs.

As a third-party participant in this research project, you will be reviewing information obtained from 60-90-minute semi-structured interview and recorded on encrypted devices. By consenting to this waiver, you are agreeing to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of the participants and their information. You also agree to return all files related to this project are returned to the principal researcher and not kept by you or anyone at your agency. You agree that any information will be stored on password-protected and encrypted devices.

This research study has been reviewed and Certified by the Institutional Review Board, Antioch University, Seattle. For research-related problems or questions regarding participants' rights, you can contact Antioch University's Institutional Board Chair, Mark Russell, Ph.D. at

The primary researcher conducting this dissertation study is Samantha McGee, Psy.D. Student. The supervising dissertation chair is Michael Sakuma, PhD., who can be contacted at

If you have questions at any time, you may contact Samantha McGee at (***)***-****
or

I have read and understand the information explaining the purpose of this research, and my rights and responsibilities as a third-party participant. My signature or verbal consent below designates my consent to participate in this research study, according to the terms and conditions outlined above.

Participant Name (printed): _____

Participant Signature: _____ Date: _____

Participant Number _____

Participant E-mail Address: _____

Appendix E

Tables and Diagrams of Themes and Codes

Figure 4

Diagram of Superordinate, Subordinate, and Emergent Themes

