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A Phenomenological Study of Faculty Members' Experiences with Attempting To Integrate Religion and Spirituality into Counseling Psychology Doctoral Training

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A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF FACULTY MEMBERS' EXPERIENCES WITH
ATTEMPTING TO INTEGRATE RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY INTO
COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY DOCTORAL TRAINING

by

Theresa M. Nutten

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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Theresa M. Nutten, Ph.D.

Western Michigan University, 2020

Religion and spirituality (R/S) are two of several multicultural variables salient to some clients seeking counseling, therefore psychologists are expected to be sensitive to and respectful of R/S in professional duties (APA, 2017a; APA, 2017b). However, research has shown that the integration of topics of R/S into the training of psychology graduate students has been minimal at best (Brawer et al., 2002, Hage et al., 2006, Saunders et al., 2014; Schafer et al., 2011; Schulte et al., 2002; Vogel et al., 2013). There are potential logistical and personal barriers to the inclusion of religion and spirituality into mental health training curricula, and many psychologists debate the best practices for training (Adams et al., 2015; Crook-Lyon et al., 2012).

Moreover, counseling psychology is well-known for emphasizing a multicultural focus and social justice advocacy in doctoral training (CCPTP, 2013; Scheel et al., 2018), but this field tends to prioritize other factors of cultural identity over R/S (Adams et al., 2015; Hage, 2006; Schulte et al., 2002). Given the limited information about the specific ways in which topics of R/S are integrated into counseling psychology doctoral training, this study attempted to fill a gap in the literature by exploring the perspective of faculty members who are responsible for implementing the training. The central research question investigated the experiences of faculty members at APA-accredited counseling psychology training programs regarding their attempts to

integrate topics of religion and spirituality into counseling psychology doctoral training. Two sub-questions sought to understand contextual influences on participants' attempts, including professional and personal values and attributes. Given the qualitative nature of the questions posed the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) method (Smith et al., 1999) was used to collect and analyze data. Data were collected from ten participants across the United States using a demographic screening survey, an initial interview, and a member check interview.

The researcher's interpretation of participants' stories revealed five themes related to their attempts to integrate religion and spirituality in training. Participants' descriptions of their attempts revealed that they were thoughtful around the planning and execution of their attempts. Participants named various constituents that they were serving (professional organizations, institutions, departments, programs, and students) and described the complexity of meeting the needs of each entity. Additionally, participants felt varying levels of support for their efforts, which led to experiences of tension and pressure when making attempts. However, participants' personal values, and desire to give their students tools they would need to provide culturally-sensitive clinical care around topics of R/S, helped participants in making attempts despite these challenges.

This research contributes to the field of counseling psychology by providing information about the integration of topics of R/S across a range of courses, topics participants presented on during attempts, and methods that were used in attempts made. Results of this study contributed to ideas for future training, research, and practice around topics of R/S. These include intervening at various levels: professional, institutional, departmental, training program, and individual.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Over 75% of Americans in a national survey reported that religion and spirituality (R/S) are significant values in their lives (Pew Research Center, 2020). With such large numbers of religious affiliation within the United States, religion and spirituality are very likely to be relevant to mental health professionals at some point in their career. The following research explores how mental health professionals (i.e., professional organizations, clinicians, researchers, faculty members) acknowledge and deal with the integration of religion and spirituality in the training of future counseling psychologists.

Background

In the past several decades, mental health professionals and researchers in the field of psychology have shown increased acknowledgement that religion and spirituality (R/S) are one of many multicultural variables that counselors and psychologists should be sensitive to and respect when working with clients (ACA, 2014; APA Council of Representatives, 2007; APA, 2017a; APA, 2017b). For some, affiliation with a religious and/or spiritual belief system is a form of culture, that is, religious or spiritual affiliation may foster a community of members with common customs, language, and values (APA, 2017b; Loewenthal, 2013). As such, R/S practices are often a critical component of healing practices in many racial and ethnic groups (APA, 2017; Boyd-Franklin, 2010; King & Trimble, 2013; Mattis & Grayman-Simpson, 2013; Sue & Sue, 2016), including Native North American, Latina/Latinos, and many southeast Asian cultural groups. For some, religious and spiritual beliefs and cultural practices are a source of strength, such as when affiliated with resilience against instances of racism in African American communities (Boyd-Franklin, 2010).

Alternatively, religion has been associated with forms of discrimination for individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT). Research has shown psychological distress for individuals who experience discrimination and oppression from religious and/or spiritual beliefs and practices, particularly when individuals who identify as LGBT find religious and/or spiritual beliefs and practices to be an important part of their own life (Beagan & Hattie, 2015; Kashubeck-West et al., 2017). Mental health professionals serve a significant role in taking a stand against institutional, systemic, and individual discrimination against oppressed groups. For example, psychologists, particularly counseling psychologists, are called to be social justice advocates and agents for oppressed groups (APA, 2017a; APA, 2017b, Scheel et al., 2018; Vera & Speight, 2003). One way psychologists have been social justice advocates is by taking a stand against religious intolerance within the United States. Religious persecution of individuals potentially affiliated with Islamic groups, such as that associated with the Muslim religion, increased significantly after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Due to amplified prejudice and discrimination, such as that against Muslims, the American Psychological Association (2007) implemented the *Resolution on Religious, Religious-based, and/or Religion-derived Prejudice* calling for psychologists to be aware of the negative influence that religious persecution may have on these populations. The resolution calls for psychologists to be sensitive and respectful to religious and spiritual cultural variables in clinical treatment.

Psychologists tend to hold religion as less personally salient than the general American population does (Delaney et al., 2007; McMinn et al., 2009; Shafranske, 2000; Shafranske & Cummings, 2013). Many psychologists even hold negative views towards religion (Shafranske & Cummings, 2013; Vieten et al., 2016). Negative views may exist because religion and spirituality are not considered to hold scientific merit in pragmatic, or reductionist, research,

which is the dominant research paradigm in psychology (Nelson, 2009; Shiraev, 2015). Additionally, religion can be associated with oppression, authoritarianism, rigidity, prejudice, and racism (Allport & Ross, 1967; Hall, Matz, & Wood, 2010; Hunsberger & Jackson, 2005; Nelson, 2009). If psychologists hold negative views about religion and spirituality, it is possible that they may struggle to empathize and understand the significance that religious and spiritual topics can play in the lives of clients (Shafranske & Cummings, 2013; Walker et al., 2004). Practicing clinicians, who feel uncomfortable with religious topics themselves, may not seek training on R/S or explore their own biases regarding topics of R/S, thereby decreasing competence in this area (Walker et al., 2004). Because religion and spirituality have the potential to be relevant to mental health treatment, clinicians should be willing and prepared to address religious and/or spiritual topics in clinical practice (APA, 2017b; Vieten et al., 2013).

Although psychologists may have differing views on religion and spirituality than the general public, it is entirely possible that a psychologist with negative views towards topics of R/S will, nonetheless, work with a client with R/S beliefs. Clients, particularly those with religious or spiritual affiliations, believe it is both appropriate and preferred to discuss religion and spirituality in individual or group counseling (Morrison et al., 2009; Post & Wade, 2014; Rose et al., 2008). Depending on the relationship the client, and the client's cultural group, has with religion and spirituality, topics of R/S may reveal themselves in therapy in multiple ways. For example, topics of R/S may reveal themselves as a source of coping. For clients adhering to religious and spiritual values, the integration of R/S in clinical treatment is associated with positive mental and physical health outcomes (Cook et al., 2012; Gall & Guirguis-Younger, 2013; Koenig, 2015; Nelson, 2009). On the other hand, religion and/or spirituality may be a source of struggle for some individuals. Some examples of spiritual struggle might include anger

with God, questioning religious or spiritual belief systems, or in some cases, experiences of discrimination and oppression due to religious beliefs and/or practices (Exline, 2013).

Religion and spirituality can be incorporated into any part of the treatment process including assessment, case conceptualization, treatment planning, and termination (Aten & Leach, 2009). Implementation is dependent on the competence and comfort of the clinician and needs and wishes of the client (Aten & Leach, 2009). Topics of R/S may be integrated implicitly (e.g., talking about meaning making systems) or explicitly (e.g., using prayer or mindfulness meditations) into counseling (Aten & Leach, 2009). Several well-known theoretical orientations lend themselves well to the incorporation of religion and spirituality, such as Jungian psychology (Mack, 1994; Nelson, 2009), Humanistic psychology (Mack, 1994; Nelson, 2009), and Religiously or Spirituality Integrated Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (Sperry, 2013).

Professional organizations, such as the American Psychological Association (APA) and the American Counseling Association (ACA), have increased attention to dimensions of R/S in clinical treatment and training. In general, the *American Psychological Association Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* (2017a) and the *American Counseling Association Code of Ethics* (2014) call for clinicians to (a) avoid imposing their values on clients; (b) advocate against discrimination of clients due to race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, social economic status, age, ability status, or religion and/or spirituality; and (c) treat all individuals and groups with respect and sensitivity towards cultural differences. A major difference in these documents is that the APA only acknowledges religion in the list of cultural variables (APA, 2017), whereas the ACA addresses both religion and spirituality as dimensions of cultural identity (ACA, 2014). Psychologists, counselors, and other mental health

professionals continuously strive to implement best practices for integrating multicultural competence into research, training, and clinical practice.

One way these leading professional organizations have shown increased attention to the dimensions of religious and spiritual cultural diversity is through the establishment of divisions devoted to the study of religion and spirituality within mental health professions. Members of the APA Division 36, the Society for Religion and Spirituality, have contributed to the understanding of the relationships among religion, spirituality, and psychology through their peer reviewed journal titled *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality* (Piedmont, 2013). Affiliates of the ACA's Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling (ASERVIC) have contributed significantly to the training of future counselors in religious and spiritual cultural factors through the development of *Competencies for Addressing Spiritual and Religious Issues in Counseling* (ASERVIC, 1999, 2009). These religious and spiritual competencies have been integrated into the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) standards for counselor education training programs, thereby setting guidelines or expectations of inclusion (CACREP 2001, 2009, 2016).

Similar to the standards set forth by the American Counseling Association, the American Psychological Association calls for psychologists to receive training in topics of diversity, such as religion, as it pertains to clinical practice (APA, 2017b); however, no specific R/S competencies have yet been endorsed by the APA. A group of professionals from Division 36 of the APA have established a set of 16 *Spiritual and Religious Competencies* that are in the process of being validated, with the hope of being integrated into future accreditation standards for psychology training programs (Parker et al., 2019; Vieten et al., 2013; Vieten et al., 2016). The proposed competencies seek to increase psychologist's attitudes (or awareness), knowledge,

and skills to address topics of religion and spirituality ethically and effectively in clinical treatment (Vieten et al., 2013). Movement towards endorsement is in progress as a group of psychologists from Division 36 met at the 2019 annual APA conference to discuss the importance of having an APA endorsed set of competencies around topics of religion and spirituality, and members of the organization called for a task force to be formed (Sisemore, 2019).

Researchers have examined the extent of R/S training within counselor education and psychology training programs. Compared to other mental health professions (e.g., psychology, social work, marriage and family therapy), counselor education training programs tend to be the most advanced with respect to their integration of topics of R/S into counseling theory, research, and training, likely due to their incorporation of topics of R/S into CACREP accreditation standards (Hage et al., 2006; Oxhandler & Pargament, 2018; Park 2015). Despite having higher rates of inclusion of topics of R/S across core curricula, counselor trainees report a need for additional training on topics of religion and spirituality to increase perceived competency to provide clinical interventions with topics of R/S (Henriksen et al., 2015; Magalidi-Dopman, 2014). Researchers in the field of counselor education are attending to ways to increase clinician competence by exploring factors that lead to increased competence and the establishment of best practice methods for increasing counselor competence of topics of R/S through graduate training.

Alternatively, researchers in the field of psychology present literature examining the extent of inclusion of topics of R/S in psychology graduate training programs as they work towards the establishment and potential inclusion of R/S competencies in APA-accreditation standards. However, thus far the integration of religious and spiritual topics into the training of psychology graduate students has been minimal at best (Brawer et al., 2002; Hage et al., 2006;

Harper, 2012; Saunders et al., 2014; Schafer et al., 2011; Schulte et al, 2002; Vogel et al., 2013). Psychology trainees reported that they are most likely to gain knowledge about topics of religion and spirituality while in supervision of clinical coursework, as relevant to current client cases, rather than in their non-clinical coursework (Brawer et al., 2002; Hage, 2006; Hage et al., 2006; Saunders et al., 2014; Schafer et al., 2011; Vogel et al., 2013). When religious and spiritual topics are integrated into psychology graduate curricula, they are most often covered in diversity classes (Brawer et al., 2002; Crook-Lyon et al., 2013; Henrikensen et al., 2015; Schafer et al., 2011).

Experts who study religion and spirituality from a psychological perspective have noted that there are potential logistical and personal barriers to the inclusion of topics of R/S into mental health training curricula (Adams et al., 2015; Crook-Lyon et al., 2012). Examples of logistical barriers include determining what R/S content should be integrated into classes and what are the best practices for instruction. Another barrier is a lack of clearly defined R/S competence required for effective and ethical treatment of topics of R/S in clinical settings. A lack of specific competencies leaves room for the instructor to be subjective regarding the extent of R/S integration into training curricula. Similar to the potential biases practicing psychologists may hold, psychology faculty members may also hold negative views about religion and spirituality, which may influence their incorporation of topics of R/S into graduate curricula. Many psychologists have expressed concern that multicultural coursework should be centered on cultural variables of race and ethnicity and integrating other cultural topics in diversity training might draw students' attention away from difficult dialogues of race and racism (Crook-Lyon et al., 2012). This sentiment was echoed by training directors of APA-accredited counseling psychology training programs who reported that counseling psychology faculty consider religion

and spirituality to be less important to training programs than other forms of diversity, such as race and ethnicity (Schulte et al., 2002). Other research has shown that counseling psychologists are open to discussions around topics of R/S as they come up in class discussion, but feel they are not expected to be knowledgeable about specific topics relating to R/S (Hage, 2006).

Because much of the research within the field of psychology is inclusive of several specializations (e.g., clinical, counseling, and school), there is little known about the how the topics of R/S are being integrated into counseling psychology doctoral training. This researcher is only aware of two studies that specifically addressed the experiences of professionals within the field of counseling psychology regarding how topics of R/S are integrated into training (Schulte et al., 2002) and clinical practice (Harper, 2012). Given that the field of counseling psychology is known for its emphasis on multiculturalism and social justice advocacy within training, research, and practice (Vera & Speight, 2003; CCPTP, 2013; Speight & Vera, 2008; Scheel et al., 2018; Speight & Vera, 2008), there is value in research that seeks to understand how topics of R/S may be addressed differently within the field of counseling psychology in comparison to other specializations of psychology.

Statement of Problem

Religion and spirituality are salient aspects of peoples' lives. However, despite the APA and the ACA recommendations for training, counselors and therapists do not receive adequate exposure to topics of religion and spirituality during their graduate training. More information is needed to understand what happens in the cases where R/S are integrated into graduate training, specifically from the vantage point of faculty members. Faculty members are responsible for implementing the training requirements of their academic program so there is value in understanding the experiences of faculty members regarding (a) their perspectives on the

appropriateness of R/S integration into graduate training, (b) ideas on how and when to integrate topics of R/S into graduate training, and (c) the support or barriers that influence the integration of topics of R/S into graduate training.

Because, as previously noted, the APA and the ACA have varying regulations on the integration of topics of R/S in training, this researcher has chosen to focus the current study on the experiences of counseling psychology faculty members. One reason this population was selected was because the researcher is in a counseling psychology doctoral program and therefore can contribute to her field by learning about faculty experiences of the phenomenon within her own profession. A second reason for limiting the population to faculty members at APA-accredited counseling psychology training programs is that there is a lack of understanding of the opinions and perspectives of counseling psychology faculty members. Studies that have specifically assessed counseling psychology training programs are over 10 years old and include small sample sizes, thereby warranting an updated assessment of integration.

In order to honor the goals set forth by the ethical standards and the mission of counseling psychologists, researchers examining the appropriateness of, and best practices for, the integration of topics of R/S into graduate curricula should include a variety of perspectives on the topic (Cook et al., 2012). The researcher of this study recruited participants from diverse backgrounds to give voice to a variety of experiences of faculty members in APA-accredited counseling psychology training programs across the United States who have attempted to integrate topics of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training. A total of 10 participants engaged in this research study. Study participants predominately identified as “White/Caucasian American/European American” (n = 6) and female (n = 8), which was expected based on the demographic make-up of APA members. Participants also identified as “both religious and

spiritual” and Christian (n = 5), which is somewhat surprising because research has shown that psychologists tend to be less religious than the general American population. Of note, participants represented diverse identities based on race and ethnicity (n = 4), sexual orientation (n = 2), agnostic or atheist religious identity (n = 3), culturally Jewish, but not religious (n = 2), and years since degree earned (ranging from 1 year to 31 years). Regarding past or present religious affiliation, participants listed membership with 10 different religious or spiritual belief systems and three participants reported their religious affiliation has changed over time.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The purpose of this dissertation is to explore a phenomenon of the experiences of faculty members in APA-accredited counseling psychology training programs who have attempted to integrate topics of religion and spirituality into counseling psychology doctoral training. The research question guiding this study is, “What are the experiences of faculty members at APA-accredited counseling psychology training programs regarding their attempts to integrate topics of religion and spirituality into the training of counseling psychology doctoral students.” The sub-questions are as follows:

1. What has influenced the attempts of faculty members at APA-accredited counseling psychology training programs to integrate topics of religion and spirituality into counseling psychology doctoral training?
2. How do the personal and professional attributes and values of faculty members at APA-accredited counseling psychology doctoral training programs influence their attempts to integrate topics of religion and spirituality into counseling psychology doctoral training?

Methodology

Given the research questions being asked, a phenomenological qualitative research approach was used to collect and analyze data (Creswell, 2013). Participants in this study were faculty members at APA-accredited counseling psychology training programs who attempted to integrate topics of religion and spirituality into counseling psychology training. The criterion for inclusion was that faculty members had experience with the phenomenon being studied, that their experiences were with teaching counseling psychology doctoral students at an APA-accredited counseling psychology training program, and that religion and/or spirituality was not a specialized research area for the faculty member. Interested participants who met inclusion criteria were invited to complete two semi-structured interviews with the researcher; first an interview exploring their perspectives and feelings about the phenomenon, and a second member-checking interview. All interviews were facilitated using Skype, a web-based video program. Data were analyzed using the Interpretative Phenomenological Approach (IPA; Smith et al., 1999). Using IPA, the researcher co-constructed her understanding of the meaning participants have made of their experiences with the phenomenon.

Significance

This study contributes to the field of counseling psychology by providing insight into the experiences of faculty members at APA-accredited counseling psychology training programs who have attempted to integrate topics of religion and spirituality into counseling psychology doctoral training. Second, this research adds to the existing literature on attempts made to integrate R/S in training by providing awareness of the methods and content that participants used in attempts they made.

Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has introduced this study examining the experiences of faculty members at APA-accredited counseling psychology training programs who have attempted to integrate topics of religion and spirituality into counseling psychology doctoral training. The following chapter will review relevant literature on (a) the definition of religion and spirituality; (b) the relevance of religion, spirituality as cultural variables within the United States; (c) the influence of religion and spirituality in clinical practice; (d) the ways in which religion and spirituality are incorporated into the guidelines and standards of the APA and the ACA; and (e) current literature regarding the integration of religion and spirituality into APA-accredited and CACREP-accredited counseling and counselor education training programs.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mental health professionals, particularly counseling psychologists, pride themselves in being multicultural-competent clinicians. Multicultural competency is a tripartite model in which mental health clinicians should gain knowledge, skill, and awareness around a variety of cultural topics (Sue et al., 1992). The operational definition of multicultural competency refers primarily to visible racially and ethnically diverse populations within the United States including African Americans, Native North Americans, Asian Americans, and Latinx Americans (Sue et al., 1992). However, other oppressed groups may also benefit from the multicultural competencies standards (Sue et al., 1992). For psychologists, multicultural topics are defined by several documents, including the American Psychological Association Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (APA, 2017a) and the Multicultural Guidelines: An Ecological Approach to Context, Identity, and Intersectionality (APA, 2017b) to include race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, disability status, and religion and spirituality (APA, 2017a; APA, 2017b). Some topics of diversity, such as race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender, receive more attention in research, training, and practice than others, such as religion and spirituality, ability status, and age (Adams et al., 2015; Vogel et al., 2013). Research has shown that topics of religion and spirituality (R/S) often receive minimal or no attention in psychology training programs (Brawer et al., 2002; Crook-Lyon et al., 2012; Hage et al., 2006; Kelly, 1994; Saunders et al., 2014; Schafer et al., 2009; Schulte et al., 2002; Vieten et al., 2013; Vieten et al., 2016; Vogel et al., 2013).

Members of the American Psychological Association (APA) continue to make strides to acknowledge religion and spirituality as cultural variables recognized by mental health

professionals and requiring additional competency. As a result of the increased attention to the significance of religion and spirituality, the accreditation body of the APA has grappled with how and what to include in the integration of R/S topics into graduate training. This is particularly true within the field of counseling psychology, which is known for holding strong values of multiculturalism and social justice advocacy in training, research, and clinical practice (CCPTP, 2013; Goodman et al., 2004; Scheel et al., 2018; Toporek & Worthington, 2014; Vera & Speight, 2003). The following literature review will examine the history of religion, spirituality, and psychology to provide a context for the integration of topics of R/S in counseling psychology training. A second goal of this literature review is to delineate previous research around how topics of R/S are integrated into psychology training programs, as well as in other mental health training, particularly in counselor education.

Specifically, this literature review will (a) discuss the definitions of religion and spirituality in mental health research, (b) explore religion and spirituality as cultural variables within the United States, (c) describe the significance of religion and spirituality in clinical practice, (d) explore the APA guidelines and standards to emphasize multicultural competent training and practice associated with religious and spiritual topics, and (e) critically evaluate the current state of religious and spirituality training within counseling and psychology training programs.

Varying Definitions of Religion and Spirituality

Many mental health professionals study religion, spirituality, and psychology as a specialization area in a movement known as the *Psychology of Religion* (Beit-Hallahmi, 1974; Nelson, 2009). According to a reference in the *American Psychological Association Dictionary of Psychology*, the Psychology of Religion is “the empirical or academic study of

spiritual experience or organized religion from a psychological perspective” (VandenBos, 2007, p. 754). As the evolution of studying religion within the field of psychology has expanded, the Psychology of Religion movement also evolved to include spirituality and, in latter parts of this paper, is referred to as the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality movement.

A critical task of researchers in the Psychology of Religion movement has been to define religion and spirituality, which has proven to be a challenging and confusing undertaking. Social scientists have used multiple ways to operationalize the constructs of religion and spirituality in scientific research (Hill et al., 2000; Nelson, 2009; Pargament et al., 2013b; Zinnbauer et al., 1997; Zinnbauer et al., 1999). As you will find throughout this review, social scientists sometimes discuss religion and spirituality as distinct terms. At other times, they interchange the terms religion and spirituality as though these constructs have the same meaning. Sometimes religion is the umbrella term that includes spirituality and other times, spirituality is the umbrella term that includes religion. Religion and spirituality are constructs that can be difficult to distinguish between, yet for many social scientists and the public, it seems important to differentiate them (Nelson, 2009; Pargament et al., 2013b). For both social science researchers and the public, the acceptability of religion and spirituality (and their definitions) has changed over time to align with popular beliefs systems, thereby increasing confusion about these terms (Pargament et al., 2013b).

One critique of the current research on religion and spirituality is that without distinct operational definitions, it is unclear what constructs researchers are examining (Hill et al., 2000; Oxhandler & Pargament, 2018; Zinnbauer, 1997). Moreover, varying definitions of these terms cause problems with the applicability of this research across multiple populations and settings because each definition is different. Therefore, there is a call within the research on religion and

spirituality within the field of psychology to develop clear definitions of these terms that distinguish between these variables (Pargament et al., 2013b).

Though often used interchangeably, the recent trend in the literature is to describe religion and spirituality as mutually exclusive phenomena (Hill et al., 2000; Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005). The movement towards separation of definitions is in part due to the individualistic preferences for religious and spiritual identities. Individuals may identify as “religious but not spiritual,” “spiritual but not religious,” “both religious and spiritual,” or neither. Another reason for the separation of terms is that many individuals have pre-conceived ideas about religion and spirituality, which can have both positive and negative connotations (Pargament et al., 2013b). Some positive attributes commonly associated with religion are altruism and church attendance. Some negative attributes commonly associated with religiousness are oppression, dogma, and prejudice. Compared to religion, spirituality tends to be perceived as positive and is commonly associated with being a flexible experience, whereas religion is perceived as being rigid and bad. Alternatively, spirituality is at times not taken as seriously as religiosity because of the association of spirituality with popular trends such as “New Age” beliefs (Moberg, 2002). Researchers often differentiate between religion and spirituality in that traditional rituals characterize the former and the latter is an experience free from tradition (Hill et al., 2000; Nelson, 2009; Zinnbauer et al., 1997; Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005). Individual differences in the definitions of religion and spirituality, as well as the commonly held associations of these terms, have led to tensions between these constructs. In short, spirituality is perceived as “good” individual practice and religion is perceived as “bad” institutional practice (Hill et al., 2000; Nelson, 2009; Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005).

Experts in the field of psychology of religion and spirituality, Pargament et al. (2013b), recommended the preferred use of the terms religion, spirituality, or both religion and spirituality together. The present study separates the terms religion and spirituality when discussing concepts related only to religion or only spirituality and uses the phrase religion *and* spirituality (R/S) to denote concepts applied to both religion and spirituality together. According to Pargament et al., (2013b) it is acceptable to use both the terms religion and spirituality to refer to a full range of beliefs or practices that are “embedded within both non-traditional, secular contexts and established institutional contexts” (p. 17). The following sections will define and describe religion and spirituality as unique constructs.

Religion

Religion is defined as “the search for significant psychological, social, or physical destination within established institutional contexts that are designed to facilitate spirituality” (Pargament et al., 2013b, p. 16). The public often views religion as being a highly structured, objective, and institutional practice because religious individuals often adhere to beliefs and practices as defined by a religious institution (Pargament et al., 2013b). Social scientists often study aspects of religion through the perspective of a religious individual, such as measures of religious commitment, motivation, struggling, or coping. Religion is also associated with social, communal, and/or cultural values (Loewenthal, 2013; Pargament et al., 2013b). The social aspect may include things like church attendance or a community gathering to practice a ritual in reverence to the Sacred. Religious institutions or communities have varying beliefs about several topics, including the necessity for worship and ritual, the existence of a higher power(s), the creation of the universe, and the afterlife.

Generally, there are two broad categories of religious groups, theists and non-theists. Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and Sikhism are all examples of theist religions because they adhere to a belief in God. These theist groups often have religious definitions that include recognition of a higher power and involve acts of worship or rituals. Alternatively, non-theists are religious groups who do not believe in, or worship, a God(s). Many Eastern religions like Buddhism, Jainism, Taoism, and Confucianism, are non-theists religious groups that hold beliefs in karma, moral values of humanity and love, nature, and the sacredness of all creation (Miller, 2003a). Non-theists can be atheist, agnostic, or other disbelievers. Atheist groups are defined by a disbelief, or lack of belief, in God (Lippy & Williams, 2010a; Streib & Klein, 2013). Many people who are atheist believe in the sacredness of concepts other than a higher power or God-like care for humanity, evolution, and science (Lippy & Williams, 2010a; Streib & Klein, 2013). For example, followers of the Church of Scientology International are an atheist religious group that adheres to a belief that humans are on a quest of self-actualization through scientific means (Lippy & Williams, 2010b). A second example of an atheist religion is that of Wicca and Witchcraft, which adhere to beliefs that magic is sacred (Lippy & Williams, 2010b). Atheist groups differ from agnostic groups in that the former denies that God can exist and the latter is skeptical that God exists (Lippy & Williams, 2010a; Streib & Klein, 2013). Followers of groups of disbelievers may consider that some religious beliefs and practices (such as the belief in God) are illogical (Lippy & Williams, 2010a).

Within each of these larger categories of religion, there are multiple subsections, or religious branches. For example, Christianity is a broad example of a theistic religious group that adheres to beliefs of the divinity of Jesus Christ and the Bible. Some theist religious branches include Catholicism, Protestantism, and Eastern Orthodox religions. Within each of these

religious branches, there are religious denominations, such as Conservative Protestants, United Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Churches, Baptist Church, and many Lutheran Churches. Within each of these denominations, there are subsections called sects. For example, within the Baptist Church there are sects called Southern Baptist and Seventh Day Adventists. Each denomination and sect shares the same core tenants as the broad religious groups but has varying histories, worship styles, and specific beliefs (Ellison & McFarland, 2013). The more removed the sect is from the original religious branch, the smaller the organization and the more likely that the belief and practices are to deviate from the original religious branch.

Membership in a religious branch, denomination, or sect may have positive attributes, such as a sense of belonging to a community of like-minded individuals. Some researchers have suggested that the social support provided by religious communities (Lim & Putnam, 2010) and the increased interaction by supportive individuals may benefit a therapy client's propensity for positive coping skills (George et al., 2002; Park et al., 2020). Additionally, religiosity is often associated with views of altruism because many religious affiliations value helping attitudes towards others (Saroglou, 2013). However, there are also many negative attributes associated with religious group affiliation, including that some religious practices are oppressive, authoritative, rigid, racist, and discriminatory (Allport & Ross, 1967; Hall et al., 2010; Hunsberger & Jackson, 2005; Nelson, 2009). Because of these negative associations, many Americans (and psychologists) have turned their attention to spirituality rather than religion, assuming that spirituality is free from these negative biases.

Spirituality

According to Pargament et al. (2013b), spirituality is defined as, "The search for the sacred; or, sacred beliefs, practices, experiences, or relationships that are embedded in

nontraditional contexts” (p. 17). Pargament et al. (2013b) went on to describe spirituality saying, “[spirituality] connotes an individualized, experientially based pursuit of positive values, such as connectedness, meaning, self-actualization, and authenticity” (p. 11). This definition speaks to the core task of spirituality as searching for an emotional, social, and biological connection with something sacred, which can lead someone who is spiritual to feel connected to themselves as well. The sacred may or may not include a deity and can include nature, loving relationships, parenting, work, social justice, and virtues such as humility or gratitude (Hill et al., 2002; Pargament et al., 2013b).

Not all objects can be sacred. For example, although gardening is important and relaxing for some people, it is not spiritual in nature unless the practice brings the individual a connection to the spirit or a higher power (Hill et al., 2000). Therefore, someone who is spiritual must have a meaningful and significant connection to the sacred object. As you can see in this definition, spirituality is difficult to define because, as some social scientists note, spirituality is an individually constructed and elusive concept (Moberg, 2002). Another important aspect of spirituality is that the search for the sacred process can be a lifetime, developmental process, and there are several theories of faith and spiritual development, such as Fowler’s Stages of Faith (1981). While a full review of such theories would go beyond the scope of this study, the general concept is that the connections a spiritual person has made with the sacred may change throughout a person’s lifetime. An individual who has discovered the sacred is likely to be motivated to further explore and understand that connection through spiritual practices. Spiritual practices are identified as any behaviors a spiritual person engages in to continue their connection to, and possibly enhance their relationship with, the sacred (Cervantas & Purhum, 2005). Activities may include “spiritual practice (e.g., ritual, music), spiritual knowledge (e.g.,

study of sacred texts, scientific inquiry), spiritual experience (e.g., meditation, walks outdoors), and spiritual relationships (e.g., church involvement, social action)” (Pargament, 2013, p. 262).

While there are several positive components to spiritual practice, there are likely to be times when a person who is spiritual experiences spiritual struggle. As the researcher will further explore later in this literature review, spiritual struggle occurs when an individual experiences conflict or tension, or is questioning their sacred connections (Exline, 2013; Pargament, 2013) and may be a reason why someone may seek therapy. In some cases, individuals who are unable to resolve their spiritual struggle may turn away from the search process, either temporarily or permanently, which may cause emotional distress (Exline, 2013; Pargament, 2013). On the other hand, an individual may attempt to reconnect and further their understanding of their sacred relationship through coping strategies, such as forgiveness, rites of passage, and meditation retreats. Research is increasingly showing that moving through the process of reconnecting with the sacred can be a profound experience leading to personal growth and healing (Cervantas & Purhum, 2013; Pargament, 2013).

This section, Varying Definitions of Religion and Spirituality, has delineated the various definitions of religion used in mental health research and identified the definitions used in this research. As alluded to when defining religion and spirituality, for many individuals who hold religious or spiritual identities and/or affiliations, religion and spirituality can become a cultural lens to see experience the world through. The following section will explore religion and spirituality as cultural variables within the United States of America.

Religion and Spirituality as Cultural Variables Within the United States

According to the 2014 U.S. Religious Landscape Study (Pew Research Center, 2020) religion and spirituality are topics that are important to 77% of a national sample of 35,000

United States citizens who participated in a telephone survey. Of the national sample, 70.6% of North Americans identified as Christian, including Evangelical Protestant (25.4%), Catholic (20.8%), Mainline Protestant (14.7%), Mormon (1.6%), Orthodox Christian (1%), and Jehovah Witness (<1%). Roughly 6% of participants reported affiliations with non-Christian faiths, such as Judaism (1.9%), Muslim (0.9%), Buddhism (0.7%), Hinduism (0.7%), and other (1.5%). The high percentage of religious affiliation and religious importance to North Americans represented in the Pew Research Center survey suggests that religion and spirituality (R/S) are topics that would be relevant in counseling.

There are several important social implications regarding religion and spirituality within the United States. In order to provide context for the social implications, it is important to understand some of the historical context of religion within the United States of American (U.S.). According to the Bill of Rights of the U.S. Constitution, the “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof” (U.S. Const. amend. I). This amendment was enacted so that the Americans had the right to practice their religion freely, without government interference. This law is relevant to how topics of R/S are addressed within mental health training, and practice in several ways.

One way the Amendment I to the U.S. Constitution is relevant is that it contributes to a social norm that many Americans view R/S as personal and taboo topics that should not be discussed in public spaces. If topics of R/S are perceived as being taboo to discuss, then some Americans might feel hesitant to discuss topics of R/S in mental health treatment, even if it is relevant. Similarly, topics of religion are often avoided within public educational systems (Edwards, 2018; Talbot & Anderson, 2012), which can make it hard for students to explore topics of R/S as relevant to them. Developmentally, college is often a time when students explore

many of their values and identities, including religion and spirituality (Astin et al., 2011; Talbot & Anderson, 2012). When topics of religion and spirituality are avoided in academic settings, students have less opportunity to foster their own religious and spirituality growth, and to learn about the religious and spiritual values within other cultures. Some believe there is a need for an educational setting that allows for holistic views of learning and promotes students to explore topics that are important to the students (Talbot & Anderson, 2012). These same authors believe there is a need for faculty in higher education to create safe spaces to address topics of R/S as important to student (Talbot & Anderson, 2012).

Within the United States, there is also a system of privilege and oppression related to religious and spiritual membership. An example of a religious privilege is that many Americans identify with beliefs, practices, and affiliations with Christianity, which is a dominant religious group that comes with a socially constructed set of unearned privileges similar to being White/European American or male (Clark et al., 2002). For example, many state and federal holidays occur around Christian holidays, which means that individuals who are Christian often do not have to justify taking time off work to celebrate religious holidays (Clark et al., 2002).

On the other hand, many underrepresented religious groups, such as Muslim or Sikh, experience prejudice, discrimination, and oppression, particularly when a person also holds intersecting racially and ethnically diverse identities (Joshi, 2006). Moreover, religious diversity within the United States has an extensive history of being associated with interreligious prejudice, oppression, and conflict (Allport & Ross, 1967; Hall et al., 2010; Hunsberger & Jackson, 2005; Joshi, 2006; Nelson, 2009). Similar to other social identities, religious groups tend to be ethnocentric and instill values of social conformity and respect for tradition, which

may create in-group and out-group perspectives that lead to intergroup conflict (Allport & Ross, 1967; Hall et al., 2010).

To further explore religion and spirituality as cultural variables within the United States, this researcher will provide some examples of the importance of R/S as cultural variables that might be relevant considerations for clinical treatment of these unique populations. First the researcher will describe the intersection of R/S within racially and ethnically diverse groups. Second, the researcher will explore the intersection of R/S within sexual and gender diverse groups.

Intersection of R/S and Racial and Ethnic Identity

Religion and spirituality are an important part of the intersecting identities held by many racially and ethnically diverse people (Fukuyama et al., 2014, Park et al., 2020; Sue & Sue, 2016). Many racially and ethnically diverse groups, such as African Americans (91%), Latinx Americans (84%), and Asian Americans (66%), reported religion and spirituality to be important (Pew Research Center, 2020). This section will briefly describe some of the cultural variables to be aware of regarding the intersection of racial, ethnic, and religious and/or spiritual identities. Included will be the unique cultural variables associated with some racially and ethnically underrepresented populations within the United States, as well as some treatment considerations.

African Americans are often noted to be a highly religious group, so much so that spirituality is distinguished as a salient component of Afrocentric culture (Boyd-Franklin, 2010). Christianity is highly prevalent in populations of African Americans and Blacks of Caribbean or African descent living in the United States (Mattis & Grayman-Simpson, 2013). Religion, specifically the religious institutions (or Churches), has served as a community of support for African Americans since the institution of slavery and has continued to provide shelter and

retreat from racial discrimination (Boyd-Franklin, 2010; Mattis & Grayman-Simpson, 2013; Sue & Sue, 2016). African Americans (as well as other individuals of racially and ethnically diverse groups) may seek to address mental health issues through religious leaders rather than with identified mental health practitioners (Boyd-Franklin, 2010; Mattis & Grayman-Simpson, 2013; Sue & Sue, 2016). Not all religious leaders are mental health professionals and therefore are likely limited in their ability to treat mental health disorders. Religious leaders could provide *spiritual guidance* (a reflection process with the goal of spiritual growth), but, as untrained mental health professionals, cannot provide therapy (Sperry, 2013). Understanding the historical and cultural significance of R/S to some African Americans, one way that mental health professionals can provide culturally sensitive care is to be competent to address religion and spirituality through collaboration with churches and by integrating R/S interventions (e.g., prayer) into counseling.

Christianity is prominent in Latinx American culture, specifically Catholicism, Protestantism, and Evangelism (Koss-Chioino, 2013). The following summary from Koss-Chioino (2013) described ways that Christianity is prevalent for many Latinx American cultural groups. During the 20th century, the Catholic Church was known for providing aid for Latinx American immigrants through social services and adapted culturally sensitive practices through the incorporation of Spanish-speaking priests who held masses in the Spanish language. Many Latinx American immigrants have also benefited from Catholic and Protestant private education. In addition to religious practices, Latinx communities commonly practice *communitarian spirituality*, which includes, “community and family celebrations of the Day of the Dead by Mexicans and Mexican Americans ... [or] neighborhood-oriented healing ‘cults,’ such as Spiritism” (Koss-Chioino, 2013, p. 600). Mental health professionals are called to tailor mental

health treatment to the popular healing system of the community. For Latinx populations, religion and spirituality are cultural factors that must be considered and integrated into culturally sensitive clinical treatment.

Asian American populations represent a wide range of immigrants with varied ancestries, distinct ethnic group identification, and diverse religious and spiritual backgrounds (Ai et al., 2013; Fukuyama et al., 2014). Experts from the study of the psychology of religion and spirituality highlight the importance of expanding the definition of religion and spirituality to encompass a global perspective, specifically when examining the influence of Western and Asian-born religious worldviews, that is Taosim, Confucianism, and Zen Buddhism. Ai et al. (2013) broadly describe the difference between Western and Asian-born religious worldviews, noting that (in the former) the Sacred is typically a personalized object (e.g., God), whereas some Eastern faiths emphasize the integration of humans as a part of a whole (e.g., the Universe). Regardless of religious or spiritual affiliation, participation in communities of like-minded believers may simultaneously increase racial and ethnic identity by preserving traditional cultural values and serve as a positive coping mechanism for acculturative stress in Asian American immigrant populations (Ai et al., 2013; Fukuyama et al., 2014).

Many Native North American populations consider spirituality to be ingrained in the cultural ceremonies (King & Trimble, 2013). Within Native North American cultural traditions, spirituality is often tied to a connection with living, including the land (Fukuyma et al., 2014). As Native North American populations have endured colonization and genocide, many spiritual practices of this culture have been disrupted (Fukuyma et al., 2014). King and Trimble (2013) criticize traditional, Westernized, psychological perspectives, indicating that these views have often “overlooked, dismissed, or discredited” (p. 565) a cultural dimension of Native North

American populations' spirituality. Many cultural groups, such as Native North Americans, believe that psychological healing occurs through *Espiritistas* (mediums) or *Shaman* (or indigenous healer), who hold the power to cure illness on a spiritual dimension (Sue & Sue, 2016).

Intersection of R/S, Sexual Orientation, and Gender Identity

Researchers have examined the roles of religion and/or spirituality in sexually and gender diverse individuals. Many have documented that for some individuals who identify as LGBTQ+, religious and/or spiritual participation has led to rejection, oppression, concealment of identity, or abandonment of faith institution (Hopwood & Witten, 2017; Kashubeck-West et al., 2017). For many sexually diverse and transgender and gender-nonconforming (TGNC) individuals, conflict with religious organizations has led to emotional and psychological distresses, such as feelings of shame and guilt, viewing sex negatively, disconnection from body, internalized heterosexism, and dissolving relationships with self and others (Beagan & Hattie, 2015; Kashubeck-West et al., 2017). Though much of the literature on the roles of religion and spirituality in the lives of sexually diverse individuals is largely negative, counselors must be cautious not to assume that these identities conflict with one another (Kocet et al., 2011). Indeed, there are many faith traditions that are affirming to LGBTQ+ groups, such as Native North American religions, Judaism, Buddhism, and Hinduism (Hopwood & Witten, 2017; Kashubeck-West et al., 2017).

This section, *Religion and Spirituality as Cultural Variables within the United States*, has provided brief examples of the ways in which religion and spirituality can be cultural variables that are important to many Americans, noted the social influences of R/S within the United States, and briefly described the intersection of R/S with both racial and ethnic, sexual, and

gender diverse populations. For some Americans who hold religious and/or spiritual beliefs, values, and practices, topics of R/S may be important subjects that come up in counseling. Therefore, the following section describes the influence of religion and spirituality in clinical practice.

The Influence of Religion and Spirituality in Clinical Practice

The previous section revealed that religion and spirituality may be topics that are important for many Americans and therefore are likely to be relevant within mental health clinical practice. The following review will reveal the (a) beliefs and preferences of clients and (b) the attitudes of mental health professionals regarding the inclusion of religion and spirituality in psychotherapy. The roles of religion and spirituality in psychotherapy are also described, including R/S integrated into therapeutic interventions and R/S as coping mechanisms.

Clients' Beliefs and Preferences about Integrating R/S into Therapy

Clients, particularly those with religious or spiritual affiliations, believe it is both appropriate and preferred to discuss religion and spirituality in individual or group counseling (Morrison et al., 2009; Post & Wade, 2014; Rose et al., 2008). Rose et al. (2008) examined clients' beliefs about the appropriateness of discussing spiritual and religious topics in counseling and clients' preferences for discussing spiritual and religious topics in counseling. Participants (N = 74) were predominately European American (92%), females (87%), with some sort of religious affiliation, from counseling sites such as university counseling centers, private practices and specialized treatment centers (e.g., a women's center or Lutheran Social Service center). Participants were asked an open-ended question eliciting an explanation as to whether or not they would or would not like to discuss spiritual and religious topics in counseling. Fifty-five percent of participants reported they would like to discuss

spiritual and religious topics. In addition, results revealed that clients with higher levels of religious or spiritual affiliation expressed stronger levels of support that religious and spiritual discussions are appropriate and preferred in psychotherapy. Some reasons participants gave for why they would like to discuss spiritual and religious topics in psychotherapy included themes of finding spiritual and religious topics to be essential to healing and growth and that spirituality was personally important. Twenty-two percent of participants reported that their preference to discuss topics of R/S in psychotherapy was dependent on other factors, such as relevance of topics of R/S to presenting concern (22%), willingness to discuss spirituality but not religiosity (8%), and the qualities of the counselor (5%). Individuals who reported they would not like to discuss religious and spiritual topics in counseling (18%) provided reasons such as a preference to discuss topics of R/S with clergy, a belief that topics of R/S were not a part of presenting concern, and uncertainty of their own R/S beliefs. Similar results were found in Morrison et al. (2009) and Post and Wade (2014).

The results from these studies indicate that, for clients who identify with a religious or spiritual belief system and wish to discuss these topics in counseling, there is merit to incorporating religious topics in mental health treatment. While it is understandable that not all clients will have religious affiliations, or want to discuss topics of R/S, it is important that mental health professionals be prepared to assess for the appropriateness of these conversations and to discuss religious and spiritual topics if desired by the client. The following section will describe psychologists' attitudes towards religion and spirituality and briefly discuss how those attitudes may influence attempts to integrate topics of R/S into clinical practice and training.

Psychologists' Attitudes Toward R/S

Many samples of psychologists have reported that religion is less personally salient for them than the general American population (Delaney et al., 2007; McMinn et al., 2009; Shafranske, 2000; Shafranske & Cummings, 2013). Psychologists who self-identify as being less religious, less spiritual, or agnostic may have trouble discussing topics of R/S because they may not have examined these topics themselves (Vieten et al., 2013). Psychologists who are not religious or spiritual may find difficulty understanding the importance of R/S values for clients (Shafranske & Cummings, 2013; Walker et al., 2004). Their lack of understanding may decrease the likelihood of using R/S assessments or R/S interventions with clients (Walker et al., 2004). Additionally, mental health professionals are sometimes trained that topics of R/S are outside of their scope of practice and/or unimportant to address with clients (Aten & Leach, 2009). If psychologists are less likely to bring attention to religious and spiritual topics in counseling, then clients may not feel comfortable discussing topics of R/S themselves and the environment may diminish opportunities to discuss religious and spiritual resiliency or spiritual struggle for clients.

Not only are religion and spirituality less relevant to some psychologists, but research has shown that social scientists tend to hold negative views of religion (Coyle, 2010; Hage et al., 2006). One reason why psychologists may hold negative views of religion is that faith beliefs are sometimes considered aversive to science (Shafranske & Cummings, 2013; Vieten et al., 2016). Though religion and spirituality were once a valued source of knowledge in understanding psychological constructs, the views of society and science during the 15th through 18th centuries shifted to the secularization hypothesis, which held that as science and technology advanced, religion would lose its significance to society (Nelson, 2009). This movement away from religion and toward an emphasis on science carried through the 20th century and emphasized

pragmatism. In pragmatic research, social scientists explained phenomena through empirical evidence and reductionist explanations. Historically, as psychologists competed with other medical professionals (who used pragmatic research techniques) for prestige and resources, psychologists turned away from studying religious and spiritual constructs for laboratory research (Shirayev, 2015). Moreover, psychological theories of the time, such as behaviorism, psychoanalysis, neuroscience, and cognitive psychology, excluded religious perspectives, further dividing religion, spirituality, and psychology (Nelson, 2009). Most notably, Sigmund Freud, often cited as the founding father of psychoanalysis, explicitly criticized religion as an obsessive neurosis and expressed that psychoanalysis would alleviate his patients' religious anxieties (Freud, 1907). Though Freud eventually retracted his strong statements about religion, negative views about religion continued to persist in the field of psychology (Nelson, 2009; Shirayev, 2015).

A second reason for psychologists holding skeptical views is because, as previously noted, religion is associated with oppression, authoritarianism, rigidity, prejudice, and racism (Allport & Ross, 1967; Hall et al., 2010; Hunsberger & Jackson, 2005; Nelson, 2009). Though some topics of R/S may be associated with oppression, not all religious belief systems and affiliations are negative. However, the negative views some psychologists hold about religion and spirituality may have a strong influence over what and how topics of R/S are incorporated into the training of future psychologists, which has the potential to directly affect clients if clinicians are not adequately prepared to discuss R/S cultural factors that are relevant to a client.

Conversely, in samples of psychologists who identified as religious, the proportion of non-dominant religious group representation was larger than a national sample (Shafranske & Cummings, 2013). This could be because psychologists' emphasis on multiculturalism may draw

more diverse groups to the profession and contribute to the larger number of non-dominant religious group membership (Shafranske & Cummings, 2013). In one sample, clinicians who were personally religious and/or spiritual reported integrating R/S into treatment more than those with less than favorable personal experiences (Shafranske & Cummings, 2013). For many psychologists who integrate religious and spiritual interventions into treatment, they do so based on their own religious and/or spiritual experiences because they lack training on topics of R/S (Walker et al., 2004). Clinicians who impose their personal values onto a client, by either ignoring topics of R/S or by providing interventions based on their own experience, risk unintentionally doing harm to their client (Aten & Leach, 2009, Cashwell et al., 2013). One significant reason for the inclusion of R/S training in graduate education is to provide clinicians with the opportunity to gain awareness of their R/S biases and attitudes so as not to impose them on their clients.

It is important to understand the worldview of practicing clinicians, who are members of the associations responsible for overseeing the standards of training of future psychologists. Saunders et al. (2014) asked 543 doctoral trainees at APA-accredited clinical and counseling psychology programs to describe their understanding of the perceived appropriateness to discuss topics of R/S with clients. When asked whether mental health professionals should ask clients about their spiritual and religious beliefs and practices (SRBP), 21.9% of psychology trainees stated that they “should always ask,” 31.5% reported they “should almost always ask,” and 42.5% reported they “should never ask” (p. 4). Participants who reported at least some training in topics of R/S were more likely than those participants with no training to endorse the appropriateness of asking clients about SRBP. These results suggest that counselor trainees with

training in topics of R/S may be more comfortable initiating conversations with clients regarding topics of R/S.

Upon further examination, Saunders et al. (2014) sought to find out what types of questions doctoral psychology trainees felt were most appropriate to ask clients. Participants reported it was most appropriate to ask clients (a) about the salience or relevance of SRBP to the client, as indicated by questions like “How important is your religion or spirituality to you?” (Saunders et al., 2014, p. 4) and (b) about SRBP as a positive coping strategy, as indicated by questions such as, “Does your religious or spiritual community offer you support when you are having problems?” (Saunders et al., 2014, p. 4). According to the authors, psychology trainees felt less comfortable talking to clients about problems related to religion or spirituality than about religion and spirituality as strengths. This can be problematic because topics of R/S are sometimes a source of distress for clients and mental health professionals must be able to discuss these topics as needed. Whether religion and spirituality are considered by the client as a strength or a challenge to their personal identity, the students who had some training were more prepared to include the concepts in their professional encounters.

This section, *Psychologists’ Attitudes Toward R/S*, revealed the ways in which religion and spirituality may be significant in the clinical practice of mental health professionals and how these views may trickle down to future psychologists through graduate training. The following section will describe the historical context and present views on the roles of religion and spirituality in psychotherapy.

Roles of R/S in Psychotherapy

William James (1902), the founding president of the American Psychological Association and researcher in the Psychology of Religion movement, wrote a pivotal book titled, *The*

Varieties of Religious Experience, which emphasized ideas that (a) religion is an individual feeling, (b) individuals can have a variety of religious experiences, (c) religion is one way to treat abnormal psychology, (d) religious conversion could lead to happiness, and (e) religion is valuable (Nelson, 2009). Not only did James' writings encourage psychologists to explore the individual meaning and the role that religion could play in a person's life, but his writings also gave psychologists permission to use religion and spirituality as a component of therapy (Nelson, 2009).

Since James' writings, several researchers in the psychology of religion and spirituality have continued to explore R/S from a psychological perspective. Ample information has been gathered on topics such as religious and spiritual development across the lifespan, attachment in relation to a God concept, the utility of prayer, religious and spiritual experience, and R/S as related to physical and mental health (Cook et al., 2012; Hood et al., 2018; Pargament et al., 2013a). Researchers in the field of the psychology of R/S have a unique opportunity to shed light on questions like why are religion and spirituality important to individuals, and how do religion and spirituality help individuals who are religious and spiritual? These are questions that help consumers of this data, such as therapists, to understand the worldview of individuals who identify as religious or spiritual (Pargament et al., 2013a). Approaching R/S from a psychological perspective can also offer an opportunity to understand how individuals who identify as atheist, agnostic, or other R/S affiliations may make meaning out of life.

One common way that religion and spirituality are often integrated into therapy is in aiding clients in making sense of human existence. Mental health professionals practicing from a Western mental health perspective, tend to rely on sensory information and the physical presence of their client to guide clinical practice, leaving little room for spirituality (Sue & Sue, 2016). As

mental health professionals, particularly counseling psychologists, move towards holistic perspectives of healthcare, the utilization of R/S may be one way to shift towards making sense of human existence. The integration of religion and spirituality has the potential to allow for a deeper examination of the spiritual self and can be productive to the counseling process (Sue & Sue, 2016). As psychologists and other mental health professionals are moving towards a social justice perspective of health care, one that focuses on moving beyond traditional models of psychotherapy, there is value in understanding how R/S may play a role in changing clinical trends. The next two sections, *R/S Integrated into Therapeutic Interventions* and *R/S as Coping Mechanisms*, describe ways that topics of R/S may be used in the clinical work of mental health professionals.

R/S Integrated into Therapeutic Interventions

There are several avenues in which religion and spirituality may be involved with therapeutic interventions. Similar to the way a therapist would approach other topics, therapists may choose to integrate topics of R/S based on the client's preferences, client needs, and therapist competence to practice religious and spiritual interventions. There is a continuum of ways that R/S are integrated into counseling, ranging from implicit integration to explicit integration (Miller, 2003b). Implicit integration is a more covert form of religious and spiritual interventions in which a therapist may talk about topics of R/S without using religious and spiritual specific techniques, such as prayer. Therapists using implicit techniques may explore topics such as meaning making, moral values, hope, forgiveness, and religious coping strategies. On the other end of the continuum, explicit integration directly addresses R/S using religious resources, such as religious and/or spiritual practices (e.g., prayer or meditation) or referrals to religious or spiritual communities or leaders (Aten & Leach, 2009; Miller, 2003b).

A second way to integrate topics of R/S into counseling is through *Religiously or Spiritually Integrated Psychotherapy*. The primary goal is psychological treatment, with a secondary emphasis on religious or spiritual growth (Sperry, 2013). Religiously or Spirituality Integrated Therapy differs from traditional psychotherapy approaches in that the goal of traditional psychotherapy is not to increase religious or spiritual growth, unless that is a goal of the client and relevant to the client's psychological care. An example of Religiously Integrated Psychotherapy might be an agency or therapist who practices Christian Counseling. Religiously or Spiritually Integrated Psychotherapy is a culturally sensitive treatment because the focus is on psychological care within the client's religious and/or spiritual framework.

A third way to integrate R/S counseling topics into counseling is through *Pastoral Counseling* with a pastoral counselor, a trained professional counselor who is also a religious leader (Sperry, 2013). Pastoral counseling is most appropriate for brief therapy assisting with transitional topics (Sperry, 2013). Pastoral counseling is structured similarly to traditional psychotherapy in that the client and pastoral counselor establish agreed upon session times and fees and maintain clinical boundaries. Pastoral counseling differs from traditional psychotherapy in that the former allows for the counselor to give advice on religious or spiritual matters and resources in the faith community (Sperry, 2013).

Scientists in the field of psychology are in the early stages of completing experimental studies investigating the effects of spiritually integrated treatment on client outcomes. Though more research is needed in this area, early studies suggest that spiritually integrated treatment is as effective as other evidenced-based treatments for mental health concerns like depression (Gall & Guirguis-Younger, 2013). For example, studies have shown that in randomized controlled trails, Religious Cognitive Behavioral Therapy has similar outcome effects in reducing

symptoms of depression in patients with chronic illness as conventional Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (Pearce & Koenig, 2016). In one clinical trial, conventional Cognitive Behavioral Therapy was found to be more effective than Religious Cognitive Behavioral Therapy in reducing suicidal thoughts in persons with major depressive disorder with individuals with low levels of religious affiliation; however, both treatments were equally effective for individuals with religious affiliation (Ramos et al., 2018).

A commonly researched counseling intervention that is often associated with spirituality is the use of mindfulness exercises. Mindfulness is a practice that encourages an individual to be open and accepting of one's present experience (Brown et al., 2013). Mindfulness-based interventions include Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT), Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy ([ACT] Brown et al., 2013; Santiago & Gall, 2016; Wang 2017). Outcomes studies have revealed that both MBCT and MBSR are generally as effective as standard treatment protocols when treating symptoms of depression; however, have discrepant results for control groups (Brown et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2018). While mindfulness can be a spiritual practice, it is important to note that the definition of spirituality requires that it be about connecting to the sacred. It is possible that even though the MBCT and MBSR interventions are based on spiritual concepts, these outcomes studies are not representing how these mindful interventions are aiding the participants in connecting with something that is sacred and may not in fact be measuring spiritual outcomes. Other studies have researched other forms of spiritual meditation, like hatha yoga and Dejian, that have been associated with positive outcomes for many mental health concerns like depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, substance use, and more

(Wachholtz & Austin, 2013). More research is needed to understand the extent to which religious and spiritual interventions actually reduce symptoms of mental health concerns.

R/S as Coping Mechanisms

Religious and spiritual coping is one way that R/S may be revealed in counseling, and it is important for mental health professionals to be knowledgeable about addressing these topics with their clients. There are five factors associated with religious and/or spiritual coping (Pargament et al., 2000). The first coping factor is *meaning*, that is religion and spirituality “offers frameworks of understanding and interpretation” (Pargament et al., 2000, p. 3). For example, individuals may interpret a situation as, “I saw my situation as a part of God’s plan” or “I believe the devil is responsible for my situation” (Pargament et al., 2000, p. 4). The second factor is *control*. At times when individuals feel out of control, R/S may offer an alternative locus of control (e.g., the outcomes are in God’s hands). Third, religious and spiritual coping can provide *comfort* at times of need (e.g., prayer, looking to God for support, confessing sins). Fourth, religious coping can bring about a sense of *intimacy* through a community of like-minded individuals and/or a sense of social identity. Some examples of religious intimacy might be seeking support from members of a religious and/or spiritual community to pray for healing or comfort. Negative intimacy might be feeling rejected or abandoned by a higher power or R/S community. Finally, religious coping may foster resilience through *life-transformations* (e.g., hope for spiritual rebirth, seeking new life purpose from higher being).

Religion and spirituality can play a role in client’s lives in both positive and negative ways. According to Pargament et al. (2000), positive coping occurs when an individual is connected to a sacred being and others or when an individual holds a positive view of the world around them. For clients who identify as religious or spiritual, the use of religious and spiritual

coping strategies (e.g., prayer) in counseling can be positive (Brown et al., 2013). Religious and spiritual coping strategies are linked to lower levels of depression, anxiety, and suicidality (Gall & Guirguis-Younger, 2013; Koenig, 2015; Nelson, 2009).

On the other hand, negative coping occurs when there is a spiritual struggle. Spiritual struggle can take many forms including emotional distress (such as feeling guilt), internal conflict (such as spiritual questions and/or doubt) and interpersonal conflict, such as oppressive values of a religious institution (Exline, 2013). Spiritual struggle is also associated with mental health concerns, including emotional distress, and can perpetuate other mental and physical health concerns (Exline, 2013). A meta-analysis on religious coping identified significant associations (effect size of .22) between spiritual struggle and poor adjustment (Ano & Vasconcelles, 2005). Twenty-two of 49 studies revealed links between spiritual struggle and anxiety, depression, anger, negative mood, guilt, and social dysfunction (Ano & Vasconcelles, 2005).

This section, *The Influence of Religion and Spirituality in Clinical Practice*, described the belief and attitudes of both clients and psychologists regarding the integration of topics of R/S into clinical practice and revealed that clients who hold R/S beliefs are indeed open to R/S integrated interventions. However, research has shown that some psychologists hold negative values about the integration of R/S topics, which may present challenges in meeting their clients' R/S needs. This section also briefly outlined ways that topics of R/S are relevant to psychotherapy including an overview of some topics and a discussion of R/S as a therapeutic intervention. There is a need across mental health professions to take action to increase mental health professional's ability to provide counseling services that are sensitive to diverse religious and spiritual belief systems and practices. Therefore, it is important that students in mental health

professions gain competency (i.e., awareness, knowledge, and skills) in addressing religious and spiritual topics in counseling. Due to the importance of addressing diverse perspectives of religion and spirituality within doctoral training, the following section will discuss professional guidelines and standards around topics of R/S set forth by the American Psychological Association (APA) and the American Counseling Association (ACA).

Religion and Spirituality in Guidelines and Standards of Professional Associations

To affirm the importance of R/S in practice, the APA and the ACA have included topics of religion and spirituality in their organizations. The following review considers the guidelines and standards that address the integration of religion and spirituality into organizational values, clinical work and training across the APA and the ACA. Counseling standards are included because the ACA has been historically more inclusive of topics of R/S than the APA and for a longer period of time and is therefore more advanced around this subject.

American Psychological Association

The APA has been an active supporter and advocate for many diverse cultural groups, with their commitment to religion and spirituality as demonstrated through the creation of (a) *Division 36, The Society of Religion and Spirituality*; (b) the inclusion of religion in the APA ethical standards; (c) the integration of both religion and spirituality in the multicultural guidelines; (d) the adaptation of the Resolution on Religious, Religious-based, and/or Religion-derived Prejudice; and (d) the establishment of the APA-accreditation standards that include guidelines that specifically address religion.

APA Division 36

The APA first recognized the importance of the relationship between religion and psychology in 1949 with the creation of the *American Catholic Psychological Association*

(Piedmont, 2013). This association was renamed *Psychologists Interested in Religious Issues* in 1970 and formally became Division 36 of the APA in 1976 (Piedmont, 2013). As societal perceptions of religion have evolved over time, the organization has gone through several name changes, all of which included some sort of religious term in the title. Spirituality was first included in the Division 36 title in 2012 when the organization changed its name to the *Society for the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality* (Piedmont, 2013). Members of Division 36 have devoted themselves to researching and identifying religious and spiritual topics in psychological theory, research, and clinical practice. In 2009, Division 36 established a peer-reviewed journal titled *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality* (Piedmont, 2013). Although there has been some movement towards the integration of spirituality into the field of psychology, much of the literature presented in this journal uses the term religion rather than spirituality.

Ethical Standards

The *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* (hereinafter referred to as the APA Code of Conduct, APA, 2017a) provides guidelines for the minimum standards for which a psychologist is practicing ethically. The APA Code of Conduct was originally established in 2002 and was amended in both 2010 and 2017. There were no notable changes to these codes across versions regarding the inclusion of religion.

In general, these codes call for a psychologist to explore their own personal biases and prohibit discrimination of cultural aspects. Throughout the APA Code of Conduct religion is listed as one of the many areas psychologists should not discriminate against and is specifically named in four sections (Principle E, Section 2.01, Section 3.01 and Section 3.03). Principle E specifically identifies religion as one of many cultural variables that psychologists should respect.

Psychologists are aware of and respect cultural, individual, and role differences, including those based on age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, and socioeconomic status, and consider these factors when working with members of such groups. (APA, 2017a, p. 6)

Section 2.01, Boundaries of Competence, speaks to the need for psychologists to understand how a variety of cultural factors, including religion, may influence research and clinical services. This section calls for psychologists to “obtain training, experience, consultation, or supervision necessary to ensure the competence of their services” (APA, 2017a, p. 7). Additionally, religion is listed twice in Section 3, Human Relations, where psychologists are directed to not “engage in unfair discrimination” (p. 8) or “harass or demean persons based on their religious affiliations” (p.8). Together, these codes reveal the importance of psychologists’ sensitivity to religious beliefs and practices. Furthermore, Section 2, Boundaries of Competence, calls for psychologists to work within the scope of their own competencies (APA, 2017a). Section 2.01 states that professional psychologists must “have or obtain training, experience, consultation, or supervision necessary to ensure the competence of their services, or they make appropriate referrals” (APA, 2017a, p. 7) related to several factors, including religion, because these factors can affect the implementation of treatment or research.

Multicultural Guidelines

The *Multicultural Guidelines: An Ecological Approach to Context, Identity, and Intersectionality* (hereinafter referred to as the APA Multicultural Guidelines; APA, 2017b) provide a conceptual framework for psychologists to provide culturally competent clinical practice, research, education, and consultation. The current version of the APA Multicultural Guidelines (APA, 2017b) are updated from the 2002 *APA Guidelines on Multicultural Education, Training, Research, Practice, and Organizational Change for Psychologists*. These two documents differ in that the 2002 guidelines were specific to racially and ethnically diverse

cultures, and the 2017 guidelines cover a wide array of culturally diverse factors, including religion and spirituality, and emphasize the ways diversity factors might intersect with one another.

Religion and spirituality are more salient dimension of identity in the APA Multicultural Guidelines (2017b) when compared to the other APA-endorsed documents discussed in this chapter, thereby showing the continued work by members of the APA to be inclusive of both religion and spirituality as a cultural identity. Unlike many other APA-endorsed documents, the authors of the APA Multicultural Guidelines use both the terms religion and spirituality to denote they are separate constructs. This suggests that the APA Multicultural Guidelines (2017b), which provide recommendations for best practices, are more inclusive than the APA Code of Conduct (2017a), which provides an expectation of minimum acceptable practices. Throughout this Multicultural Guidelines (2017b) document, religion is still discussed more than spirituality.

Similar to other APA-endorsed guidelines and standards, religion and spirituality are typically listed as two of many cultural variables within the APA Multicultural Guidelines. Religion and spirituality are included in both Guidelines 1 and 2. Guideline 1 calls for psychologists to “recognize and understand that identity and self-definition are fluid and complex and that the interaction between the two is dynamic” (APA, 2017b, p. 16). Within this guideline, R/S are named as two of many cultural influences that can shape a person’s identity. Regarding practical applications, Guideline 1 is relevant to psychology training in that there is an explicit acknowledgment of the importance for educators to model cultural competence and to “provide coursework focused on the multidimensional nature of identity” (p. 21). Therefore, this guideline represents a value within the field of psychology that faculty members not only train

future psychologists on a wide array of cultural dimensions, including religion and spirituality, but they also practice competence around topics of R/S themselves.

To expand upon this idea of competence, Guidelines 2 states that, “psychologists aspire to recognize and understand that as cultural beings, they hold attitudes and beliefs that can influence their perceptions of and interactions with others as well as their clinical and empirical conceptualizations” (p. 26). Specifically, Guideline 2 calls for psychologists to be aware of the ways their worldviews have been shaped by their own socialization around a variety of cultural topics including religion and spirituality. Moreover, the authors call for psychology consultants, clinicians, and educators to be aware of power dynamics that are inherent in those roles and the influence of privilege identities within professional duties. Guideline 2 provides a framework for educators to increase their awareness of their own biases, attitudes, values, and practices around topics of R/S as a way to be culturally competent and to reflect upon how these beliefs, values, and attitudes might influence the educators’ role in psychology training.

Guideline 5 calls for psychologists to,

Aspire to recognize and understand historical and contemporary experiences with power, privilege, and oppression. As such, they seek to address institutional barriers and ... seek to promote justice, human rights, and access to quality and equitable mental health and behavioral health services (APA, 2017, p. 45).

Religion is specifically named as one of many cultural dimensions to consider as psychologists work as social justice advocates. Implied in this statement is that religion is a cultural variable related to systems of power that psychologists should be aware of. The authors specifically call for psychologists who are educators to “consider how issues of power and privilege affect clinical supervision and classroom dynamics” (APA, 2017b, p. 55). This guideline recognizes that there are systems of privilege and oppression around religious cultures that are important for future psychologists to have as training on these topics. It is also important for those providing

training to be aware of how this system of privilege and oppression is present in graduate educational settings.

Within these guidelines, there is mention of ways that religion is relevant in clinical practice. In Guideline 5, religion is also explicitly used to describe practical implications of “nonmainstream religions” (p. 54). The authors note that religion and spirituality can play an essential role in values and beliefs around health practices, but they are often not acknowledged in Western society. In this example, psychologists exhibiting multicultural competence around R/S should have an awareness that R/S can be influential in mental health treatment and should be willing to learn about ways that religion and spirituality are relevant to clinical practice. Guideline 6 calls for psychologists to “promote culturally adaptive interventions and advocacy within and across systems, including prevention, early intervention, and recovery” (p. 60). In this guideline, religion is mentioned as an important variable that psychologists should obtain training around regarding culturally sensitive practices. Additionally, Guideline 10 notes that “psychologists actively strive to take a strength-based approach when working with individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations that seek to build resilience and decrease trauma within the sociocultural context” (APA, 2017b, p. 88). This guideline calls for psychologists to consider that cultural contexts, like religion, can influence the interpretation of and response to trauma. The authors call for graduate-level psychology students to have exposure to research and interventions related to understanding trauma and resilience from cultural contexts.

Together, the updated APA Multicultural Guidelines (2017b) reveal the APA’s continued devotion to recognizing the importance of religion and spirituality as cultural variables that may be relevant for clients and calls for psychologists to be competent around topics of R/S.

Moreover, these guidelines explicitly state that topics of R/S should be included as a part of psychologist training. Of note, these guidelines came out one year prior to the data collection of this research study, which means that participants of this research might have limited experiences in integrating topics of R/S based on these guidelines.

One way that the APA has shown respect and advocacy towards religious and spiritual cultural variable is through the Resolution on Religious, Religion-based, and/or Religion-Derived Prejudice, which will be described next.

Resolution on Religious, Religion-based, and/or Religion-Derived Prejudice

Noting a significant problem with prejudice directed towards individuals and/or groups affiliated with religious and/or spiritual beliefs and practices, the APA Council of Representatives (2007) adopted a *Resolution on Religion, Religious-based, and/or Religion-Derived Prejudice*. The purpose of this resolution was to operationally define prejudice to indicate a position against prejudice. Prejudice is defined as, “directed against individuals and groups based on religious and spiritual beliefs, practice, adherence, identification, or affiliation” (APA Council of Representatives, 2007, p. 1). Prejudice was reported to be in the form of nongovernment discrimination, such as hate crimes or social ostracism. Government discrimination was also reported and included “government surveillance of religious speech ... and a lack of legal protection for citizens from non-majority faiths who are victims of religious hate crimes” (APA Council of Representatives, 2007, p. 1). This document also noted the stance of the APA regarding these topics and pledged resolutions to the concerns raised. Overall, this document acknowledged the significance of psychologists to address religion and spirituality as cultural variables that may influence clients and the clinical treatment of these clients. Specifically, the resolution declared that “understanding and respecting patient/client spirituality

and religiosity are important in conducting culturally sensitive research, psychological assessment, and treatment” (APA Council of Representatives, 2007, p. 2) and asserted that the APA “opposes prejudice and discrimination” based upon factors such as religion (APA Council of Representatives, 2007, p. 2). This decree established that the American Psychological Association would include information on “prejudice and discrimination based on religion and spirituality in its multicultural and diversity training material and activities” (APA Council of Representatives, 2007, p. 3).

One example of research that supports the call for culturally sensitive research and treatment comes from counseling psychologists Ahluwalia and Alimchandani (2013), who wrote a review outlining how the field of counseling psychology is at an advantage to serve as allies for Sikh populations within the U.S. and called for social justice action. According to these authors, the Sikhs are a racially and ethnically diverse religious group in the United States that has experienced prejudice and discrimination such as harassment, violence, and hate crimes due to their visibly racial (e.g., skin-tone) and religious (e.g., turbans) markers. After the devastating attacks of September 11, 2001, many Muslim and Arab individuals and groups in the United States have been identified as terrorists. Due to misidentification and stereotyping, the Sikh Americans, particularly Sikh American men, have been associated with terrorists and experienced discrimination. The intersection of race, ethnicity, and religious discrimination of this group signifies the importance of mental health professionals to be prepared to address topics of R/S in counseling to provide culturally sensitive treatment and advocacy. Ahluwalia and Alimchandani described recommendations for training around the Sikh. In the area of knowledge, the writers suggest that students understand the cultural and community-level traumas faced by this population as well as the ways that the religious values of this community

became a cultural way of life. Regarding awareness, they recommended that counseling psychology trainees self-reflect on their own assumptions and stereotypes about individuals who are Sikh (Ahluwalia & Alimchandani, 2013). When considering skills, Ahluwalia and Alimchandani recommend that clinicians use affirming counseling techniques to recognize the role that religion can play in a client's presenting concern and as a positive coping skill. This piece of research is a valuable contribution from within the field of counseling psychology as to how to engage in research that supports an underrepresented religious community within the U.S. and also provides specific recommendations for psychological research, training, and practice.

In summary, the APA's active Division 36, ethical codes, multicultural guidelines, and religious resolution emphasize the importance of knowing how religion can influence therapy, yet provide little specific guidance on how to apply topics of R/S into the training of future psychologists. To see more about the application of topics of R/S into training, we must turn to accreditation standards and competencies.

Accreditation Standards

Accreditation standards are a set of guidelines that establish consistency across participating graduate training programs and internship sites. In the last 10 years, there are two relevant documents describing accreditation standards across the field of psychology: the *Guidelines and Principles for Accreditation of Programs in Professional Psychology* (hereinafter referred to as the APA Guidelines and Principles of Accreditation; APA, 2013) and the *Standards of Accreditation for Health Service Psychology and Accreditation Operating Procedures* (hereinafter referred to as the APA Standards of Accreditation; American Psychological Association Commission on Accreditation [APA CoA], 2019).

Within the APA Guidelines and Principles of Accreditation, the phrase “cultural and individual diversity” is mentioned in several sections and includes religion. These guidelines call for doctoral training programs to uphold a “clear and coherent curriculum plan” (APA, 2013, p. 6) allowing students to demonstrate competence for a variety of cultural topics. Additionally, these guidelines call for APA-accredited programs to educate students on the ways in which culture and diversity can influence psychological phenomena in science and practice (APA, 2013). The standards set forth in this document reveal a clear stance from the American Psychological Association that psychologists should receive training on religion because it is a cultural topic.

Like the APA Guidelines and Principles of Accreditation (APA, 2013), the APA Standards of Accreditation (APA CoA, 2019) also includes religion as a dimension of diversity when discussing “cultural and individual differences and diversity” (p. 11). These standards expand upon the previous guidelines by commenting on the importance of recruiting a diverse faculty and student population into training programs, which requires a supportive and encouraging learning environment to maintain retention of diverse individuals. The writers of this document go on to note that religiously affiliated training programs can gain accreditation for the psychology programs as long as any statements about religious standards of the institution are made publicly known to applicants of the program. Furthermore, the values of the institution cannot infringe on the academic freedom to train students in areas that are included in the accreditation standards. Finally, a training program is required to address any areas of conflict in values that may create tensions around intersecting identities of diversity.

On a final review of training program standards, the field of counseling psychology, a specialization of psychology, has established guidelines for a Model Training Program (MTP,

Scheel et al., 2018). These guidelines are meant to set ideal guidelines for counseling psychology training programs, which are based on the previously mentioned standards and guidelines set forth by the APA. According to the MTP (Scheel et al., 2018), there are four core values of counseling psychologists. The first value is an individuals' "growth towards full potential" (Scheel et al., 2018, p. 9), which has historically represented counseling psychologists call to help individuals meet their full potential. Scheel et al. (2018) went on to say,

In fact, our vision of actualized potential has expanded to embrace possibilities for positive change in our communities, organizations, and social structures, and we recognize that counseling psychologists can have a role in that [personal] growth as well as in the prevention of distress (p. 10).

Second, Scheel et al., (2018) describe the value of "holistic and contextual" (Scheel et al., 2018, p. 10) elements, meaning that counseling psychologists take a holistic perspective of humans and recognize that people are influenced by contextual systems. Third is a commitment towards "diversity and social justice" (Scheel et al., 2018, p. 10). Scheel et al., (2018) said,

We encourage our training programs to promote respect for diversity and inclusiveness in all that we do. We are encouraged to promote training environments representing safety, trust, and respect to all members of the training community. Furthermore, trainers and trainees should acknowledge the presence of bias and prejudice in themselves as well as in society, and work to guard against its oppressive effects through self-examination and critical thinking about personal values and beliefs (p. 10).

The fourth value is that of "Communitarianism" (Scheel et al., p. 11), which describes a desire for individuals who are providing training to function from a collegial environment by modeling behaviors including "vulnerability, humility, and transparency" (p. 11). These four counseling psychology values are encouraged to be integrated across six clusters of training principles.

Cluster 1 describes "training that fosters a counseling psychology identity as holistic, anchored in science, concerned with common factors across all forms of therapy, vocationally oriented, and developed through self-reflective processes that foster awareness" (Scheel et al.,

2018, p. 12). Cluster 2 discusses “Diversity and Social Justice” (Scheel et al., 2018, p. 10) and follows the guidance of the APA Code of Conduct and the APA Standards of Accreditation (APA CoA, 2019). According to Scheel et al. (2018), this cluster suggests that a training program (a) “educates students to become effective practitioners with diverse clients promoting healing and growth across social and cultural contexts” (p. 19); (b) “educates students to become competent in conducting culturally and methodologically valid research that contributes to multicultural and clinical applications and theory development” (p. 20); (c) “educates students to show interest in, and commitment to, research and practice that considers international contexts” (p. 21); and (d) “educates students with a commitment to social justice demonstrated through a spectrum of professional activities as counseling psychologists” (p. 22). Religion is named in Cluster 2 as one of many cultural factors that counseling psychologists are called to respect. Additionally, it is noted that the counseling psychology values of multiculturalism and social justice are infused across all clusters described.

According to Scheel et al. (2018), Cluster 3 establishes training guidelines for the “Core Competencies of Health Service Psychology” (p. 23). Included in this cluster is also a call for trainees to “demonstrate knowledge, awareness, and application of ethical, legal, and professional standards and guidelines of psychology” (Scheel et al., 2018, p. 23), as well as, develop competence in the professional roles of supervision and consultation. Cluster 4, “Developmental, Prevention, and Strengths Orientation” (Scheel et al., 2018, p. 27), speaks to the need for students to receive training in “developmental” (p. 28) and “strengths-based perspective[s]” (p. 27) to clinical application and the importance of “culturally relevant” (p. 29) preventative care. Cluster 5 refers to the counseling psychology training emphasis on the “Research-Practice Integration,” (Scheel et al., 2018, p. 21) or a focus on evidenced-based

treatment. The final cluster, Cluster 6, calls for training programs to aid students in recognizing that “counseling psychologists value and serve in an important role in the training and development of master’s programs in counseling, counseling psychology, and other related disciplines” (Scheel et al., 2018, p. 32) and as such encourage doctoral students to gain experiences in the provision of supervision and training. Additionally, Cluster 6 speaks to the importance of counseling psychology training programs to “emphasize students’ development of a sense of responsibility, and the acquisition of skills to be multiculturally effective leaders, mentors, and advocates” (Scheel et al., 2018, p. 33) and describes the importance of faculty members’ ability to model those qualities.

Of note, these three accreditation guidelines and standards vaguely describe what cultural topics should be included in graduate curriculum, thereby leaving open to interpretation what content is included in which class and to what extent. As will be reviewed in the “Religion and Spirituality in Graduate Coursework” section, members of psychology training programs debate the best way of addressing religion in graduate level training. The establishment and endorsement of religious and spiritual competencies are one way the APA could establish guidelines to facilitate adequate training of topics of R/S to psychology trainees.

Many of the APA documents described thus far, the APA Code of Conduct (APA, 2017a), the APA Standards of Accreditation (APA CoA, 2019), and the Counseling Psychology Model Training Program (Scheel et al., 2018), reflect that the APA values the importance of religious diversity; however, these documents do not specifically list any aspects of spirituality. As previously noted, social scientists often interchange the terms religion and spirituality; however, they are not the same. It is possible that these guidelines mean to use religion as a broad term to describe spirituality and religion, but uncertainty exists because spirituality is not

explicitly cited in the documents. If both terms are not explicitly stated, it is possible that the language of these documents, and similar documents, may not be applicable to some groups (i.e., if the document states religion, then those who identify as spiritual but not religious, are excluded).

Although the APA Code of Conduct (APA, 2017a), the APA Multicultural Guidelines (APA, 2017B), the APA Resolution (APA Council of Representatives, 2007), the APA Standards of Accreditation (APA CoA, 2019) and the Counseling Psychology Model Training Program (Scheel et al., 2018) identify the significance of understanding how religion influences psychological phenomena, the focus of these documents is to describe what psychologists should do, not to provide criteria for how to complete the tasks. In general, competencies provide clarification of terminology and guide curricula of graduate training programs. In fact, research has shown that students feel more adequately prepared to provide therapy in areas with established competencies (such as race) than areas without competencies (Vogel et al., 2013). The APA has already endorsed several competencies on the topics of disability, sexual orientation, aging, gender, and multicultural issues; however, the APA has not yet established any religious or spiritual competencies (Vieten et al., 2013). Such competencies could provide clarification of terminology and guide curricula of graduate training programs.

The closest the field of psychology has come to adapting competencies regarding religious and spiritual issues comes from the APA Division 17, the Society of Counseling Psychology, which specifically lists religious groups in their Counseling Psychology Core Competency guidelines (CCPTP, 2013). The Counseling Psychology Core Competencies call for counseling psychologists to have “awareness, sensitivity, and skills in working professionally with diverse individuals, groups, and communities” including those with “religious affiliations”

(CCPTP, 2013, p. 5). These competencies indicate that it is important to understand religious diversity, yet inadequately define what is meant by being a “sensitive and aware” counselor. These competencies also lack specifications on what skills are required to be competent. Furthermore, they only address the needs of those who identify as religious, and not spiritual. Therefore, it would be important to standardize a set of basic religious and spiritual competencies that the American Psychological Association endorses (Vieten et al., 2013; Vieten et al., 2016). A group of advocates from Division 36 have developed a proposed set of R/S competencies they hope will be endorsed by the APA for the use in training of future psychologists.

Proposed Religious and Spiritual Competencies

Several competencies about religion and spirituality in clinical practice have been proposed at presentations during annual APA conventions (Vieten et al., 2013). The proposed competencies identify specific guidelines to train psychologists on religious and spiritual beliefs and practices. As of August 2019, leaders of Division 36 called for the assembly of a task force to support efforts to have competencies that are endorsed by the APA (Sisemore, 2019). One reason why the APA has not endorsed the use of these competencies is that there is insufficient research supporting them (Vieten et al., 2013).

In hopes of addressing this limitation, representatives of Division 36 have begun to validate a set of 16 *Spiritual and Religious (S/R) Competencies* (Parker, 2019; Vieten et al., 2013; Vieten et al., 2016). Vieten et al. (2013) used focus groups and online survey methods to create a list of proposed S/R Competencies deemed valid by 184 mental health professionals, 105 of which were labeled by the authors as “experts in the intersection of spirituality/religion and psychology” (p. 133). These guidelines promote the aptitude of ethical practice through self-

exploration of personal bias and understanding of spiritual and religious topics. Self-exploration and understanding are two practices that are identified in competencies on other topics, such as the APA Multicultural Guidelines (APA, 2017b), as areas important to effective and proficient practice. Therefore, it is appropriate that self-exploration and understanding would be included in competencies specifically dedicated to spiritual and religious topics.

Vieten et al.'s (2013) S/R Competencies were intended to perform as “baseline standards for content that can be integrated through clinical training and supervision” (p. 139). The proposed spiritual and religious competencies were “designed to include basic competencies for all psychologists, rather than guidelines for gaining proficiency in spiritually oriented psychotherapy” (p. 107). Vieten and colleagues defined the competencies as:

A set of attitudes, knowledge, and skill in domains of spirituality and religion that every psychologist should have to effectively and ethically practice psychology, regardless of whether they conduct spirituality oriented psychotherapy or consider themselves to be spiritual or religious. (p. 133)

As evident in the definition of these competencies, Vieten et al. (2013) acknowledged that not all clients need religion or spirituality integrated into counseling and that clinicians do not need to practice from a religious or spiritual model. Rather, the intent of their proposed competencies was to benefit the field of psychology by providing clinicians with the training necessary to be skillful in working with religious or spiritual topics as relevant to the needs of the client.

Following Sue et al.'s (1992) multicultural tripartite model, Vieten et al.'s (2013) proposed S/R Competencies included the domains of attitudes, knowledge, and skills (see Table 1). Similar to the awareness domain of the original multicultural competency tripartite model, the attitudes domain called for psychologists to gain awareness of and examine their own religious and spiritual attitudes (Vieten et al., 2013). The knowledge domain called for psychologists to gain knowledge of both resources and research of religious and spiritual clinical intervention. The

proposed competencies also encouraged psychologists to gain an understanding of a variety of religious and spiritual belief systems and practices to reduce interpreting normative behavior within these populations as being pathological. Finally, the skills domain called for psychologists to be skilled in religious or spiritual clinical application including assessment and intervention.

Table 1

Proposed Spiritual and Religious Competencies for Psychologists

Attitudes

- 1) Psychologists demonstrate empathy, respect, and appreciation for clients from diverse spiritual, religious, or secular backgrounds and affiliations.
 - 2) Psychologists view spirituality and religion as important aspects of human diversity, along with factors such as race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, disability, gender, and age.
 - 3) Psychologists are aware of how their own spiritual and/or religious background and beliefs may influence their clinical practice, and their attitudes, perceptions, and assumptions about the nature of psychological process.
-

Knowledge

- 4) Psychologists know that many diverse forms of spirituality and/or religion exist, and explore spiritual and/or religious beliefs, communities, and practices that are important to their clients.
 - 5) Psychologists can describe how spirituality and religion can be viewed as overlapping, yet distinct, constructs.
 - 6) Psychologists understand that clients may have experiences that are consistent with their spirituality or religion, yet may be difficult to differentiate from psychopathological symptoms.
 - 7) Psychologists recognize that spiritual and/or religious beliefs, practices, and experiences develop and change over the lifespan.
 - 8) Psychologists are aware of internal and external spiritual and/or religious resources and practices that research indicates may support psychological well-being, and recovery from psychological disorders.
 - 9) Psychologists can identify spiritual and religious experiences, practices, and beliefs that may have the potential to negatively impact psychological health.
 - 10) Psychologists can identify legal and ethical issues related to spirituality and/or religion that may surface when working with clients.
-

Table 1 - continued

Skills

- 11) Psychologists are able to conduct empathic and effective psychotherapy with clients from diverse spiritual and/or religious backgrounds, affiliations, and levels of involvement.
- 12) Psychologists inquire about spiritual and/or religious background, experience, practices, attitudes, and beliefs as a standard part of understanding a client's history.
- 13) Psychologists help clients explore and access their spiritual and/or religious strengths and resources.
- 14) Psychologists can identify and address spiritual and/or religious problems in clinical practice, and make referrals when necessary.
- 15) Psychologists stay abreast of research and professional developments regarding spirituality and religion specifically related to clinical practice, and engage in ongoing assessment of their own spiritual and religious competence.
- 16) Psychologists recognize the limits of their qualifications and competence in the spiritual and/or religious domain, including any responses to client's spirituality and/or religion that may interfere with clinical practice, so that they (a) seek consultation from and collaborate with other qualified clinicians or spiritual/religious resources (e.g., priests, pastors, rabbis, imam, spiritual teachers, etc.), (b) seek further training and education, and/or (c) refer appropriate clients to more qualified individuals and resources.

Note. Adapted from *Spiritual and Religious Competencies for Psychologists* by Vieten et al. (2013, p. 135).

In a follow-up study, Vieten et al. (2016) asked 272 masters-level and doctoral-level licensed psychotherapists to complete an “online survey about how to address specific domains of diversity in the clinical practice of psychology” (p. 96). Participants rated each one of the 16 proposed S/R competencies on four items. First, participants answered *yes* or *no* to the following question: “Do you believe that psychologists should receive training in, and demonstrate competence in, this area?” (p. 98). Next, participants answered the sentence stem, “In my training program I ... received *little, some, comprehensive, or too much* formal training in this domain” (p. 98). Third, participants were then asked to rate “the extent to which they believe they demonstrate each competency, by selecting a response to the stem, ‘In my practice of psychology, I ...’” (p. 98), followed by the content of each proposed competency. Participants could answer *completely, mostly, somewhat, a little, or not at all*. Finally, participants rated the

importance of each competency to the practice of psychology on a scale of *very important*, *somewhat important*, *a little bit important*, or *not important*.

Over 70% of participants endorsed high levels of agreement that psychologists should receive training and demonstrate competence in all the proposed competencies. For example, 70.3% of participants agreed that psychologists should demonstrate proficiency for Competency 5, “Psychologists can describe how spirituality and religion can be viewed as overlapping, yet distinct, constructs” (p. 100), and 76.1% agreed for Competency 13, “Psychologists help clients explore and access their spiritual and/or religious strengths and resources” (p. 100).

Regarding training, nearly half (44.5%) of the participants confirmed they “did not receive any explicit training” in any S/R competency in their graduate training program, and 24.9% reported having received a “little bit” of training in these competencies (p. 99). While most participants reported inadequate training in the areas of spirituality and religion, only 4.2% reported that they demonstrated each competency “not at all.” Based on the results of this study, Vieten et al. (2016) determined that their proposed set of competencies were “important, relevant, and acceptable to the majority of psychologists” (p. 108) and recommended that the competencies be included in psychology training programs and internship sites. They also suggested that the competencies be integrated through specialized coursework on spiritual and religious domains or explicitly incorporated into courses of assessment and treatment.

A recent replication study of the Vieten et al. (2016) work was conducted to examine school psychologists’ perceptions of the proposed competencies (Parker, 2019). Parker (2019) conducted a survey with 121 school psychologists working in school settings. Participants were predominately White/ European American, female, and identified as being Christian (n = 78). Sixty-two percent of respondents earned degrees from APA-accredited training programs. Parker

(2019) understood that school psychologists may have less opportunities to “provide direct clinical interventions,” (p. 58) than other psychologists, which warranted asking participants “to rate the extent to which they believed they possessed each competency using a 5-point scale (1 = *not at all* to 5 = *completely*)” (Parker, 2019, p. 58). This is a different question than the Vieten et al. (2016) study, which asked participants to “rate the extent to which they believe they demonstrate each competency” (p. 98). Like Vieten et al., (2016), Parker (2019) also measured participants’ perceived importance of the R/S competencies for the practice of school psychology using a 4-point scale (1 = *not important* to 4 = *very important*).

Results of Parker’s (2019) study revealed that over 80% of participants reported that they possessed average or higher levels of competency across all 16 domains of R/S competency in the areas of attitude, knowledge, and skills, which was similar to the results Vieten et al. (2016) found. Regarding importance, 87% of participants perceived R/S competency to be *important* to *very important*. When comparing results of participants with doctoral-level degrees versus participants with specialist-level training, there were no differences found.

Parker’s study expanded on Vieten et al.’s (2016) findings by reporting the highest and lowest levels of participants’ perceived competence. Participants’ three highest levels of competence were (a) “I recognize that spiritual and/or religious beliefs, practices, and experiences develop and change over the lifespan” (p. 61), (b) “I view spirituality and religion as important aspects of human diversity along with factors such as race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, disability, gender, and age” (p. 61), and (c) “I demonstrate empathy, respect, and appreciation for clients [or students] from diverse spiritual, religious, or secular backgrounds and affiliations” (p. 61). The school psychologists in Parker’s study scored higher on their perceived level of competency to address topics of R/S from a developmental

perspective than was found through Vieten et al.'s (2016) study. One reason for the difference could be because school psychologists are likely to have training in developmental perspectives due to their work with school aged populations (Parker, 2019). Another reason could be because Parker changed the language in their research question to focus on the participants' perceived possession of competency versus Vieten et al.'s (2016) study, which asked how much the participant used the competency in clinical practice (Parker, 2019). An implication of this would be that psychologists may feel capable of addressing topics of R/S with clients if necessary, but that they have not had to demonstrate these competencies. The other two areas in which Parker's (2019) participants identified as being highly competent do align well with the multicultural competencies and it makes sense that participants would feel more competent in those areas than areas including skill-based interventions.

The areas for which Parker's (2019) participants reported less perceived competency included the following domains: (a) "I can help clients [students] explore and access their spiritual and/or religious strengths and resources" (p. 61), (b) "I can identify and address spiritual and/or religious problems in my practice and make referrals when necessary" (p. 61), and (c) "I can stay abreast of research and professional developments regarding spirituality and religion specifically related to my practice and engage in ongoing assessment of my own spiritual and religious competencies" (p. 61). These results revealed that school psychologists have lower levels of perceived competence in the two skill-based areas (e.g., explore and assess strengths and make referrals when necessary) than reported in Vieten et al. (2016). These results suggest a need for schools psychologists to gain additional training relating to skills-based religious and spiritual competencies (Parker, 2019).

This section, the American Psychological Association, has described the various ways that topics of religion and spirituality are acknowledged by the American Psychological Association as important cultural variables that should be respected and recognized by psychologists. This section also revealed proposed competencies around topics of spirituality and religion for psychological practice. Like the American Psychological Association, other mental health professions have also been addressing religious and spiritual topics in psychotherapy. The following section will outline some steps the American Counseling Association has taken to integrate topics of R/S into ethical standards and practice.

American Counseling Association

The American Counseling Association (ACA) has been a leader in the mental health fields for incorporating religious and spiritual (R/S) topics in counseling theory, research, and training (Hage et al., 2006). The ACA has an operating division, the Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling, which is devoted to the study of topics of R/S, similar to the one noted earlier for the APA. One strength of the ACA division is that it has studied both religious and spiritual matters since the 1990's, therefore utilizing a longer period of time in which to implement topics of R/S into practice and training. An advantage of the ACA is the use of the terms religion and spirituality as separate entities in the ACA ethical guidelines. The following review will highlight the contributions ACA has introduced to the field of counseling.

ACA ASERVIC Division

In the 1950's, the ACA developed an Association for Catholic Counselors and acknowledged it as an official division of the ACA in 1974 (Miller, 1999). Though this organization originated as the primary means for communication and guidance of Catholic

counselors, it is no longer affiliated with any particular religious group (Miller, 1999). After several name changes, the division subsequently became the Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling (ASERVIC). In 1993, ASERVIC broadened its focus to examine both religious and spiritual belief systems.

According to the Bylaws of the ASERVIC (2003), the vision of this division is to “[create] an environment that empowers and enables the expression, exploration, development, and research of evolving spiritual, ethical, and religious values as they relate to the person, to society, and to the procession of counseling and human development” (para. 3). One way the ASERVIC promoted this vision was through its professional journal, *Counseling and Values*. This journal has published over 2,000 issues and has included topics on a variety of spiritual, religious, and ethical matters in counseling theory and practice. The ASERVIC and the ACA have made strides to integrate religious and spiritual subjects into the counseling profession through the ACA Code of Ethics and ACA’s spiritual competencies.

Ethical Standards

The *American Counseling Association Code of Ethics* (hereinafter referred to as the ACA Code of Ethics; ACA, 2014) calls for counselors to “[honor] diversity and [embrace] a multicultural approach in support of the worth, dignity, potential, and uniqueness of people within their social and cultural contexts” (p. 3). These ethical standards provide a broad overview of how multiculturalism should be integrated into the training, research, and practice of a counselor. Most explicitly linked to graduate curricula, Section F.7.c requires that “counselor educators infuse material related to multiculturalism/diversity into all courses and workshops” (ACA, 2014, p. 14). Section C.2.a calls for counselors to work within the scope of competence based on their training and supervision. Section C.2.a states, “Whereas multicultural counseling

competency is required across all counseling specialties, counselors gain knowledge, personal awareness, sensitivity, disposition, and skills pertinent to being a culturally competent counselor in working with a diverse population” (ACA, 2014, p.8). Section C discusses the emphasis on both formal instruction and supervised training as essential components of training ethical and effective counselors. In both section F.7.c. and section C.2., multicultural/diversity are terms used to describe cross-cultural similarities and differences as well as the intersection of cultural and social identities (ACA, 2014). The broad language used in this definition may allow someone to include religion and spirituality within this context, though neither is identified. The ACA Code of Ethics requires counselors to have a general sensitivity to topics of cultural diversity, which could include religion and spirituality, though it is not explicitly stated.

The concepts of religion and spirituality are specifically addressed in two sections of the ethics code that discuss discrimination and assessment. When explicitly stated, the inclusion of spirituality and religion is covered in a similar capacity to other multicultural topics, such as race. Religion and spirituality are specifically listed as two of many cultural factors that counselors should not discriminate against (ACA, 2014). Specifically, this document states that “counselors do not condone or engage in discrimination against prospective or current clients, students, employees, supervisees, or research participants based on ... religion/spirituality” (p. 9). Through this statement, the ACA emphasizes the importance of being respectful and sensitive to areas of diversity, including R/S. Respect and sensitivity are concepts commonly emphasized across the ethical codes of other mental health professions such as the APA. However, unlike the APA, the ACA includes religion and spirituality as two features that professionals should take into consideration when choosing assessments to give to clients and in the interpretation of those assessments. The explicit inclusion of religion and spirituality in assessment procedures shows

one way in which religion and spirituality is incorporated into clinical practice rather than simply being an area of diversity that is to be acknowledged and respected.

Accreditation Standards

As recommended by the ASERVIC, religious and spirituality topics have been included in the CACREP Accreditation Standards (Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs, 2001, 2009, 2016). In general, these guidelines call for the integration of multicultural topics into all coursework. Additionally, these Standards call for counselor trainees to have knowledge of “student development in a multicultural society, including characteristics such as immigrant status, disability, extreme ability or talent, cultural background, spirituality, and family situation” (CACREP, 2009, p. 48). Finally, these Standards call for counselor trainees to have knowledge of the role of spirituality in the treatment of addictions (CACREP, 2009).

To highlight their commitment, the CACREP Standards were updated in 2016 and the phrase “religious and spiritual beliefs” (CACREP, 2016, p. 42) was included in the definition of the term multicultural. Religious groups are also discussed in the definition of pluralistic, which describes when multiple groups (e.g., racial and religious) “coexist and cooperatively work toward the interdependence needed for the enhancement of each group” (p. 43). Therefore, any time the terms multicultural or pluralistic group are used in the CACREP Standards, the implication is that religion and spirituality are included. The separation of the terms religion and spirituality falls in line with the trend of the field of psychology to view religion and spirituality as two distinct constructs and is a strength of this document. Unlike the 2009 Standards, the 2016 CACREP Standards do not include a definition of the term spirituality (or religion) in the glossary. The inclusion of definitions of religion and spirituality would be important to clarify

what is meant by “religious groups” or “spiritual beliefs,” and might be considered a loss in the 2016 version of the document.

In general, the CACREP Standards (2016) guide counselor education programs to include multicultural and pluralistic groups in discussions of theoretical models, culturally competent counseling, and differences among groups. Specifically, section 2.B states that counselor education programs must “reflect current knowledge and projected needs concerning counseling practice in a multicultural and pluralistic society” (p. 9). This statement is important in that it emphasizes the need for counselor education programs to not only provide current information about multicultural topics, but also encourage programs to go a step further to consider the needs of these diverse groups.

Within the 2016 CACREP Standards, spirituality is explicitly discussed in three areas. First, section F.2.g calls for counseling curricula to include training on “the impact of spiritual beliefs on clients’ and counselors’ worldview” (p. 10). Second, section 5.A. notes that spirituality is explicitly noted as a concept expected to be integrated into substance abuse curricula relating to (a) the addiction recovery process, (b) biopsychosocial addiction intake assessments, and (c) the understanding of holistic functioning for clients with disabilities (CACREP, 2016, p. 20). Third, section 5.D., Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling, calls for trainees of this specialization to demonstrate knowledge and skills on a variety of topics, including the “effects of the onset, progression, and expected duration of disability on clients’ holistic functioning (i.e., physical, spiritual...)” (p. 26). Beyond the CACREP Accreditation Standards, the ACA has an endorsed set of Spiritual Competencies that specifically address the ways that religion and spirituality should be integrated into counselor training and clinical practice; this is described next.

Spiritual Competency

In response to a call from counselors to integrate spirituality into counselor education, the ASERVIC held a “Summit on Spirituality” in 1995 (Miller, 1999, p. 499). According to Miller, the goals addressed at the Summit on Spirituality were: “(a) defining or describing spirituality and (b) exploring the key counselor competencies regarding spirituality” (1999, p. 499). A gathering of thirteen ACA members who had professionally published articles or books on topics of spirituality discussed the ethics and potential of implementing spirituality into counselor education. The summit members described spirituality as:

A capacity and tendency that is innate and unique to all persons. The spiritual tendency moves the individual towards knowledge, love, meaning, peace, hope, transcendence, connectedness, compassion, wellness, and wholeness. Spirituality includes one’s capacity for creativity, growth, and the development of a value system. (ASERVIC, 1995, p. 1).

Using this definition of spirituality (and modeling after the CACREP core competencies of the time), the members created a set of 10 spirituality competencies (Miller, 1999). These spiritual competencies were subsequently reviewed by roughly 35 ACA members without connection to the original Summit on Spirituality, thereby providing a less biased view on the competencies created (Young et al., 2007). Nine spirituality competencies emerged (see Table 2) and these were then infused into the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) accreditation standards and curricula (Young et al., 2007).

Table 2

Counselor Competencies: Spiritual and Religious Issues in Counseling

- 1) A counselor should be able to explain the relationship between religion and spirituality, including similarities and differences.
 - 2) A counselor should be able to describe religious and spiritual beliefs and practices within a cultural context.
 - 3) A counselor should engage in self-exploration of his/her religious and spiritual beliefs in order to increase sensitivity, understanding, and acceptance of his/her belief system.
 - 4) A counselor should be able to describe his/her religious and/or spiritual belief system and explain various models of religious/spiritual development across the life span.
 - 5) A counselor should demonstrate sensitivity to and acceptance of a variety of religious and/or spiritual expressions in the client's communication.
 - 6) A counselor should identify the limits of his/her understanding of a client's spiritual expression and demonstrate appropriate referral skills and general possible referral sources.
 - 7) A counselor should assess the relevance of the spiritual domains in the client's therapeutic issues.
 - 8) A counselor should be sensitive to and respectful of the spiritual themes in the counseling process as befits each client's expressed preferences.
 - 9) A counselor should use client's spiritual beliefs in the pursuit of the client's therapeutic goals as befits the client's expressed preferences.
-

Note. Adapted from *The Development of the Spiritual Focus in Counseling and Counselor Education* by Miller (1999, p. 500).

Keeping up with current trends in the study of religion and spirituality in counseling, the ACA endorsed an updated list of 13 spiritual and religious competencies in 2009, as recommended by ASERVIC (2009). The "Competencies for Addressing Spiritual and Religious Issues in Counseling" (hereinafter referred to as Competencies for Addressing S/R; ASERVIC, 2009) call for counselors to gain knowledge, awareness, and skills in spiritual and religious issues in counseling. These Competencies for Addressing S/R (ASERVIC, 2009) are broken into several categories including "Culture and Worldview" (p. 1), "Counselor Self-Awareness" (p. 2), "Human and Spiritual Development" (p. 2), "Communication" (p. 2), "Assessment" (p. 3), and "Diagnosis and Treatment" (p. 3). Interestingly, Competency 1 notes that counselors are expected to be knowledgeable about the "similarities and differences between spirituality and

religion ...” (ASERVIC, 2009, p. 1), which, as you may recall, experts in the field are unable to agree on a definition. If defining and describing religion and spirituality are a competency, then it is important for social scientists to develop operational definitions of these constructs. Table 3 provides additional information about the Competencies for Addressing Spiritual and Religious Issues in Counseling.

Table 3
Competencies for Addressing Spiritual and Religious Issues in Counseling

Domain	Competency
Culture and Worldview	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The professional counselor can describe the similarities and differences between spirituality and religion, including the basic beliefs of various spiritual systems, major world religions, agnosticism, and atheism. 2. The professional counselor recognizes that the client’s beliefs (or absence of beliefs) about spirituality and/or religion are central to his or her worldview and can influence psychosocial functioning.
Counselor Self-Awareness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. The professional counselor actively explores his or her own attitudes, beliefs, and values about spirituality and/or religion. 4. The professional counselor continuously evaluates the influence of his or her own spiritual and/or religious beliefs and values on the client and the counseling process. 5. The professional counselor can identify the limits of his or her understanding of the client’s spiritual and/or religious perspective and is acquainted with religious and spiritual resources, including leaders, who can be avenues for consultation and to whom the counselor can refer.
Human and Spiritual Development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. The professional counselor can describe and apply various models of spiritual and/or religious development and their relationship to human development.
Communication	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. The professional counselor responds to client communications about spirituality and/or religion with acceptance and sensitivity. 8. The professional counselor uses spiritual and/or religious concepts that are consistent with the client’s spiritual and/or religious perspectives and that are acceptable to the client. 9. The professional counselor can recognize spiritual and/or religious themes in client communication and is able to address these with the client when they are therapeutically relevant.

Table 3 – continued

Assessment	10. During the intake and assessment processes, the professional counselor strives to understand a client’s spiritual and/or religious perspective by gathering information from the client and/or other sources.
Diagnosis and Treatment	<p>11. When making a diagnosis, the professional counselor recognizes that the client’s spiritual and/or religious perspectives can a) enhance well-being; b) contribute to client problems; and/or c) exacerbate symptoms.</p> <p>12. The professional counselor sets goals with the client that are consistent with the client’s spiritual and/or religious perspectives.</p> <p>13. The professional counselor is able to a) modify therapeutic techniques to include a client’s spiritual and/or religious perspectives and b) utilize spiritual and/or religious practices as techniques when appropriate and acceptable to a client’s viewpoint.</p> <p>14. The professional counselor can therapeutically apply theory and current research supporting the inclusion of a client’s spiritual and/or religious perspectives and practices.</p>

Note. Adapted from *Competencies for Addressing Spiritual and Religious Issues in Counseling* by ASERVIC (2009, pp. 2-3).

The American Counseling Association has shown the significance of spirituality and religious topics in counseling theory, research, and practice through the creation of the ASERVIC division of ACA, endorsement of R/S competencies, and presence in CACREP Accreditation Standards. The explicit inclusion of spiritual belief systems in these areas reveals that counselor education curricula encourages building culturally religious and spiritual skill to be used in clinical practice. The integration of religious and spiritual concepts in counselor education follows the guidelines for spiritual competency set forth by the ASERVIC.

In this section, “Religion and Spirituality in Guidelines and Standards of Professional Associations,” the researcher has described ways that the APA and the ACA have recognized religion and spirituality as cultural variables for which clinicians should have some level of awareness, knowledge, and skill to address in clinical treatment. This section also identified standards of competence around topics of R/S and revealed that the APA and the ACA are at

different levels of development regarding expectations of what and how standards of competence are implemented into graduate training. The following section will review the current state of training in religion and spirituality in graduate coursework.

Religion and Spirituality Training in Graduate Coursework

Researchers have found that the majority of students, faculty, program directors, and practicing clinicians from the psychology professions believe it is important to integrate topics of R/S into graduate training in order to improve efficacy of clinical practice (Cashwell et al., 2013; Crook-Lyon et al., 2012; Pate & High, 1995; Schafer et al., 2011; Young et al., 2007).

Researchers have examined the state of incorporation of religion and spirituality in graduate training from the perspectives of psychology and counselor training programs, the significance of training on topics of R/S, *what* specific R/S content should be included in graduate training, and *how* to effectively accomplish this task.

Hage et al. (2006) completed a multidisciplinary literature review across counselor education, clinical psychology, counseling psychology, and other mental health professions to further understand the state of spiritual and religious (R/S) training. The authors examined literature between 1990 and 2005 to understand the nature of coursework and practicum work related to topics of R/S in training programs, the role topics of R/S play in supervision, the openness of faculty and clinical supervisors to the integration of topics of R/S in graduate training, and the expectations of accrediting bodies to train on topics of R/S. Overall, this research showed that graduate training programs have acknowledged the importance of being respectful and aware of client Spiritual and Religious Beliefs and Practices (Saunders et al., 2014), yet have minimal inclusion of religion and spirituality in most graduate training curriculum.

More recently, Park et al. (2018) completed a correlational study looking at the relationship between “spiritually competent practice and mental health graduate students across social work, counseling, and psychology” (p. 202). This sample of participants (N = 125) consisted from students from accredited master and doctoral-level training programs in counseling (n = 62), psychology (n = 22), and social work (n = 41). Participants completed both the Spiritual and Religious Competency Assessment (SARCA; Fluellen, 2007) and the Revised Spiritual Competency Scale II (SCS-R-II; Robertson, 2011). The SARCA is a 34-item measure of the perceived integration of topics of R/S. The SCS-R-II is a 21-item inventory measuring spiritual competence in counseling. Both measures were created based on the ASERVIC (2009) competencies.

Findings from this study suggested that students from counseling training programs scored higher on the SCS-R-II than students in psychology and social work programs. This makes sense given that the measure of competence used in this study was based from standards adopted into counselor education training curricula; therefore, it is expected that counselor trainees would have exposure to these topics in their training. Alternatively, the psychology accreditation standards do not require specific training around the R/S competencies found within counselor education.

A valuable contribution of the Park et al. (2018) study was a look at differences between the institutions that house the students' training program. Findings suggested that students at religiously affiliated institutions demonstrated higher levels of competency than students at secular, or non-religiously affiliated, institutions (Park et al., 2018). These findings are not surprising given that many religious institutions do require that topics of R/S are integrated into program curricula. Additionally, the results of this study suggested that students' religious

identities and affiliation were associated with the students' level of competence to address topics of R/S with clients. Students with strong religious affiliation scored statistically significantly higher on both measures than their peers with lower levels of affiliation with their personal faith.

There are differences between the counseling profession and the psychology profession regarding the evolution of integrating topics of R/S into graduate training. Of note, the introduction of accreditation bodies requiring R/S training in curriculum (CACREP 2001) has led to increased exposure to R/S research and classroom discussion in counselor training programs (Hage et al., 2006). As previously noted, the counseling profession has been incorporating religious and spiritually competencies into their CACREP Accreditation Standards (2001, 2009, 2016). Much of the research from counselor training programs focuses on the best practices for *how* to incorporate topics of R/S in counselor training, likely due to the length of time topics of R/S have been a standard part of CACREP training guidelines. Alternatively, experts in the study of religion and spirituality within the field of psychology have proposed religious and spiritual competencies that have yet to be endorsed by the American Psychological Association, or incorporated in psychology training programs. Therefore, literature from the psychological training programs has been geared towards answering the question of *what* should be included in graduate training. A review of both sets of literature is warranted to gain a full understanding of how and what should be included in the integration of R/S training into graduate training.

The following review will include an examination of the current state of how graduate training programs address topics of R/S in counseling and psychology programs. The review begins with a description of counselor education training programs because they are more advanced in their integration than the field of counseling psychology, thereby revealing what

happens when topics of R/S are integrated into training programs. The review will also include the current state of psychology training programs, with an emphasis on counseling psychology programs, because that is the population of interest in this study. Due to the differences in the extent of training between counseling and psychology training programs, the progress of these training programs will be discussed separately. As a matter of convention, psychology graduate students of APA-accredited programs will be referred to as “psychology trainees,” counseling (both CACREP accredited and non-CACREP accredited) graduate students as “counselor trainees,” and, when mentioned together, the APA and the ACA graduate students are combined as “graduate trainees.”

Counselor Education Training Programs

Counselor education programs are cited as more advanced in training on topics of R/S than other mental health professions, such as clinical psychology, counseling psychology, and psychiatry (Hage et al. 2006; Oxhandler & Pargament 2018; Park et al., 2018). This is likely due to the inclusion of competencies, developed in 1999 by the Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling (ASERVIC), into the 2001 CACREP Standards (CACREP, 2001), which reinforce the significance of religious and spiritual training (Hage et al., 2006; Park et al., 2018).

Some studies have shown that counselor trainees report a need for additional training on religious and spiritual topics to increase perceived competency to provide clinical interventions with religious and spiritual topics (Henriksen et al., 2015; Lu et al., 2019; Magalidi-Dopman, 2014). Magaldi-Dopman’s (2014) qualitative study of eight counselor trainees from CACREP accredited programs examined the experiences of multicultural training, specifically addressing topics of R/S. Of note, many of the participants were diverse in age, gender, race, ethnicity,

sexual orientation, and R/S background. As one of the few studies on this topic where many participants were non-dominant religion group members, this study is a starting point to understanding diverse perspectives of the integration of topics of R/S into counselor training. Several notable themes were revealed. First, participants reported that their training provided insufficient opportunities to gain self-awareness around religious and spiritual topics or to practice skills related to the use of religious or spiritual interventions. Second, participants noted that they felt more competent to address issues of race than of religion and spirituality. Third, participants stated that when topics of R/S were present during their clinical practica, the counselors felt unprepared to address the complexity of the topics. Based on the themes presented by participants, Magaldi-Dopman developed a grounded theory that religious and spiritual topics were an “afterthought,” in multicultural training.

In another study, Henriksen and colleagues (2015) examined 113 masters-level (n=61) and doctor-level (n=51) counselor trainees from CACREP and non-CACREP accredited programs to understand student perceptions of their training on religious and spiritual topics. Similar to Magaldi-Dopman’s (2014) study, 59% of participants in Henriksen et al.’s (2015) study reported that counselor training did not increase student’s awareness or sensitivity to topics of R/S. In fact, 68% of counselor trainees reported that no opportunities to complete self-discovery activities were provided in their training program. Of the participants who did experience opportunities for self-discovery, only 10% of participants reported an increase in competence due to counselor training.

Noting that there are differences in the perceived effectiveness of training, it is important to understand factors that contribute to increased competency of graduate trainees. Factors that have been considered in research include factors about the (a) training institution and training

program; (b) student variables like R/S identity, age, graduate training level, and self-efficacy; and (c) experiences with training and clinical practice around topic of R/S.

Recently, Lu et al. (2019) looked at variables that predict spiritual competence of counselors-in-training (CIT). Participants included 109 students from across 24 states within the U.S. Participants were enrolled in master's-level (n = 65) and doctoral-level (n = 27) counselor training programs across various counseling disciplines like clinical mental health counseling and marriage, couple, and family counseling. Participants completed a Qualtrics survey to gather demographic data and complete the study measures. The Spiritual Competency Scale Revised (SCS-R-II; Dailey et al., 2015) was used to measure spiritual competence. Students' multicultural counseling competence was measured through the Cross-Cultural Counseling Inventory-Revised (CCCI-R; LaFromboise et al., 1991). Counselor self-efficacy was measured through the Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale (CSES; Melchert et al., 1996). Finally, the Spiritual/Religion Training Environment (S/R-TEM) was adapted by the researchers of this study from a questionnaire on religious and spiritual issues in counseling psychology training, developed by Schulte et al. (2002). This measure is a 10-item measure of students' perceptions of their training program's openness to topics of religion and spirituality as a part of diversity and within training and supervision.

Results revealed that based on the scores on the SCS-R-II, students expressed a general sense of inadequacy in their perceived spiritual competence in all areas except in the domain of *Cultural and Worldview* (Lu et al., 2019). Participants of this study felt more prepared to recognize how religion can shape a client's worldview (e.g., religious coping), but felt less competent to assess, diagnosis, and provide treatment relating to religious and spiritual issues. This makes sense given that participants' level of general multicultural counseling competence

was predictive of students' perceived R/S competence (Lu et al., 2019). These results suggest that general multicultural training aids students in learning about religion and spirituality as a dimension of cultural diversity that should be attended to in clinical practice; however, does not aid students in learning skills related to clinical practice.

Other results from this Lu et al. (2019) study found that students' perceived self-efficacy was not predictive of the students' level of R/S competence. However, religious institution, education level (master or doctoral), and the training program environment were all variables that were predictive of students' perceived spiritual competence. Regarding religious institution and educational level, it was found that students at religiously affiliated institutions and at doctoral-level training programs had higher scores on the measure of R/S competency than their peers at secular and master's-level training programs. Because religiously-affiliated institutions often emphasize religion and spirituality in their mission, it is not surprising that students may gain more exposure to those topics in their graduate level training program. It is unclear as to what elements in doctoral level training helped to predict perceived competence and the source suggested that future research should further explore this variable (Lu et al., 2019). Specifically, there is a need for more information about what students perceive to be helpful in increasing perceived competence (Lu et al., 2019).

Furthermore, the counseling programs' religious and spiritual training environment was found to contribute to students' perceived competence, though this variable had smaller predictive power than institutional religious affiliation, counselor training level, and multicultural counseling competence (Lu et al., 2019). As Lu et al. (2019) pointed out, the counseling training environment does not specifically target training religious and spiritual competence but rather

speaks to how open students perceived faculty to be in including topics of R/S in training around diversity, teaching and supervision, and the faculty members' research interests.

A previous study by Lu and Woo (2017) examined 74 master-level counselor trainees' perceptions of learning environment and perceived program emphasis on topics of R/S in training. Using the same definition as previously mentioned, learning environment was measured by a Likert-type questionnaire (1 = *strongly disagree*; 5 = *strongly agree*). To measure program emphasis, or the extent to which the training program emphasized S/R competency, participants were asked to, "...indicate to what extent your program has emphasized the following competences," (Lu and Woo, 2017, p. 221) for nine ASERVIC S/R competencies (Miller, 1999) using a 5-point Likert-type scale with anchors of 1 = *not at all* and 5 = *very much*. Students' outcome expectation was measured by asking participants, "To what degree, do you expect that your program will prepare you to be S/R competent?" (Lu and Woo, 2017, p. 221), which was rated using a Likert-type scale (1 = *not competent at all*; 5 = *very competent*).

Students in the Lu and Woo (2017) study did not agree that they had a learning environment in which they perceived faculty members to be open to topics of R/S in training. Additionally, students reported low to moderate expectations that their training would help them be sufficiently competent to address R/S in clinical practice. Yet, study participants also perceived that their training program did incorporate six out of the nine competencies into training. Students' perception of faculty members' openness to integrating topics of R/S into training (e.g., learning environment) was also found to be more important to students than the how much the R/S competencies were integrated into coursework. Based on these results, Lu and Woo suggested that students may benefit more from collaborative supervisor relationships with

counselor educators (i.e., mentorships) who are competent around topics of R/S than from explicit teaching methods.

Several studies have shown that students who hold religious and/or spiritual affiliation tend to have higher scores on perceived competence and comfort addressing topics of R/S than their peers who do not identify as religious or spiritual (Johnson, 2014; Park, 2015; Young et al., 2007; van Asselt & Senstock, 2009). It is possible that students with religious or spiritual backgrounds have a previously vested interest in topics of R/S and may seek training in topics of religion and spirituality, thereby increasing perceived competence and comfort with these areas. It is important for all students to receive training in topics of R/S because, as previously noted, religion and spirituality are likely to be relevant to clinical practice.

Other factors associated with increased levels of perceived competence were the educational level (e.g., master or doctoral-level), level of counselor training (e.g., how many courses taken on topics of R/S) and clinical experience for practicing clinicians (van Asselt & Senstock, 2009; Lu et al., 2019; Ruffin, 2014). In van Asselt and Senstock (2009), participants included a total of 542 graduate students from CACREP accredited programs and clinicians recruited from the Mental Health Counselor Association and the ASERVIC. To measure participants' spiritual beliefs, experiences, and well-being, participants took the *Index of Core Spiritual Experiences* (INSPIRIT, Kass, et al., 1991) and two subscales from the Spiritual Health Inventory (SHI, Veach & Chappel, 1992): the Personal Spiritual Experiences (measuring beliefs and experiences) and the Spiritual Well-Being (measuring benefits from a relationship with a higher power). Participants were provided case scenarios and asked the extent to which the participant agreed or disagreed (1 *strongly disagree* to 4 *strongly agree*) that topics of R/S were part of the client's presenting concern and how useful a therapeutic focus on topics of R/S would

be to the case presented (van Asselt & Senstock, 2009). Additionally, participants were asked to rate on a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very competent*) how competent they would feel counseling the client in the case scenario. The results of this study suggest that spiritual identity, training, and clinical experience around topics of R/S were all factors that increased perceived competency. It was found that the participants with spiritual beliefs and experiences, as measured by INSPIRIT and the SHI Personal Spiritual Experience, were positively related to recognizing a clients' spiritual concerns and predictive that the participant would choose to use a spiritual treatment. Participants who had both spiritual beliefs and received spiritual training also scored higher on the measure of perceived competency. Additionally, the authors found that participants who had more counseling experience were less likely to report topics of R/S as a presenting concern and to choose spirituality as a primary treatment. Age and educational level were not factors that significantly contributed to the outcomes (van Asselt & Senstock, 2009). This suggests that the more exposure that students and clinicians have to topics of R/S in training and clinical practice, the more competent they will perceive themselves to be.

Training increased students' comfort to use spiritual and religious interventions and in their perceived competency to integrate topics of R/S into clinical practice (Ruffin, 2014). Ruffin (2014) studied the perceived comfort and competence of counseling students after providing a religious and spiritual training intervention. Participants included 127 master's-level counseling students from CACREP accredited programs (72%) and non-CACREP accredited training programs. All participants were enrolled at the time in a practicum course and assigned to either the intervention group (n = 67) or control group (n = 60). Participants in the intervention group received reading materials on the ASERVIC competencies and participated in at least 5 minutes of discussion on one ASERVIC competency item each week of their practicum course, for a total

of nine weeks. Scores on measures of perceived comfort to address spiritual topics with clients (as measured by the Scale of Comfort with Integrating Religion/Spirituality in Counseling; SCIRSC; Jenkins, 2009) and spiritual competence (as measured by the Spiritual Competency Scale Revised Edition II; SCS-R-II; Robertson, 2011) were taken at two times, before and after the practicum intervention. The control group took the SCIRSC and the SCS-R-II in the beginning of their practicum course and did not participate in the R/S training intervention.

Overall, results revealed that participation in a “religion and spirituality in counseling training” intervention increased counselor trainees perceived comfort to integrate topics of R/S into clinical practice (Ruffin, 2014). Specifically, students reported increased comfort to self-disclose the counselor’s religious and spiritual personal information, to provide clients with religious and spiritual interventions, and to show sensitivity to topics of R/S. Results also showed a positive relationship between counselor trainees’ perceived comfort to address spiritual issues with clients, as measured by the SCIRSC, and perceived competence to address spiritual issues with clients, as measured by the SCS-R-II. Institutional accreditation type (CACREP or non-CACREP), institutional religious status (religious or secular), and self-identified religious and/or spiritual identity had no significant effect on levels of perceived comfort or competence. The results of this study indicate the importance of integrating topics of R/S into counselor training to increase counselor comfort and competence to effectively address topics of R/S in counseling. According to Ruffin (2014), future studies should further examine if there is a difference in the levels of perceived comfort and competence between students who identify with religious and spiritual beliefs and practices compared to students who do not. Other future research might further explore the extent to which institutional affiliation (accreditation status or religious/secular) might influence graduate students’ comfort and perceived competence to

address spiritual and religious issues in counseling (Ruffin, 2014). Additionally, more research is needed to determine what R/S training interventions are best suited for graduate training (e.g., what topics, what courses should they be integrated into, what method to use). Understanding what topics of R/S to include as a minimum standard of competence is critical. This could provide training programs the opportunity to provide space for the foundational, or most critical, topics in graduate training.

This section on *Counselor Education Training Programs* has revealed information about the ways religion and spirituality are integrated into the training of counseling students. In summary, studies showed that students' perceived their training to be inadequate and their perceived competency in areas relating to counseling skills to be low. Students' religious and/or spiritual identities, degree of perceived multicultural counseling competence, and level of training (e.g., doctoral level) were variables that were related to increased competence. Additional information is needed to understand the influence of institutional factors (e.g., religiously affiliated versus secular institution) and training program accreditation (e.g., accredited versus non-accredited training program) on students' level of competence, as results were mixed. One important variable for additional consideration is students' perceptions of how open the faculty members of training programs are regarding the integration of R/S into counselor education. Interestingly, much of the research from the field of counselor education is focused on students' perceptions and competency, whereas research from the field of psychology provides more insight into the perceptions of faculty members and training directors, who would be responsible for implementing training. The following section will review how topics of R/S are integrated into psychology graduate training programs.

Psychology Graduate Training Programs

With minimal guidelines in place to guide the integration of R/S as a cultural factor into the graduate training of psychology students, researchers have attempted to understand how topics of R/S are being addressed in graduate training. The following review will begin by describing topics of R/S in supervision, which is the most commonly cited way that psychology trainees receive exposure to topics of R/S in training. Because members responsible for determining how to integrate topics of R/S debate on the best way to do so, the review explores the following section by integrating R/S as a separate course, R/S integrated into multicultural courses, and R/S in core curriculum to highlight the themes found in literature. This section will end by describing barriers to integration as well as critiques of measurements used to assess competence.

R/S in Supervision

Researchers have consistently found that psychology trainees are most likely to gain knowledge about religion and spirituality topics while in supervision of clinical coursework, as relevant to current client cases (Brawer et al., 2002; Hage, 2006; Hage et al., 2006; Saunders et al., 2014; Schafer et al., 2011; Vogel et al., 2013). Learning about religious and spiritual topics solely through supervision is not considered best practice for counselor training for several reasons (Vogel et al., 2013). One is that psychology trainees who learn through supervision-only have decreased opportunities to explore personal value systems before meeting with clients and could easily impose their values onto the client. Another reason is supervision-only training provides limited availability for psychology trainees to hear multiple viewpoints regarding religious and spiritual topics through classroom discussion. A third is supervision-only training reduces the ability for psychology trainees to become competent with religious and spiritual

skills prior to clinical practice. Therefore, it is important to understand ways in which topics of R/S can be incorporated in graduate training coursework prior to clinical practicum and this will be discussed in the next three sections.

R/S as a Separate Course

One solution to the issue of including topics of R/S into curricula is to offer a separate course on topics of R/S in clinical practice. Minimal research on religion and spirituality courses offered as stand-alone (or a distinct course) has been completed, likely because there is minimal opportunity for dedicated programming in psychology training for these courses. According to Schafer et al. (2011), 22 of 89 (24%) APA-accredited program training directors reported offering courses with R/S as a distinct content area; however, there was variability as to how frequently the course was offered. Some courses were offered once a semester (22.7%), others were offered once a year (27.3%), and some courses were offered once every other year (18.2%). Of the classes being offered, only 27.3% of the programs required the course as part of the core curriculum.

The rigorous nature of graduate study often leaves limited opportunities to take additional courses that are not a required part of a student's curricula. A lack of required core curricula on religion and spirituality concepts could decrease the likelihood that students would take these elective courses. According to a Saunders et al. (2014) survey of 543 doctoral students in APA-accredited clinical psychology and counseling psychology graduate programs, only 22.4% of participants reported taking one or more classes on the topic of spirituality or religion as its own course. The limited nature of this survey makes it unclear if students had opportunities to take courses and chose not to or simply did not have courses available to take. As will be discussed in

the following sections, psychology trainees feel ill-prepared to provide appropriate and effective clinical treatment regarding topics of R/S and call for additional training in topics of R/S.

The Inclusion of R/S in Multicultural Courses

As previously noted, members of the APA have decreed that religion and spirituality must be incorporated into psychology training emphasizing multiculturalism (APA, 2013). However, researchers have debated whether multicultural or diversity focused courses are the best place to integrate topics of R/S into graduate curriculum (Crook-Lyon et al., 2012; Henrikensen et al., 2015). Across multiple survey and qualitative studies, most training directors, faculty, and students advocated for religion and spiritual issues to be a part of multicultural focused course rather than its own course (Crook-Lyon et al., 2012; Henrikensen et al., 2015; Vogel et al., 2013). According to Crook-Lyon et al. (2012), psychologists across APA divisions indicated that religion and spirituality are essential parts of a person's culture that should be addressed as necessary in multicultural training (Crook-Lyon et al., 2012). On the other hand, some professional psychologists (Crook-Lyon et al., 2012) and psychology students (Souza, 2002) argued that spirituality and religion should be taught separately from other multiculturalism (i.e., race) because both are such personal and controversial topics that are too difficult to do each topic justice in one diversity course.

To explore the importance of R/S training during diversity classes, Crook-Lyon and associates (2012) surveyed 340 psychologists who were affiliates of the APA Division 12: Clinical Psychology (n= 104), APA Division 36: Psychology of Religion and Spirituality (n=127), and APA Division 45: Society for the Psychological Study of Ethnic Minority Issues (n=109). Participants were asked to complete a 34-item questionnaire regarding their opinion of the current state of religious and spiritual issues in graduate training and the inclusion of religion

and spirituality in multicultural training. Participants were also asked to write their response to the question, “Do you think religious and spiritual issues should be included in the multicultural movement” (Crooks-Lyon et al., 2012, p. 172). The data revealed that 75% of participants believed that religious and spiritual issues are inadequately addressed in graduate training, and 65% of participants agreed, or strongly agreed, that religion and spirituality were important to be taught during graduate training.

Practicing counseling psychologists have echoed a concern that training on topics of R/S is not adequate. Harper (2012) completed a dissertation interviewing five practicing counseling psychologists of varying racial ethnic backgrounds and religious identities to understand their experiences with the phenomenon of “how their religious and spiritual beliefs influence their work, professional identity, and work with specific clients” (p. 44). When asked about how “counseling psychologists become more aware of their influences of spirituality and religion on their practices,” (p. 109) all participants spoke of the importance of graduate training. In general, participants reported they did not receive adequate training on topics of R/S, particularly covering how “religious and spiritual issues in terms of client’s worldview, assessment, and integration of related topics” (p. 109). According to Harper (2012), “three individuals reported there was a sense that spirituality was not valued by faculty and [one participant] stated she felt she was judged and thought to be less intelligent when she disclosed her religious identity” (p. 109). Three participants noted that more attention should be given to addressing topics of R/S in graduate programs to increase multicultural competence of trainees. Topics of R/S were noted to be appropriate to include in a multicultural course.

Despite the APA’s efforts to acknowledge that religious and spiritual issues are important cultural factors to incorporate into graduate training, participants in the reviewed studies had

varying preferences for whether religion and spirituality should be integrated into diversity training or presented as its own course. Few psychologists (14%) in the work by Crook-Lyon et al. (2012) felt that religion and spirituality should not be included in multicultural training. However, some of these participants expressed concern that adding several elements, such as religion and spirituality, into multiculturalism curriculum takes away the limited amount of time in curriculum already provided little space to have in depth discussions on topics already included (Adams et al., 2015; Schulte et al., 2002). Moreover, the integration of religion and spirituality might represent a topic that is easier for some students to discuss than other difficult topics, such as race and racism, and could thus draw attention away from these other crucial topics (Crook-Lyon et al., 2012).

This critique is particularly notable in counseling psychology, which is known for being more traditional in its views that multicultural classes should focus on topics of race and ethnicity rather than other variables (Adams et al., 2015; Hage, 2006). Crook-Lyon et al.'s perspective is supported in the results of two other studies. Schulte et al., (2002) surveyed 40 training directors and found that 65% of counseling psychology faculty believed religious and spiritual dimensions were not considered as important to their programs as other forms of diversity such as race and ethnicity. Vogel et al., (2013) surveyed doctoral students (n = 127), doctoral faculty (n = 41), doctoral directors of clinical training (DCT, n = 27), pre-doctoral interns (n = 59), and intern training directors (TD, n = 38) in APA-accredited clinical and counseling psychology training programs and pre-doctoral internships. Participants identified a distinct hierarchy of effectiveness of training of diversity topics in APA-accredited programs. Training was most effective in areas of race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender/sexual

orientation. However, training on issues of age, disability, and spirituality/religion were reported as the least effective.

Understandably, this researcher does not want to downplay the salience of topics of race and racism as a central focus of multicultural classes. However, as previously discussed, religion and spirituality are a significant part of several racially and ethnically diverse groups and topics of R/S can be relevant to discussions of systematic oppression. Therefore, it seems contradictory to deem religion and spirituality as insignificant when compared to other multicultural issues, when these topics appear to be complementary. It is also essential to note that researchers on the topic of integration advocate for topics of R/S to be integrated *across* multiple, if not all, courses (Brawer et al., 2002; Schafer et al., 2011, Vogel et al., 2013). According to the APA Accreditation Standards, multicultural topics are strongly encouraged to be integrated throughout all graduate curricula (APA, 2018), and topics of religion and spirituality should be no exception. If more training programs were to integrate R/S readings, discussions, and or case conceptualizations into other core classes, then the pressure might be taking off classes like diversity training to bear the sole responsibility of R/S education and training, thereby leaving more space for other topics of diversity to be discussed.

R/S Integrated into Core Curriculum

Much of the research on R/S in psychology training programs focuses on the integration of R/S into other coursework, other than topic specific and those with a diversity focus. Brawer et al. (2002) and Schafer et al. (2011) both examined the opinions of directors of APA-accredited Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology (Ph.D.), and Doctor of Psychology (Psy.D.) clinical psychology programs on the systematic coverage of religious and spiritual topics in psychology training. The Schafer et al. (2011) study was a follow-up to the original Brawer and associates

(2002) study and differed in that Schafer et al. only included clinical directors from programs within the United States. Brawer et al. also included Canadian participants. Another difference in the studies was the measures used. Brawer et al.'s survey included 10 items measuring the extent to which religious and spiritual issues were covered in class work, supervision, or research and the interest of faculty and students in religious and spiritual topics (clinical or training). Schafer et al. expanded Brawer et al.'s measure by asking about the type of program and institution participants were from. Though not much is known about the types of programs reported in the Brawer et al. study, it was noted in Schafer et al. that 21% of participants came from programs with religious affiliations. According to Brawer et al. and Schafer et al., systematic coverage of religious and spiritual topics are "occurring in each of the following three areas: course work, supervision, and research" (Brawer et al., 2002, p. 205). In both studies, roughly 17% of training directors reported that systematic education occurred in their training program. Systematic education occurred in only 8.3% of coursework in Ph.D. programs and in 8.8% of non-religiously affiliated training programs (Schafer et al., 2011). On a positive note, the percentage of participants who reported no coverage of spiritual or religious topics in graduate training reduced from 16% (Brawer et al., 2002) to 2.2% (Schafer et al., 2011), in the approximately 10 year period between studies.

In general, Schafer et al.'s (2011) study revealed an overall increase in the incorporation of religious and spiritual topics into psychology curricula. When religion/spirituality was integrated into the core curriculum, it was typically incorporated into non-religious or non-spiritual classes not specifically focused on religion and spirituality. Of the 67 programs that did not offer a R/S specific course, content related to religion and spirituality was incorporated into 68.5% of cultural diversity courses, 44.9% of ethics/professional issues courses, 15.7% of history

of psychology courses, 11.2% of family psychology, and small percentages of other courses (Schafer et al., 2011).

Until this point in the review of how topics of R/S are integrated into psychology training, much of the literature has sampled from multidisciplinary pools within the field of psychology. As previously described, the field of counseling psychology is well known for valuing multiculturalism and social justice advocacy in research, training, and clinical practice (Scheele et al., 2018; Vera & Speight, 2003) and may have different experiences regarding the ways in which topics of R/S are integrated into counseling psychology doctoral training. The following section will specifically review literature pertaining the ways topics of R/S are integrated into counseling psychology graduate training programs.

Counseling Psychology Graduate Training

To this researcher's knowledge, there is minimal research that has specifically looked at the ways in which topics of R/S are integrated into the counseling psychology graduate training (Schulte et al., 2002; Bhattacharyya, 2014). Schulte et al. (2002) surveyed 40 training directors from training programs affiliated with the Council of Counseling Psychology Training Programs (CCPTP). Schulte et al. created a survey instrument for use in this study with the intent of exploring the extent that topics of R/S were integrated into counseling psychology training. This survey consisted of open-ended questions regarding demographics and 22 statements about the participants' training program to which participants responded using a Likert-type scale with the anchors 1 (*completely false*) to 4 (*completely true*). The content of the survey covered the extent to which R/S were included in diversity training (7 items), whether R/S knowledge is considered to be relevant to counseling psychology training (4 items), whether R/S is included in didactic instruction and practicum training (9 items) and whether faculty members are open to research

on R/S topics in counseling psychology (2 items). Sample questions included “R/S issues are regularly discussed as issues in counseling psychology” (p. 124), “Knowledge of various R/S traditions is considered an important part of a therapists’ expertise in the program” (p. 124), “Student learn about R/S development” (p. 124), and “Faculty members in the program are willing to supervise student research on R/S issues” (p. 124). Like other research looking at the extent that R/S is integrate into training, participants endorsed that topics of R/S were more likely integrated into a previously established course than a standalone course. When integrated into coursework, 57% of the participants estimated that topics of R/S were addressed in one, two, or three courses. Results indicated that there was variability regarding the extent that topics of R/S were integrated into diversity training, which makes sense given that participants expressed varying opinions regarding how important topics of R/S are within diversity training framework. Though not always directly included in counseling psychology coursework, participants reported an openness to having students reflect on topics of R/S in their written assignments or to do research on topics of R/S. Additionally, practicum supervisors were open to discussing topics of R/S as relevant to a clients’ case. Schulte et al (2002) reported a hope that moving forward the field of counseling psychology would be more inclusive of R/S as a dimension of cultural identity that would be included in multicultural competency for counseling psychology trainees.

There is a notable example from within the field of Counseling Psychology regarding the ways that topics of R/S can be integrated into training curricula through social justice advocacy. This example comes from a counseling psychology doctoral program at Boston College, which created an anti-Islamophobia intervention called, *Don’t Meet Hurt with Hate Campaign* in response to an increase of hate crimes against individuals who are Muslim, after the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing (Bhattacharyya et al., 2014). Understanding that social justice work requires

both individual and systemic changes to reduce inequalities for disadvantaged individuals (Vera & Speight, 2003), students in the counseling psychology doctoral program at Boston College engaged in self-reflection around their roles as allies to the Muslim community and practiced facilitating dialogues using active listening in their classroom setting (Bhattacharya et al., 2014). Students also collaborated with organizations for Muslim students and Islamic societies to understand their needs in order to develop a counter narrative campaign. Finally, the group of students developed an online presence for the campaign and hosted a paneling event to discuss “Myths and Facts about Islam Post-Marathon” (p. 1147) which served the purpose of reducing prejudice against this population. This example serves as an excellent example of the ways counseling psychologists can serve as social justice advocates for religiously diverse groups, and it is important that psychology trainees gain exposure to these types of topics within their doctoral training. This example is very different than the types of traditional teaching methods (reading, writing, didactic exercises) that might be considered when looking at the extent that topics of R/S are integrated into training, but are in line with recommendations for social justice training (Constantine et al., 2007; Goodman et al., 2004; Kozen & Blustein, 2018; Speight & Vera, 2008; Vera & Speight, 2003). Given that the integration of topics of R/S within psychology graduate training has been limited across disciplines of psychology, it is important to understand any barriers that may hinder integration, which will be discussed in the following section.

Barriers to Integration

Some researchers have speculated that there are barriers that exist in the integration of religious and spiritual topics into psychology training (Adams et al., 2015; Vogel et al, 2013). One hypothesis involves the field of psychology placing emphasis on empirical science

(pragmatic and reductionist research) rather than spiritual domains (Vogel et al., 2013). As previously noted, religion and spirituality have been separate studies from the field of psychology since the 19th century because topics of R/S were deemed to be independent of scientific knowledge (Nelson, 2009; Shirev, 2015). Some psychologists may continue to believe that the field of psychology and the fields of religion/spiritually should be distinct, which may contribute to difficulty integrating topics of R/S into psychology graduate training.

A second potential barrier is the attitudes of faculty. Experts who study religion and spirituality from a psychological perspective have expressed concern that faculty may lack knowledge, preparation, and competency to address topics of R/S themselves, thereby reducing effectiveness of their ability to train on such topics (Adams et al., 2015). Faculty may need to gain training in topics of R/S as related to clinical practice to perceive themselves as competent. Some faculty may be more engaged in topics of R/S than others. For example, Hage (2006) reported that counseling psychology faculty are willing to be open to discussions around topics of religion and spirituality, but feel they are not expected to be knowledgeable about specific religious and spiritual cultures. Faculty's potential inexperience or lack of competence in topics of R/S may send implicit messages to students that topics of R/S are not an integral part of graduate training (Vogel et al., 2013).

Vogel et al. (2013) suggested that faculty who do not explicitly bring up topics of R/S might unintentionally relay a message to students that topics of R/S are inappropriate to discuss in the classroom (Vogel et al., 2013). In one study, APA graduate trainees reported that they were more likely to seek consultation from peers who identify as religious than to consult academic advisors on religious and spiritual topics (Vogel et al., 2013). It is unknown why psychology trainees turn to peers rather than faculty to discuss topics of R/S or if trainees seek

consultation from peers at the same rate for other multicultural topics (e.g., race/racism, sexual orientation, gender, age, or ability status). Students may rely more on peers than academic advisors because faculty do not appear comfortable discussing topics of R/S (Vogel et al., 2013). If graduate educators are uncomfortable discussing religion and spirituality in the classroom, then students may similarly feel uncomfortable discussing religion and spirituality in training or clinical practice.

Furthermore, faculty who do not believe they should be expected to be knowledgeable about topics of R/S may not present opportunities for students to engage in research and training on topics of R/S outside of graduate training. This statement is supported by the psychology trainees who reported that they lost out on opportunities to complete readings on relevant research and to attend professional conferences on religious and spiritual topics due to their advisor and/or training program's disengagement with religious and spiritual content (Vogel et al., 2013). Interestingly, training directors believed that psychology trainees had more access to religious and spiritual resources (e.g., training seminars) than psychology trainees thought they did (Vogel et al., 2013).

As a reminder, information about psychology faculty presented in this review was gathered from training directors, not faculty directly. Faculty members, as part of the broader category of mental health professionals, are trained to navigate difficult conversations with clients and to respect the cultural background of clients. It is possible that psychology faculty may have valuable tools to overcome barriers to including topics of R/S into higher education institutions and the training of future therapists. Future research is warranted to gain understanding of psychology faculty's perception of (a) the appropriateness of religious and spiritual integration into graduate curriculum, (b) the extent to which religious and spiritual

curricula should be included, and (c) the support or barriers that influence the integration of topics of R/S into psychology training.

Critique of Measurements Used to Assess Competence

Regarding religious and spiritual competence across helping professions, Oxhandler and Pargament (2018) expressed concern about the questionnaires and instruments used in measuring practitioner competence across counseling, psychology, psychiatry, marriage and family counseling, social work, and pastoral counseling. Across these helping professions, a trend was noted that many instruments are used only once or twice and there is limited information on the reliability and validity of these measures. The limited use of these measures also calls into question the generalizability of the measures across samples.

A second critique was in the development of the measures. In many cases, competency measures were created by listing R/S competencies and using a Likert-type scale to measure the degree to which respondents agreed with an item or felt they were competent. These measures are subject to concerns associated with self-report measures, in which clinicians may have an inflated sense of competence around their ability to integrate R/S or may be responding in socially desirable ways, thereby reducing the validity of the instruments. Given the critiques of the various competency measures, it is recommended that an instrument be developed to assess core R/S competences to assist with training future mental health professionals (Oxhandler & Pargament, 2018).

This large section, Psychology Graduate Training Programs, described the ways in which topics of R/S are integrated into psychology training programs. Research revealed that topics of R/S are integrated minimally within psychology graduate training and there is a question among psychology educators as to in what classes, and to what extent, topics of R/S should be included

in psychology training. There are potential barriers to integrating topics of R/S into training, including logistic concerns. Within the field of counseling psychology, topics of R/S are often included in diversity training, though receive less attention than other dimensions of diversity like race and ethnicity.

Summary

At this time, a reflection is warranted on some trends throughout the literature examining the integration of religion and spirituality into psychology and counseling graduate training. Religion and spirituality are important cultural factors and can influence potential clients in both positive and negative ways. Researchers have shown that religion and spirituality have a place in the therapeutic process, that is, there are techniques and resources available for clinicians to use in integrating topics of R/S with clients when appropriate. The goal of integrating topics of R/S into the therapeutic process should always be in the best interest of the client and clinicians must be careful not to impose their values onto clients.

Graduate level training of future mental health practitioners plays an essential role in the development of awareness of one's own biases, knowledge of cultural values, and skills for ethical and effective clinical practice. However, mental health practitioners and current graduate-level students from both psychology and counselor education training programs report their training has been insufficient in preparing them to address topics of R/S with clients. Counselor education training programs use their Competencies for Addressing Spiritual and Religious Issues in Counseling, a part of the CACREP accreditation standards, to guide their training and are researching best practices to integrate topics of R/S into graduate training with the purpose of increasing multicultural competence in this area. As organizations without religious and/or spiritual competencies as a required part of their accreditation standards, those involved with the

training of psychology graduate students (e.g., program training directors and professional members of the American Psychological Association) debate on the appropriateness of where and how much to train psychology students on topics of religion and spirituality. Experts in the field of Religion, Spirituality, and Psychology report that several potential barriers to integrating topics of R/S into graduate training may exist. Of all the valuable input revealed in this literature review, there is a gap in the voices of those represented. First, much of the research presented throughout this literature review is reflective of the worldview of predominately White/European American, Christian participants, and it is likely that religion and spirituality are intersecting cultural factors for individuals from racially and ethnicity diverse groups or other underrepresented groups within the U.S.

Second, many of these studies have included small, convenience, samples, which may have affected the data in several ways (Hage et al., 2006). The use of convenience sampling may mean that participants who choose to respond have preconceived ideas and investments in the topic of religion and spirituality in counselor training, which could produce biased data (Saunders et al., 2014). Additionally, there are several concerns about reliability, validity, and generalizability of the measures of competencies used across mental health professional training programs, like counseling and psychology (Oxhandler et al., 2018). There is a need for a well-developed measure of R/S competency to gain better insight on how well graduate-level training of counseling and psychology trainees is around topics of R/S.

Third, within the field of psychology there is very little research directed at the subfield of counseling psychology. Members of the field of counseling psychology are well known for their emphasis on multicultural competence and social justice advocacy. Religion and spirituality are noted as cultural factors on which counseling psychology trainees must receive training.

Examining how counseling psychology training programs complete this task may provide a better-rounded picture of how the field of psychology is addressing topics of R/S within training.

A fourth and highly valuable voice in this conversation is that of faculty members who are charged with training, mentoring, and guiding graduate trainees on ethical and effective clinical practice. There have been several suggestions that religious and spiritual identity, personal biases, and comfort with topics of R/S might influence a psychology faculty member's choice to integrate topics of R/S into the training of psychology graduate students. However, to this researcher's knowledge, no study has directly asked faculty about their experiences and perceptions of the integration of topics of R/S into graduate training.

The current study will address the gap in the literature by seeking to gain understanding of the experiences faculty members at APA-accredited counseling psychology training programs who have had attempting to integrate topics of religion and spirituality into the training of future counseling psychologists. This researcher has chosen counseling psychology as the population of interest both because of her affiliation with this profession and because of counseling psychology's long standing investment in examining cultural factors from a respectful and sensitive stance. It is this researcher's hope that information gathered in this study will benefit the field of counseling psychology by addressing gaps in the multicultural training of future counseling psychologists and, therefore indirectly increasing effective, ethical, and culturally sensitive clinical practice.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the research methods used to study the phenomenon of interest. This chapter will begin with an explanation of the rationale for using a qualitative research paradigm approach to examine this research topic. Next, the researcher will describe the phenomenological research design by specifying the participants and steps for data collection and analysis. Finally, the researcher will consider areas of ethics, trustworthiness, and limitations of this study.

Selection of Method of Inquiry

According to Heppner and associates (2016), “Research design is the tool that researchers use to frame a study and involves developing a plan or procedure to conduct the investigation” (p. 119). Qualitative and quantitative are two methods of research inquiry that have two different sets of research processes that involve the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data (Ponterotto, 2005). The research question(s) guide(s) the type of research design a researcher will use (Heppner et al., 2016; Miller et al., 2018; Morrow, 2007). Quantitative researchers study the relationship between variables through a controlled collection of data (Heppner et al., 2016; Ponterotto, 2005) and are appropriate for answering questions of “Why” (Morrow, 2007, p. 211). Alternatively, qualitative researchers attempt to make sense of a phenomenon by interpreting the meaning people derive from their experience with the phenomenon. Qualitative methods of investigation are appropriate for answering questions of “How?” or “What?” (Morrow, 2007, p. 211). Information gathered can be used to explore variables that are not easily identifiable, investigate topics in which there is little or no previous research, or better comprehend a phenomenon that is not well understood (Morrow, 2007).

In reviewing the literature around the integration of religion and spirituality (R/S) into counseling psychology doctoral training, this researcher identified a gap in the literature in which little is known about the experiences of faculty members at American Psychological Association (APA)-accredited counseling psychology training programs who have attempted to integrate topics of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training. The phenomenon studied in this research was the experience of faculty members at APA-accredited counseling psychology training programs attempting to integrate topics of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training. Because no narrative currently exists to describe the phenomenon of interest in this study, a qualitative method of inquiry was warranted “to explore, understand and communicate the experiences and viewpoints offered by participants” (Larkin et al., 2006, p. 103). The qualitative design used in this study was phenomenological, specifically the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach.

IPA is a commonly used approach to qualitative inquiry in psychological studies, including the field of counseling psychology (Creswell, 2013; Morrow, 2007; Ponterotto, 2005). This type of research design is well suited in the field of counseling psychology because the research process mirrors the interpersonal dynamics familiar to the clinical work of counseling psychologists (Morrow, 2007; Wertz, 2005). Moreover, this approach is well suited for multicultural research due to the emphasis of interpreting meaning in the context of the participant’s environment. Specifically, a researcher using an IPA approach is likely to foster empathy, leading to close connections with the participants, which may reduce hesitancy of some members of underrepresented groups to participate in the process of scientific inquiry (Heppner et al., 2016). Therefore, the phenomenological research approach provides opportunities to give voice to populations who are often oppressed (Morrow, 2007; Ponterotto, 2005); which is a

mission of counseling psychologists (Delgado-Romero et al., 2012). Because of this researcher's desire to give voice to faculty members at APA-accredited counseling psychology training programs with diverse identities, the IPA approach to phenomenological research is an appropriate research design to use.

Research Paradigm and Philosophical Assumptions

A researcher cannot develop a well-established research design without first understanding the underlying principles of the method of inquiry, or set of philosophical assumptions about the social world that guides the research process (Heppner et al., 2016; Ponterotto, 2005). There are four types of philosophical assumptions: ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological (Heppner et al., 2016; Ponterotto, 2005). Ontological assumptions answer the question, "What is the form and nature of reality, and what can be known about that reality?" (Ponterotto, 2005, p. 130). Epistemological assumptions describe what information constitutes knowledge (Creswell, 2013; Heppner et al., 2016; Ponterotto, 2005). Axiological assumptions address the role of values in research (Creswell, 2013; Heppner et al., 2016; Ponterotto, 2005), and methodological assumptions speak to the process of research (Creswell, 2013; Heppner et al., 2016; Ponterotto, 2005).

Traditional descriptive phenomenological research designs adhere to the constructivism-interpretivist (hereinafter referred to as constructivism) research paradigm which assumes that "reality is co-constructed between a researcher and the researched and shaped by the individual experience" (Creswell, 2013, p. 36). Researchers using constructivist paradigms assume that multiple realities exist, that is, each participant has their own experience of reality (ontology). Therefore, knowledge is understood through the subjective experience of the participants (epistemology). Because reality is co-constructed, a researcher has a significant role in the

research design and is noted as the “key instrument” (Creswell, 2013, p. 25) to data collection and interpretation (axiological). A researcher is assumed to be value-laden and therefore positions themselves in the research by explicitly reporting their values and biases (Creswell, 2013; Heppner et al., 2016; Ponterotto, 2005). Ultimately, the goal of phenomenological research is to describe the experiences of a phenomenon that has not previously been conceptualized (Miller et al., 2018).

Regarding methodological assumptions, the IPA approach of phenomenology draws on the principles of traditional descriptive phenomenological research with some variations. IPA is an integrative approach that extends the depth of participants’ description (phenomenology) by honoring the contextual influences on participants’ stories (idiography) and attempts to make sense of participants’ subjective meaning of their experiences of the phenomenon (hermeneutics; Finley 2011; Miller et al., 2018; Smith et al., 1999). Whereas traditional descriptive phenomenological research seeks to uncover the essence of a collective experience across participants’ stories, the IPA approach focuses on each participant’s individual narrative and looks for similarities and discrepancies across participants’ experiences (Miller et al., 2018).

One of the underlying principles of IPA is the focus on idiography (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014), which attends to individuals-in-context, thereby allowing participants to reflect on what the phenomenon is from their own perspective (Finlay 2011; Larkin et al., 2006; Miller et al., 2018; Smith et al., 1999). It is assumed that participants are influenced by the historical and cultural context of their experiences and that there is an interaction between the participant and those contexts (Miller et al., 2018). In other words, the essence of the phenomenon is socially constructed and within the context of the environment. Therefore, the research questions of a phenomenological study are geared towards understanding what it is like for the individuals to

live the experience and what the meaning behind those experiences are (Creswell, 2013; Larkin et al., 2006; Miller et al., 2018). In this current study, the researcher developed interview questions to understand factors that contributed to participants' experiences with the phenomenon as well as to elicit participants' thoughts on personal characteristics about themselves that contributed to their experiences. Another way this researcher focused on the interaction between participants and their experiences occurred in data analysis when the researcher noted not only what participants said, but how they said it (e.g., tone of voice).

Another cornerstone of the IPA approach is the commitment to hermeneutics (Miller, 2018; Smith et al., 1999). The hermeneutic approach is described as “the process whereby participants make sense of *x* while researchers make sense of participants' sense-making” (Smith & Osborn, 2003, p. 51). Beyond describing the participants' experiences, a researcher using IPA interprets the stories of participants to offer what it *means* for each participant to experience the phenomenon. The interpretations an IPA researcher makes are grounded in the participants' stories by identifying quotes from the participants' narratives that support the emerging themes. Intentional analysis is an important part of phenomenological research as it guides a researcher to tell the story of the phenomenon as experienced by the participants, and reflectively describe the process by which the experiences are lived (Wertz, 2005). The researcher conducts an in-depth interview with the intent of eliciting an understanding of the deeper meaning the participants make of their experiences (Wertz, 2005). A researcher must be intentional to dig deep into the participants' story to fully understand the meaning the participant makes, which is done so by asking participants to describe how they experienced the phenomenon. In the data analysis process, a researcher must maintain a balance between telling the participants' stories and describing a general meaning of the phenomenon based on a collection of participants' stories

(Larkin, 2006; Wertz, 2005). The methods the researcher of this study used to complete analysis are described in the Data Analysis Procedures section.

Given the influence the researcher has on interpreting data, an IPA research takes measures to record their thoughts, feelings, and ideas for emerging themes throughout the research process. The purpose of these records are to analyze the ways in which personal reactions and biases may influence the researchers' interpretation of results. There were two ways that the researcher of this study reflected on her influence, and they will be described in the Sources of Data and Issues of Trustworthiness sections of this chapter.

Data Collection Methods and Procedures

An important goal of phenomenological research is to gather in-depth information about an individual's experience with a particular phenomenon (Miller; 2018; Smith et al., 1999). The methods used for sampling and recruitment are essential components to understanding participants' experiences with the phenomenon of interest. The following sections will describe the researcher's sampling and recruitment methods used in this study, research questions, and the sources of data collected.

Sampling Methods

The population of interest for this study was faculty members who taught at APA-accredited counseling psychology training programs within the United States. This researcher used two sampling methods, criterion and chain sampling, to recruit participants. Criterion-based sampling is often used in phenomenological research to elicit participants who have experienced the phenomenon of interest (Creswell, 2013). To be included in the current study, participants were required to meet the following three criteria:

1. Participants needed to be currently (at the time of data collect) a faculty member at an APA-accredited counseling psychology doctoral training program.
2. Participants needed to have attempted to integrate topics of religion and spirituality into the training of counseling psychology doctoral students.
3. Participants did not consider “religion and spirituality topics in graduate training” to be a specialization area of interest (i.e., participants may be familiar with concepts surrounding integration of these topics but would not consider themselves to be an expert in this concentration area).

The above criteria were determined for the following reasons. First, these inclusion criterion were chosen to fill a gap in the literature of understanding the experiences of faculty members in APA-accredited counseling psychology training programs who are charged with training future counseling psychologists. Because the researcher was interested in the contextual influences that affect attempts to integrate topics of R/S into training, there were no restrictions on the type of institution the participant was affiliated with (e.g., secular, religious, private, and public). An additional consideration was that some faculty members who teach in counseling psychology training programs have degrees outside of the specialization of counseling psychology. Because the phenomenon of this study is the experiences of faculty members in APA-accredited counseling psychology training programs regarding their attempts to integrate topics of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training, this researcher felt it was important to allow all faculty members who had experiences with the phenomenon to participate in this research, regardless of the faculty members’ training background. For the same reason, there were no restrictions based on number of years of experience teaching or title of teaching position (e.g., tenure, non-tenure, professor, associate professor, and so on).

Similarly, faculty members in counseling psychology training programs may also teach students in other mental health programs, including those who fall under the CACREP-accreditation standards that also require the integration of topics of R/S into training. Though ideally participants would only teach counseling psychology doctoral students, the reality is that this might not be the case, thus participants were not excluded for teaching students other than counseling psychology students. This researcher encouraged all faculty participants to specifically reflect on their experiences with counseling psychology doctoral students to gain an understanding of what happens in counseling psychology training programs.

The second criterion for inclusion was that the participant had experience with attempting to integrate topics of religion and spirituality into counseling psychology doctoral training. This inclusion criterion was necessary to ensure that participants had experienced the phenomena of interest (a requirement of phenomenological research). To achieve this goal, the researcher recruited participants from APA-accredited counseling psychology doctoral training programs (Psy.D. or Ph.D.). APA-accredited programs are standardized and therefore have some similar expectations asserted as to the training of students. As explained in the literature review, the Core Competency guidelines of Division 17 of the APA indicate that it is important for counseling psychologists to understand and be sensitive to religious diversity (CCPTP, 2013). Therefore, it was expected that faculty members at APA-accredited counseling psychology training programs should have some experience with the phenomenon of this study.

The third inclusion criterion for study participants was that the faculty member did not consider “the study of religion and spirituality as related to doctoral training” to be a specialized area of teaching or research interest. The reason for this inclusion criterion was that participants in past studies have been heavily focused on topics of R/S in graduate training and may have a

different experience of the phenomenon than those without a specialization in this area. The researcher was attempting to diversify the voices who are joining the conversation by interviewing faculty members who have not specialized in this area.

A critique of the literature examining the integration of topics of R/S into mental health graduate training is that there is limited information from diverse populations. In honor of upholding the multicultural emphasis of the counseling psychology profession, this researcher sought to obtain a diverse sample of participants to gain perspectives of voices other than those belonging to the dominant groups (White/European American and Christians). Though there has been an increase of racial and ethnic membership within the American Psychological Association, psychologists still maintain a predominately White/European American membership (Center for Workforce Studies, 2017). Based on this information, it was likely that many potential participants (faculty in APA-accredited programs) would also identify as White European American. Participation in this study was not constricted based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, or religious and spiritual identities of the faculty member; rather, the researcher was purposeful to recruit a diverse sample of participants by describing the rationale for this need on the call for participation.

The researcher used chain sampling methods (Creswell, 2013) to increase the number of participants through a direct referral of individuals who might be a good fit for this study. First, the researcher asked the faculty members in her counseling psychology training program to recommend other faculty members in counseling psychology training programs whom they believed would be a good fit for participating in this study. Second, the researcher asked study participants if they could name any faculty members at APA-accredited counseling psychology training programs who they believed would be a good fit for this study.

Recruitment Methods

After receiving approval of the Western Michigan University Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, the researcher sent each training director of an APA-accredited counseling psychology training program an email requesting that they forward the invitation to participate email to the faculty members within their counseling psychology training program (criterion sampling). In the second level of recruitment (completed concurrently), the researcher used a chain sampling method by emailing faculty members in her counseling psychology program at Western Michigan University (WMU) and inquiring if they knew anyone who they believe may be a good fit for this study. In a third level of recruitment, the researcher directly sent the invitation to participate email to faculty members of APA-accredited counseling psychology training programs (criterion sampling). During the fourth, and final, level the researcher used a chain sampling method by asking study participants if they knew of anyone who they believe may be a good fit to participate in this research.

Regardless of the sampling method used, the recruitment process followed the same procedures and are described as follows. Potential participants received an invitation for participation email, which briefly described the purpose of this study and criteria for participation. A sample invitation for participation email can be found in Appendix A. The invitation for participation email instructed interested participants to click on a link to complete the online informed consent process (see Appendix B) and the demographic survey (Appendix C), a screening survey the researcher developed for the purposes of selecting a diverse participant pool.

Participants who did not meet the inclusion criteria (as determined by the researcher's review of the demographic screening survey) were sent an email thanking them for their interest

and noting that they were not invited to continue participating in the study. While some participants did self-select out of the study due to the inclusion criteria, the researcher did not have to deny continued participation to any individuals who completed the demographic survey. Participants who met the inclusion criterion were sent an email thanking them for their participation thus far and inviting them via email to schedule the initial interview. Across all sampling methods described, potential participants received one reminder email whether it was the invitation to participate or to schedule an interview. As a means of recruitment and compensation for taking part in the study, participants who completed both the initial and member check interviews were entered in a drawing to win a set of textbooks related to the integration of topics of R/S into counseling and/or training.

Participants continued to be recruited until the number reached a range that is recommended in the literature for this type of study. Phenomenological studies typically involve interviewing between three and 15 individuals who have a shared experience (Creswell, 2013; Ponterotto, 2005). According to content analysis examining the sample size and saturation of 560 dissertation abstracts of phenomenological studies, all studies had at least six participants and extended to 25 participants (Mason, 2010). Given that the researcher was recruiting from a national sample, limits were set on the number of participants of this study to ensure that the researcher collected enough data to reach saturation and, also, reach completion. The researcher intend to collect data from between 8 and 12 participants. In phenomenological research, data are collected until saturation occurs, meaning that no new information is emerging from the data (Creswell, 2013).

Sources of Data

This section will describe the various types of information gathered for data collection. Data gathered through participants' engagement in this study included a demographic screening survey and two individual interviews. Field notes, audit logs, and memos were data that the researcher completed in order to increase the trustworthiness, or credibility, of this study.

Demographic Screening Survey

The researcher used the WMU Secure Survey program to create an online demographic screening survey (Appendix C) for the purposes of gathering participant contact information and demographic data, and to aid the student researcher in selecting participants who would create a diverse sample. As previously noted, maximum diversity in participant selection was sought to give voice to a variety of experiences with the phenomenon; however, the demographic data is not part of the inclusion criterion for this study. On average, participants took roughly 6 minutes to complete the demographic survey.

Interviews

The researcher conducted two semi-structured interviews with participants via Skype, between August 2018 and February 2019. The purpose of the initial interview was for participants to share their stories about their experiences with the phenomenon of attempting to integrate topics of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training. The researcher developed a list of interview questions based off the research questions, which was used as a guide during the interviews (Appendix D). The initial interview lasted on average about 52 minutes.

The second interview, referred to as "member checking," was used to increase the trustworthiness (i.e., credibility) of my study. Both interviews were audio recorded and transcribed for data analysis purposes. After the researcher transcribed the initial interview, the

researcher emailed participants to invite them to engage in a 60-minutes or less member check interview via Skype. Member check interviews lasted an average of 26 minutes each. This interview included answering semi-structured questions (Appendix E) to clarify information the participant presented in the initial interview. After the member check interview was scheduled, the researcher sent each participant a copy of their own initial interview transcript via email. Two of the ten participants did not follow through with scheduling their member check interview.

Location. The criteria used for an appropriate interview location was based on the following: (a) preference of the participant, (b) availability of equipment (e.g., audio recording, computer, telephone), and (c) confidentiality, safety, and noise level of location. All interviews took place over a web-based media platform using the student researcher's personal laptop. The researcher conducted the Skype interviews from her private office and asked that participants also be located in a confidential and safe location with minimal to no distractions.

Transcription. Transcription was completed by the researcher using either MAXQDA, a qualitative research software program, or the *Transcribeme!*[©] *Inc.* transcription service. Any transcripts created by *Transcribeme!*[©] *Inc.* were reviewed by the researcher for accuracy. The researcher transferred the word document transcript from *Transcribeme!*[©] *Inc.* to the MAXQDA program for data analysis and all transcript documents were saved to an encrypted folder on the student researcher's password protected computer.

Confidentiality. To maintain anonymity and confidentiality, at the beginning of each initial interview the researcher asked each participant to choose their own pseudonym that the researcher used throughout the study, including in the transcripts. This researcher protected each participant's right to privacy in the completed transcript by editing identifiable information using square brackets [], such as names of students/colleagues, university, city, and other personal

identifiable information. For example, if the participant said, “at Western Michigan University” the researcher would edit that statement to “at [University].” A reference list of each participant’s pseudonym was saved to the researcher’s password protected computer to an encrypted file separate from the encrypted file storing the transcripts. The Principal Investigator and the student researcher had access to the transcribed data.

Field Notes

After completing each interview the researcher wrote a field note about her experience during the interview using the field note form she developed for this study (Appendix F). The purpose of this field note was to record the researcher’s thoughts, feelings, observations, and reactions to the interview. The goal of this data source was to help the researcher identify the ways her subjectivity might influence the interview process or data analysis and to change behaviors accordingly.

Audit Log

Audit logs are recommended across qualitative research designs to maintain records of the procedures a researcher follows and to document any changes to the study design (Richards, 2009). Based on Richards’ (2009) recommendation, the researcher used an audit log she developed for the purposes of this study (Appendix G) to record the steps of “what happened, why it happened, what were the alternatives and what are the likely results of this shift or step” (p. 26). For example, during the data analysis process, the researcher felt that the use of MAXQDA, her data analysis software program, had limited functions in sorting coded segments into themes. While it is possible that with additional training on the software program that the researcher could have used the functions the way she hoped, the researcher was unable to find a guide to instruct her on this matter. The researcher decided to download the codes and coded

segments into an excel document and complete the data analysis process by hand, in order to ensure the quality of data analysis. While completing these various data analysis steps by hand was more time consuming and the researcher had several little pieces of paper to manage, the advantage of having quality data analysis outweighed the challenges.

Memos

Memos are a researcher's personal records meant to help the researcher recognize biases, personal reactions, and influences on the study (Smith et al., 1999; Miller, 2018). The researcher used the memo function of the MAXQDA data software system to complete the memo process. Following Smith et al.'s (1999) recommendation about areas to include in memos the researcher described her thoughts, feelings and reactions related to the participants and/or phenomenon. Second, the researcher reflected on the study's research questions, emerging themes, and patterns that lead to an emerging theory. Third, the researcher noted connections she perceived between the participants' stories and the literature review. The researcher will reflect on what she learned from the process of creating memos in the reflexivity section of Chapter V.

Data Storage

Data collected from the online demographic survey were initially stored on the online WMU Secure Survey system. The researcher downloaded copies of the demographic survey and the digital-audio recordings to an encrypted file on the researcher's password protected personal computer. Once the demographic surveys were downloaded, the surveys were deleted from the WMU Secure Survey system. Audio recording for both interviews were saved as an audio media file in an encrypted folder on the researcher's personal, password-protected computer. Transcripts that were completed by the *TranscribeMe!*[®] Inc. program were saved to an encrypted folder on the researcher's personal password protected computer and uploaded into MAXQDA.

All files on MAXQDA were saved to an encrypted folder on the researcher's password protected personal computer.

Data analysis was completed using a combination of MAXQDA software (for coding) and hand sorting methods of analysis, which was then documented in a Microsoft Excel workbook. The researcher's field notes, audit logs, transcripts, and data analysis documents were emailed from the student researcher to the Principal Investigator using the WMU email server as needed. All data shared with the Principal Investigator were de-identified (e.g., transcripts with pseudonyms). The Principal Investigator saved all data she received onto a password protected computer in their locked office.

After the researcher was finished reporting the data gathered, she retained printed copies of the demographic surveys and will keep them in a locked filing cabinet in her office until all reporting of the data is completed (for at least a minimum of three years). The digital-audio files were deleted after they were transcribed. The Principal Investigator will retain all data until dissemination of data is completed (for at least a minimum of three years) and then it will be destroyed.

Data Analysis and Synthesis

This researcher used the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) method as outlined by Smith et al. (1999) and elaborated on by Finlay (2011), Larkin et al. (2006), and Miller (2018). Because of the in-depth focus on each participant's contextual experiences of the phenomenon, IPA data analysis is broken into two parts. First, the researcher completes a single-case analysis to identify themes for each case. Then, the researcher does a cross-case analysis looking for converging and diverging themes. The end result is superordinate themes that both describe participants' experiences and provide the researcher's interpretation of participants'

stories. The following section will describe the procedures the researcher of the current study used to complete data analysis.

Data Analysis Procedures

After the transcripts were deemed to be accurate by the researcher, she read each transcript, without writing any memos, in order to familiarize herself with the participants' stories. Next, the researcher used MAXQDA to write memos throughout the transcripts commenting on her initial reactions, identifying connections to literature or other participants' stories, and noting preliminary interpretations. Third, the researcher read each transcript one-by-one and identified phrases or statements, called coded statements, that captured the meaning or essence of the participants' narrative. Specifically, the researcher labeled participants' descriptions of (a) physical and emotional experiences, (b) cultural references, (c) expressions of conflicts and desires, (d) unique social interactions, or (d) reported values. Using the MAXQDA coding function, the researcher labeled the coded segment using key words of the statement, which are called codes.

After coding each of the 10 participants' transcripts one-by-one, the researcher began the fourth task, connecting emerging themes, which is the process of looking for connections between codes. Using MAXQDA, the researcher downloaded a summary of the coded statements, codes, and the page number of the transcript associated with the original text to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. The summary document was printed and each line was cut into individual strips of paper (e.g., the researcher could see the code, coded segment, participant's pseudonym, and number of transcript). Next, the researcher sorted the strips of paper into piles based on the participant. Reviewing each participant pile one-by-one, the researcher then read through each code and grouped common codes together to identify themes that described each

participant's story. The researcher then identified the participants' theme in a column of the excel document that contained the codes and coded segments.

The goal of the fifth step was to identify patterns, connections, and tensions across participants' stories. The researcher took each of the participants' themes and sorted them into piles that answered the interview questions so that all ten participants' responses for each question could be analyzed. Within each of these piles, the researcher grouped common themes from each participants' story to determine the subordinate themes of the participants' experiences with the phenomenon. The subordinate themes were then grouped together again to create superordinate themes, which are the overarching themes that describe the researchers' interpretation of participants' experiences with the phenomenon. Because the goal of IPA research is to speak to similarities and differences among participants' stories (Smith et al. 1999; Miller et al., 2018), the researcher then read each of the participants' transcripts again looking for any discrepant codes, or meaningful statements that were incongruent with the themes found in the previous step, as suggested by Smith et al. (1999). Inconsistent codes were analyzed and moved to a more fitting theme. In total, there were 9 themes found that answered the research questions; these will be described in Chapter IV.

The final step in the data analysis process was for the researcher to make interpretations of the themes found. This researcher did so by considering the abstract relationship between themes, as suggested by Smith et al. (1999), by tying themes back to pre-existing theories and literature, as suggested by Finlay (2011). In this step, the researcher created a narrative account of the researcher's understanding of all 10 participants' collective experiences with the phenomenon, which will be described in Chapter V.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness, rigor, and credibility are all interchangeable terms used to evaluate qualitative research. Trustworthiness can be evaluated on the following four categories: social validity, adequacy of data, adequacy of interpretation, and subjectivity and reflexivity (Morrow, 2005). Social validity refers to the extent the research is of value to other researchers, consumers of the research (i.e., clinicians), and the public (Heppner et al., 2016; Morrow, 2005). It is this researcher's hope that this research will be of value to those involved with the training of future counseling psychologists by providing meaningful insight on what aspects of and how religion and spirituality should be integrated into training programs; including information on any successes and struggles with integration. It is possible that the information gathered by this researcher will add value to counseling psychology training programs, and thereby clients, through increased culturally sensitive curricula.

In IPA, the quality of data and quality of interpretation are measured by how closely the research "adhere[s] to the three theoretical principles of phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography" (Miller et al., 2018, p. 248). Miller also notes that good quality IPA research is dependent on having a researcher who is skilled in developing relationships with participants as well as eliciting depth within the participants' stories. In this current study the researcher attempted to obtain adequate data by following the sampling and recruitment methods described above. After completing the first interview, the researcher also processed her questions about the interview process with the Principal Investigator of this research.

The quality of interpretation refers to the extent the researcher balances an authentic interpretation based on a rich description of the data (Heppner et al., 2016; Miller et al., 2018). One way that a researcher establishes a quality interpretation is by becoming immersed in the

data (Morrow, 2005). In this study, the researcher immersed herself in the data first through reading the transcripts and then writing a memo about them. Second, the researcher also wrote memos throughout the data collection and analysis processes to articulate hunches, interpretations, reactions, and thoughts.

Quality of interpretation is reflected in the researcher's ability to (b) be transparent in their decision making process throughout the analysis, (b) focus on detail when presenting data in order to enhance credibility, and (c) use participants' quotes to show balanced perspectives of both similarities and differences among participants' stories (Miller et al., 2018). In the current study, this researcher established and followed a well-defined strategy for data analysis that included elements to obtain a quality study. For example, the researcher used an audit log to note her decision making process. Another way the researcher attempted to perform quality IPA research occurred when the researcher was attentive to the task of balancing her interpretations with supporting quotes from the participants when writing the results in Chapter IV and discussing this study in Chapter V.

In a phenomenological study, subjectivity and reflexivity are two ways to address trustworthiness by expressing transparency of the researcher's influence on the development of research questions, co-creation of data through the interview process, and meaning making during the interpretation of data (Miller et al., 2018). IPA researchers are aware that the context, specifically, the researcher's history, attributes, values, and biases, will influence the research process (Heppner et al., 2016; Larkin et al., 2006; Miller et al., 2018). As such, a crucial component to the qualitative research process is that the researcher explicitly and intentionally positions herself by examining thoughts, feelings, and biases regarding the phenomenon of interest and the research process (Creswell, 2013; Heppner et al., 2016; Morrow, 2005). The

purpose of positioning is to provide the consumer of the research insight into how a researcher's worldview has informed the process of data collection, the interpretation of the meaning, and the overall understanding of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013; Miller et al., 2018).

In the following section, this researcher will take this opportunity to describe her experience with the phenomenon, and position herself through a practice of researcher reflexivity, to bracket her thoughts, feelings, observations, and biases regarding the phenomenon. The researcher will conclude by describing her approach to subjectivity, also known as her attempts to reduce the influence she held on the data collection and interpretation processes. Please note that because the researcher is speaking of her own experiences with the phenomenon, this section was written using first person language.

My Experience with the Phenomenon

My experience with the phenomenon of integrating religious and spiritual topics into graduate training is through the lens of a graduate trainee. During my master's-level training in a Marriage and Family Therapy program, I had some exposure to religion and spirituality in my couples and family related coursework, particularly when discussing topics of grief or cross-cultural family dynamics. For example, in my couple's therapy course, we discussed pre-marital inventories, many of which were developed through religious programs or used language specific to a religious belief system (i.e., Catholic). In my experience, religious and spiritual topics were not very integrated into my core classes, such as psychopathology, counseling theories, or multiculturalism, which included students in both counseling psychology and counselor education programs. I found that most conversations about religion and spirituality were limited to a predominately Christian perspective and came from professors who spoke of their own Catholic and Lutheran religious cultures. In general, my experience was that religion

and spirituality were not talked about in the same ways as other cultural topics, such as race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status. Moreover, I gained little knowledge or skills in applying religious and spiritual topics in clinical practice, or on ways religion and spirituality are cultural factors from non-Christian perspectives. However, because religion is important to me, I tend to reflect on my experiences as a religious person to describe my salient identity when able, such as when I was writing a self-reflective paper.

As a doctoral trainee, I observed that religious and spiritual topics were rarely formally integrated into graduate curricula (e.g., in the syllabi). I can recall few occasions when topics of R/S entered my doctoral training. In general, topics of R/S were revealed through student initiated dialogue (e.g., I did a presentation about a life-span spirituality development model) or as part of a client's story in clinical practice. One professor included topics of R/S in a classroom discussion of an ethical dilemma. I reflected on several of these training experiences and found that, in general, tension arose amongst students when discussing topics of religion, that discussions of religion seemed to be geared towards the negative (e.g., that religion is oppressive), and that the religious and/or spiritual experiences of the faculty member teaching the class tended to direct the appropriateness of the discussion. For example, a professor who identified as spiritual often talked about their spiritual practice and the discussions of spirituality seemed to be encouraged in the classroom. Another professor spoke explicitly about the oppressive nature of religion, which created a classroom environment that made it uncomfortable for me personally to advocate for religious faith systems. In speaking with some of my religious peers on this topic, I found that several identified with my experience. One of my racially diverse peers found it was more comfortable and appropriate to talk to faculty individually and outside of the classroom about topics of R/S.

Because of my personal, Christian religious affiliations and my professional interest in religion and spirituality as cultural factors, I elected to take a course (offered in a department other than my own) on the integration of religion and spirituality in clinical practice during my training as a counseling psychology doctoral student. This course increased my awareness of my R/S biases through activities such as writing a spiritual journey paper reflecting on my religious and spiritual values. Through this course, I also gained knowledge of a variety of topics related to religion and spirituality as cultural factors. One important learning was the controversy in the social science professions about defining religion. Finally, I learned skills in addressing topics of R/S in clinical treatment, such as how to complete multiple kinds of assessments to understand the significance of topics of R/S in the lives of clients. Through my personal belief systems and increased knowledge of R/S subjects, it has come to my attention how minimally my peers (who have not taken a specific R/S course as an elective) have had exposure to this material.

Researcher Reflexivity

Researcher reflexivity addresses the researcher's self-awareness by explaining key biases and highlighting how a researcher will modify their behavior based on their self-awareness (Morrow, 2005; Yeh & Inman, 2007). I identify as a White/European American, straight, Christian, able-bodied, cis-gender female. My training as a doctoral student encouraged me to reflect on my cultural worldviews. While not all clients are religious or spiritual, I strongly advocate for psychologists to be able to address topics of R/S as a cultural worldview, potential coping tool, or source of distress. I firmly believe that religion and spirituality can play an integral role in the lives of some clients, whether that be a positive or negative influence. As I reflect on historical and current religious intolerance that plagues our nation (such as the discrimination and violence towards individuals who are Muslim or Sikh, as mentioned in my

literature review), I affirm that psychologists need training to be able to research, treat, and advocate for religious and spiritual cultural groups, as counseling psychology does for other cultural areas.

My Approach to Subjectivity

I hold a strong bias that topics of R/S should be integrated into the training of future counseling psychologists, which influences my interest in studying this topic. It could also have impacted questions I posed to participants and the lens through which I interpreted the data. I took several preliminary steps to refine my proposed study in ways that would reduce my influence. An important way I attempted to reduce the influence of my biases was to use pre-scripted communication and an interview guide to facilitate dialogue with participants. Another way I was thoughtful of my influence occurred during interviews. I was careful to only ask follow-up questions that prompted participants to elaborate on what they had already said rather than prompting a new response.

As a co-creator of meaning, practicing reflexivity is also a way to manage subjectivity throughout the data collection and analysis processes. As a general method to reflexivity, I bracketed my thoughts, feelings, and opinions through writing field notes, an audit trail, and memos about my experiences each time I collected or analyzed data. I also shared my experience as a researcher with the Principal Investigator and incorporated any feedback into my behavior as a researcher.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I elaborated on the qualitative research methodology I used for the phenomenological inquiry into the experiences of faculty members at APA-accredited counseling psychology training programs regarding their attempts to integrate topics of religion

and spirituality into counseling psychology doctoral training. First I discussed the selection of method of inquiry and the philosophical assumptions of the research paradigm. I also included an outline of the procedures for sampling methods, participant recruitment, data collection, and data analysis. The researcher also completed reflexivity to reduce subjectivity and increase trustworthiness. In the next chapter, the researcher will summarize the findings of this study, examining the stories of faculty members at APA-accredited counseling psychology training programs who have attempted to integrate topics of religion and spirituality into counseling psychology doctoral training.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

In this chapter, the student researcher (hereinafter also referred to as the researcher) will describe the results of this study. This researcher sought to answer the central question, “What are the experiences of faculty members at APA-accredited counseling psychology training programs regarding their attempts to integrate topics of religion and spirituality into counseling psychology doctoral training.” The sub-questions were as follows:

1. What has influenced the attempts of faculty members at APA-accredited counseling psychology training programs to integrate topics of religion and spirituality into counseling psychology doctoral training?
2. How do the personal and professional attributes and values of faculty members at APA-accredited counseling psychology doctoral training programs influence their attempts to integrate topics of religion and spirituality into counseling psychology doctoral training?

In this chapter, the researcher will present the collective experiences of the 10 faculty members at APA-accredited training programs who shared their experiences with attempting to integrate topics of religion and spirituality into counseling psychology doctoral training. For the purposes of clarity, the themes presented in this chapter will refer to the superordinate themes across cases. The description of the superordinate themes will discuss the similarities and differences between the participants’ stories around the themes. The researcher will use illustrative statements from individual participants to support the themes. Prior to divulging the results of this study, this researcher would like to share a summary of background information about the participants, which may provide context for the data presented.

Participants

Participants provided demographic data through an online survey created by the researcher and all questions, except one about religious identity, were fill in the blank options. The following information will summarize the demographic makeup of participants in this study.

Participants represented the Northeast (n = 2), Midwest (n = 3), South (n = 2), and Northwest (n = 3) regions of the United States. This sample of participants was largely that of individuals who self-identified as either “female” or “woman” (n = 8), with two participants identifying as “male.” Only two participants noted that their gender was cis-gender (female or woman). A majority of participants identified as “White/Caucasian American/European American” racial and/or ethnic groups (n = 6), and two participants identified as both “White/European American” and culturally Jewish. One participant identified as “Asian American,” and three identified as having mixed racial and/or ethnic identities. The combinations of multiracial and ethnic identities included, “African American, Filipino, and White,” African American and European American, and “Asian American and Caucasian.” Eight participants identified as heterosexual, one participant identified as lesbian, and one chose not to disclose their sexual orientation.

The participants were all faculty members teaching in APA-accredited counseling psychology training programs, but not all were counseling psychologists. Participants had all earned either a Ph.D. (n = 9) or Ed.D. (n = 1) in either clinical, counseling, or educational psychology. Their number of years teaching ranged between one and 31 years; therefore, there is a range of potential experiences with the phenomenon of interest. Four participants reported that in addition to their role as a faculty member, they also held administrative or leadership positions in their department (e.g., chair or training director). Five participants reported affiliation with a

secular (or non-religiously affiliated) institution and five participants were at a religiously affiliated, specifically Christian, institution. All participants reported doing some sort of research at some point in their career looking at an aspect of religion and spirituality as a variable, but no participants directly conducted research on religion and spirituality within their psychology graduate training roles.

Recognizing that participants' personal religious and spiritual beliefs, practices, and affiliations might influence their experiences with the phenomenon, this researcher asked participants to identify both their religious and/or spiritual identity, and religious and/or spiritual affiliation. Participants' self-identified religious and/or spiritual identities were as follows: both religious and spiritual (n = 5); spiritual, but not religious (n = 2); sometimes agnostic, sometimes atheist (n = 1); agnostic (n = 1); and not currently practicing (n = 1), which does represent some variation in participants' reported religious identity. Interestingly, all 10 participants reported membership in unique religious affiliations, meaning that there is some diversity with regard to this dimension within this cohort of participants. Of note, some participants reported more than one membership because their religious affiliation had changed over their lifetime. Participants reported religious affiliation with Christian-associated religions, including Assemblies of God, Baptist, Church of the Latter-day Saints, Christian, Episcopalian, Evangelical, Methodist, and Roman Catholic. Non-dominant U.S. religious affiliation included Hindu (n = 1), Jewish (n = 2), and Unitarian Universalist (n = 1). Participants also identified as spiritual but not religious (n = 2), and no current affiliation (n = 2).

As the reader may recall, the researcher sought to include a diverse set of participants in order to obtain an understanding of the phenomenon from different perspectives. While there is some diversity present in this sample, it does primarily represent individuals who hold several

dominate group memberships (White/European American, heterosexual, and cis-gender), which was also expected given the demographic make-up of psychologists, as noted in the APA membership data (Center for Workforce Studies, 2017) presented in Chapter III.

To provide the reader with some individualized context for the participants, this section will provide a brief descriptions of each participant and divulge participants' (a) definitions of religion and spirituality and (b) understanding of the role that religion and spirituality play as cultural factors.

The first participant is a person of color who is cis-gender female. As an early career psychologist this person had a few years of experience working in a clinical setting prior to moving into academia. They had less than one year of teaching experience at a secular institution at the time of this study. This participant was raised within an underrepresented religious family, but does not currently practice this religion. At the time of the study they identified as “spiritual, but not religious.” A key characteristic of this participant was that they expressed a lot of interest in addressing topics of R/S in training, but expressed a lack of confidence to address topics of R/S with their students because they did not have as much training and knowledge on these topics. When defining religion and spirituality this participant said,

So I define religion as something that you are born with, born into. Kind of something that is always been around you, like a set of beliefs ... It's organized religions, [it's] kind of what I think of as being religious. A religious person to me is somebody who goes to their place of worship quite frequently and may or may not believe in the higher power. Spirituality, I think, doesn't necessarily conform to any organized religious belief.

When asked about her beliefs on religion and spirituality as cultural variables in counseling psychology training she said,

I think [the] counseling psychology as a field, I think, is very traditional in the sense that it focuses so much on race, ethnicity, age, gender differences, and I think in the past couple of years, it's started to get better about gender and sexual identity issues.

But I don't think religion or spirituality are things that counseling psychologists are regularly thinking about to be completely honest.

The second participant is White and European American, a woman, and heterosexual.

Like the previous participant, this person was also an early-career psychologist who was a first-time educator at a secular institution at the time of this study. This participant seemed to be less confident in their role as an educator, but was knowledgeable about topics of R/S because of their background as a religious person. This individual described a shift in their religious beliefs and attitudes and identified as being agnostic at the time of this study. However, this participant often referenced how their personal experiences with religion had influenced their attempts at integrating R/S in training. This person's definitions of religion and spirituality were as follows:

I see religion as institutionalized, as a community of people ... [Pargament et al., 2013b] talk about the differences between religion and spirituality and that really resonated with me that spirituality is this sort of search for the sacred, unlike religion, it's sort of more vague and can look a lot of different ways. And religion is sort of more defined. Another analogy that I really like is that spirituality is the water and religion is the cup ... That's how I think about those two things being different. I think that people can be religious, and be part of a religious community, and abide by the rules and the behaviors, but not really experience any connection with the supernatural, or God, or a deity. But, [religious people] can also [have] a spiritual experience that's sort of supernatural. I am using that word [supernatural as a] connection with something greater, without being connected to a community. You can have both [religion and spirituality].

Regarding their thoughts on religion and spirituality as cultural factors, this person said,

It's obviously very complex. I think [that] because religion is often so community oriented, and often people grow up in a religion, and it's so much of their social life, and their connection to other people, then, I mean, that clearly will become a lens that they see the world with. And so in counseling, we talk about cultural factors like, you know, ethnicity, and gender, and sexual orientation. Just like any of those other factors, I think religion impacts the way that people see the world. And although it's more like an invisible identity, it can also impact the way that the world sees you.

The third participant is multiracial, female, and lesbian. She identified as being both religious and spiritual with a Christian religious affiliation. This participant had over 25 years of teaching experience with the last four years being with their current secular institution. This

participant had done research with R/S as a form of coping showing a vested interest in topics of R/S. When describing their thoughts on religion and spirituality, this individual said, “When I say religion and spirituality I [am] more thinking about organized religion. Spirituality is [that] there is some kind of spirituality connection.” This participant shared more of their thoughts on the roles that religion and spirituality play as a cultural factor within the United States of America when they stated,

I think that for better or worse in the U.S., I think [religion as a cultural factor] looms large ... To me it feels like we are not very many generations away from youth really disregarding religion all together, because they think there is so much hypocrisy about it. I think the sex scandals in the Catholic Church have done a lot of damage. I think, that Fundamental Evangelicals who were big Trump supporters have, again, it’s a hypocrisy. I think it’s important, but we aren’t hearing from a lot of different voices and I think that the hypocrisy is a little hard to ignore.

The fourth participant is Caucasian, male, heterosexual, religious and spiritual, and Christian. This person showed confidence in his role as an educator at a secular institution noting that he was not worried about being negatively evaluated by his students or admonished by any members of his department if they brought up topics of R/S in their courses. Religion and spirituality were very important to this person and it was important for this participant to be able to have conversations with his students about topics of R/S. When defining religion and spirituality, this participant said,

I think, to me, when I hear the word religion, I think of it more, the more formal, I belong to the Catholic church, or ... I'm from [a] Muslim [religious background], or whatever. I think of it how I identify myself. In terms of spirituality, I see that more as a global part of the human psyche, who we are. I think there's the idea of, because I'm coming from a [Christian] background, I believe that we are created with this spiritual aspect in us.

When describing his thoughts on religion and spirituality as a cultural factor, he spoke with passion saying,

Culture and religion, I think, they are intertwined. I don't think we [can] separate them out. And so, if culture is an expression of myself, then part of my culture is my faith...In the U.S. we try to separate them out, but I don't know if we can. (secular institution)

The fifth participant is a White and “culturally Jewish,” heterosexual, woman, who identified as “sometimes agnostic, sometimes atheist.” Like many other study participants, this person had over 20 years of teaching experience at a secular institution. This person noted that she had supported several students who had written dissertations on various topics of R/S, which helped her to have a baseline knowledge of some topics, like the definitions of religion and spirituality. She defined religion and spirituality as follows:

I see religion as a more formalized, organized system of belief. Usually it involves something bigger than yourself that could be an organizing principle in the world. That might be a God or Gods, plural. Or it could be, if you're a Pantheist, it's this conceptualization of nature which is not really, in my mind, the same thing as a God or Gods or Goddesses, but is some sort of broader organizing principle that's beyond who we are as humans in our individual worlds and the social structures that we create. Although, I certainly think there are socially constructed aspects of religion.

To elaborate on their view of R/S as cultural variables within the United States of America, this person said,

I don't want to overgeneralize about any particular group of folks, and there's so much variation [to the role religion and spirituality play as cultural factors]. Even among people of faith in a particular faith tradition, there's huge variation. And so I don't want to overgeneralize about that, but I do consider religion and spirituality to be, again, sort of wherever you identify there, a person of faith or of no faith. It's hard to be a person of no faith in a country that's largely faith-based. It's hard to be a person who's non-Christian in a country that's predominantly Christian. So I think [religion and spirituality are] really important cultural factors.

The sixth participant self-identified as Caucasian, female, and heterosexual. Her religious identity is “both religious and spiritual” with a Christian religious affiliation. This person had experience working for five years at a secular institution prior to working at their current religiously affiliated institution. This individual valued the opportunity to work at an institution

that supported efforts to train students around topics of R/S. She defined religion and spirituality as follows:

I think for religion, I would talk more about this specific group that defines these spiritual beliefs and practices that people hold about a God or deity. Whereas spirituality, I see more as ... the daily living practices, that people engage in to feel connected to something greater, and derive meaning from.

This person's thoughts on religion and spirituality as dimensions of cultural factors speaks to the importance of R/S for this participant. She said,

I think personally, having a religion has been a very important part of my development, as a human, as a psychologist ... So I think, culturally, it matters because I think different religions cannot only shape our individual human behavior but they shape our systemic values and behavior.

The seventh participant is a Caucasian, heterosexual male, who is "both religious and spiritual" and Christian. Like the last participant, this individual chose to work at a religiously affiliated institution in order to be able to freely integrate his personal values of being a spiritual person into his professional work. Like other participants, this person had been working in clinical capacities prior to entering into the role of a faculty member; however, this participant had over 20 years of teaching experience at their current institution. His definitions of religion and spirituality were as follows:

The definition I use is "spirituality is the consciousness of victory over self and of communion with the infinite" ... So spirituality does not necessarily have to be tied to religion, and religion is not always spiritual, but they can be integrated. So what religion can do is, it can provide ritual and ordinances that go beyond just an individual's own self-discipline and then own communion with the infinite. That there are important rituals or ordinances is the term I usually use that are conducted by a religious group. Religion also helps provide more of a community for communal worship, communal processes that it does not actually demand. And then you can follow my definition of spirituality without being attached to a community and without ordinances per se. But I think those things do help the ordinances and the communal process especially if a religion makes a claim of authority.

When asked what role this participant believes that religion and spirituality play as cultural factors, he said,

I think the literature on people's religiosity and spirituality is pretty robust. That most of the people who come to us for psychotherapy have some religious flavor, and completely religion from being a legitimate topic in therapy does some damage to folks. It's like saying, "Well, yeah. You're a sexual being we can't ever talk about sexuality. Yeah, you're a religious, spiritual being but we can't ever talk about that." It does not allow the whole a person emerge in therapy ... Folks will come and say, "My religious understanding or conception is an important part of who I am." And it's not always healthy. Right? But that needs to be on the table to say, "Well, how is this working for you? What's the healthy part?" or "What's the unhealthy part?" ... And then when you look at the beautiful diversity, how they experience and conceive the infinite and their experience with the infinite as a multicultural facet, man, that's one of the most beautiful things going.

The eighth participant is a biracial, heterosexual, "cisgender woman," who is "spiritual but not religious." This participant had over five years of teaching experience with some of that working at a secular institution and the last four years of teaching at her current religiously affiliated location. This participant expressed some level of discomfort about her attempts because she did not feel as well-versed in areas of religion and spirituality as they did in other areas of diversity. However, this person showed interest and investment in integrating topics of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training, which was apparent when, during the interview, she used past syllabi as references of her efforts of R/S integration across multiple courses and years. Though this person did not provide an outright definition of religion and spirituality, the reader can get a sense of this participants' understanding of religion when they described R/S as cultural factors. She said,

I guess [religion is] a culture in and of itself. If you think of Christian youth groups, there's a culture around that. So I see it as a cultural group, depending on your religious identity and it gets intersected in these other identities that we hold in very interesting ways. And then the other piece about it, just around privilege and oppression and positionality. So, how there is a social hierarchy around religion that gets played out and impacts people's experiences and access and rights, or lack thereof, that I think are important to name, that are part of people's experience. So I think a part of someone's

identity, that it intersects with other identities in important ways so they can be their own culture and that they're connected to access to power.

The ninth participant is White and European American, female, and heterosexual. This participant stated that she is “respectful of religion but not actively practicing except holidays.” They reported their religious affiliations to include both Christian and Jewish backgrounds but currently affiliated with a different Christian religion than the one in which they were raised. This person had over 20 years of experience teaching and has conducted research in which religion and spirituality was one variable studied. She is currently working at a religiously affiliated institution. She defined religion and spirituality as follows:

To me, religion is about the rules ... it's very structured. There are organizations and whether they are the Christian religion, with a central office, or Judaism, where their structure would be within an individual congregation, a religion is something that a lot of people share in common, and have rules and structure. Whereas I think spirituality is more of something that can happen between an individual and however they conceptualize any higher power or the universe, or whatever they want to connect with. Different cultures would [conceptualize a higher power] differently.

A unique characteristic of this participant's story was how considerate they were toward respecting and honoring various religious cultural components during departmental activities (e.g., considering the influence of religious holidays on meals hosted by the department). This individual shared a thoughtful response to how religion and spirituality can be a dimension of cultural identity for someone. They said,

Religion defines rituals, beliefs, [and] attitudes towards where you should go for help, so attitude towards help seeking. Food, there are certain laws about dietary laws that almost all religions have, at least certain times of the year. So those are all cultural factors. Sometimes even language, right, if you're going to be Bar or Bat Mitzvahed you have to learn Hebrew; that's a cultural factor.

The tenth and final participant is a multiracial, heterosexual female. She identified as both “religious and spiritual” with a Christian religious affiliation. This participant had previously worked as a researcher and clinician and had less than five years of teaching

experience, all at her current religiously affiliated institution. This person showed enthusiasm to participate in this research and was so invested in learning more about how to best make attempts at integrating topics of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training that they hoped to receive a copy of the results when this dissertation was finished. This person often noted that her personal religious beliefs and identities guided her attempts. When defining religion and spirituality she said,

I think that some people use them [both terms] synonymously. I have even seen researchers use those terms synonymously. When I think of the constructs, and [this is] probably just my own upbringing, I do think of them as being related but having a different focus. Spirituality just for myself. I think of it as a relationship with a Higher Being. Whereas with religion, I think of it as more based within a denomination or the social institution of practicing my faith, so my church and the denomination, and all of the doctrines that goes along with it. I see it more as part of the church and the practice of the faith ...

This participant also shared their thoughts on R/S as cultural factors when they said,

I think [religion and spirituality are cultural factors] to the extent that someone incorporates that aspect of beliefs into their thinking ... I think [R/S] is really critical because it guides, it helps frame people's thinking. It helps frame their goals and their aspirations and their journey. And so I think that people differ in how much those factors might play in their own life. We can't know that, we can't know that up front. And so I think it's critical as a psychologist that we don't overlook that and that we explore that with our clients so that we can understand the extent to which it plays a role.

The following section will describe the results of this study on the experiences of faculty members at APA-accredited counseling psychology training programs who have attempted to integrate topics of religion and spirituality into counseling psychology doctoral training. The demographic make-up of participants is important to consider as the cultural, personal, and environmental contexts of each participant is likely to influence their attempts. Therefore, when sharing participants' responses in the following results, the writer will provide relevant reminders of cultural contexts of participants that might provide insight into their responses. It is important to note that while participants were asked to create their own pseudonyms during the

initial interview, this researcher has chosen to further protect participants' identities by removing all names and using gender neutral pronouns (e.g., they) throughout the rest of this document. This decision was made after careful consideration of the sensitive stories participants were sharing given that the field of counseling psychology faculty members is small.

Theme: Managing the Multiple Layers of Complexity

When describing their attempts to integrate topics of religion and spirituality into counseling psychology doctoral training, participants spoke about a variety of complex, and often competing, layers they were navigating. One layer of complexity was that participants felt a lack of clarity around where and how to make attempts, leaving participants to decide what attempts should entail. Participants also felt varying levels of support for their efforts, which contributed to pressure and tension that they felt when making attempts. Adding to the complexity was the influence of having various constituents that participants were serving in their attempts. Included among these were professional organizations, institutions, departments, programs, and students, as well as the participants themselves. The complexity of holding all of these multiple layers resulted in many participants feeling as though making attempts with the phenomenon of this study was risky and participants had to be thoughtful in their efforts.

Lack of Clarity Around Making Attempts

One layer of complexity that participants contended with was a lack of clarity around what it means to integrate topics of religion and spirituality into counseling psychology doctoral training. Many participants, even those at religiously affiliated institutions, felt that there were minimal guidelines from their department about how and where to make attempts. Even at times when there was a definitive stance that topics of R/S are important to include, participants were left with uncertainty as to the best methods for making attempts, adding to the complexity they

faced. The following examples will further explore the lack of clarity around guidelines for integrating topics of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training that resulted in some challenges for the participants.

Three participants, including one at a religiously affiliated institution, expressed that their department or training program did not explicitly encourage them to make attempts. For these participants, it seems like the lack of a definitive statement on the integration of R/S into training felt like a “neutral” stance, meaning there was no emphasis or support by the department or training program nor any pushback against integrating R/S topics into the training. The participants said,

I guess, I'm just thinking about APA guidelines, and when we're writing about our program and we develop our program of study and then we submit that, I don't think that there's anything specifically addressed in there to say we will take a spiritual approach or doesn't inform what we do. I think we're pretty neutral on that...But [the integration of topics of R/S is] not frowned upon [within the department or training program]. Certainly I've not been criticized at all by faculty about that, and some of our faculty [has] had conversations about how we do think about worldviews and our approaches, and some are indifferent to [religion and spirituality]. But again there's no animosity whatsoever, but again, there's not push for it either. (secular institution)

I would say [the department's or program's views are] very neutral. There's not much thought about it at all ... what I mean by neutral is that before [R/S] was integrated into that one session of that one class that I was teaching in the fall, it was never talked about at all. (secular institution)

I don't think we [as a department or training program] talk about [integrating topics of R/S in counseling psychology doctoral training] much. I could be wrong. I think we have a respect for religious diversity, and we try to look for that. I don't know that we're recruiting for [religious diversity], but we certainly honor it when it shows up and try to make space for it in our conversations or discussions with students in the class. (religiously affiliated institution)

It is important to note that participants who experienced their department and/or training program as having a neutral stance on the integration of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training, were not dissuaded from integrating those topics but also did not necessarily feel

supported or encouraged to do so either. In reading these three participants' comments it seems as though participants were less supported in their efforts than participants in the next examples who had a clear understanding that topics of R/S were important to include in training.

Almost half of the participants (two at religiously affiliated and two at secular institutions) felt that members within their training program acknowledged religion and spirituality as dimensions of cultural identity that should be included in training, but that there is more their training programs could be doing to integrate topics of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training. Here are two examples of what participants said.

So we have a department and it has several different program areas, and counseling psychology just happens to be one program area. Do I think the whole department is aware of the importance of religion and spirituality? No. But I think the counseling psychology program faculty are, and we're trying to think of ways to incorporate religion and spirituality issues into training ... Like most of the counseling psychology programs, we emphasize a multicultural perspective, diversity perspective. And I think we, as a program, are slowly coming to realize that religion and spirituality are parts of diversity, are parts of multicultural issues. So, I think just an awareness of that helped in our program level. It's been one of our priorities that we've just tried to implement under that big diversity umbrella or a big multiculturalism umbrella. And we just know it's an aspect that we should be incorporating. (secular institution)

So I think within the core faculty in counseling psychology, there's a lot of consensus about the importance of including religion/spirituality in training. And we're the folks that are doing most of the clinical courses. But, I think our students do sort of run up against a range of attitudes within the department. There hasn't been anything systematic in terms of sort of department-wide training or conversations around how to approach those issues ... There's clearly a lot more we could be thinking about. And so, I oftentimes will get sort of some kind of sense of where we are at in counseling psychology by seeing what other people are doing. And trying to think about, are we picking up on this or are we not? Or what aspects of, specifically to spirituality and religion, what are people talking about that we haven't thought about yet. And, I mean, we can't do everything. So, there's some things I run across that I'm like, "That really is out of our area. It's a whole other discipline to learn about." But there's also often good ideas there about other things that we could be thinking about. (secular institution)

These comments convey the participants' sense of hope that their training programs could move out of awareness that topics of R/S are important and more toward specifying what integrating topics of R/S means in a systematic way.

Participants' awareness that members of their larger multi-disciplinary departments held unsupportive attitudes towards integrating topics of R/S just added to the difficulty of the task. While this tension among colleagues will be further described in the *Moving Through the Tension* theme, a layer of the complexity that participants held was a sense of responsibility to advocate for and defend their own attempts to others within their academic department, leading to a sense that their attempts were risky. Participants who felt unsupported by others also felt alone in their efforts to train students around topics of R/S, which left participants feeling pressure to make their attempts meaningful for their students.

Another area represented by the participants as having a lack of clarity and thus adding to the complexity of integrating religion and spirituality is their choice of area: religion, spirituality, or both religion and spirituality. In fact, there was a mixture of the terms that participants used in their attempts. Some participants primarily taught about religion, some specifically taught about spirituality, and others used both terms. Participants' decisions on what term(s) were used was based on contextual factors like the institutional mission (at a religiously affiliated institution) or the religious make-up of the city in which the institution is located, with the assumption that students should know about the cultural identities that make up the clients they will someday serve. What is interesting is that while several participants explicitly stated that they would teach about either religion or spirituality as separate constructs, their examples reveal that they often talked about both. The next several examples will describe the terms that participants used in their attempts.

A participant at a religiously affiliated institution explained that the city where they taught is a diverse community that holds various religious beliefs and their training program felt that, “To be multiculturally competent, [our students] need to understand about different religions I think we are focused, really, on religion more than spirituality.” They further elaborated when they shared,

[As a training program] we don't specifically separate out spirituality. I think spirituality comes up in many forms of training because of the concept of mindfulness. For example, it's all the rage these days and so when you're learning psychotherapy [mindfulness] has to be part of it, or often is part of it. But spirituality can come up in discussions of religion, but I think we're really, as part of a religious institution, I think that I had another faculty member really spearheading the idea that respect for religion is something that we should try to foster in our students.

While this participant's emphasis is on attempting to integrate discussions around religion into their counseling psychology doctoral training, spirituality can be a part of those discussions at times. A different participant at a secular institution shared similar thoughts when they said, “When I say religion and spirituality, I [am] more thinking about organized religion.” Even though this second individual primarily focused on topics of religion within their attempts, they felt that spirituality is often discussed in their coursework through discussion on mindfulness practices.

In opposition of the last two examples, a participant at a secular institution, noted that they are specifically talking about spirituality in their classes when they ask their students to consider their worldview, including a spiritual context. They stated,

We address it and [the students and I] talk about spirituality directly. I'll say, “What do you think about spirituality? Are we spiritual beings? What does that mean? If you take an evolutionary perspective, how do you think about spirituality from that point of view? How does it arise? If you take it from an intelligent design perspective or Judeo-Christian, or Islamic, or Hindu perspective, how does spirituality arise within us? And what's its importance?”

This participant indicated that their attempts include spirituality, yet in their example they also named several religious denominations. The inclusion of both religion and spirituality within several of these examples suggests that the attempts were not purely about either religion or spirituality, but included some aspects of both religion and spirituality.

Two other participants, both at religiously affiliated institutions, described ways that they have settled on the integration of both religion and spirituality into counseling psychology doctoral training. One such participant who is evaluated by their institution regarding their ability to be “spirituality strengthening,” gave an example of how they described the relationship between spirituality and religion to their students:

The definition I use in [my classes] is that spirituality is the consciousness of victory over self and of communion with the infinite ... Spirituality does not necessarily have to be tied to religion, and religion is not always spiritual, but they can be integrated.
(religiously affiliated institution)

This participant noted that after defining religion and spirituality for their students, they initiate a discussion to see how the students experience their own communion with the infinite.

In a second example of the impact of the institution on use of terminology, a participant described that their department does curriculum audits in an attempt to ensure that faculty members are equally emphasizing the integration of both religion and spirituality, among other topics of diversity. They said,

I'm pretty sure everybody does use both words, religion and spirituality, and does probably [give] some kind of definition like I gave where [the faculty members are] clarifying religious affiliation versus spiritual practices. I think that that opens up the doorway. I know that in the beginning the syllabi for certain classes actually had the word Christian viewpoint in those assignments that incorporated religion and spirituality. And I think [faculty members of the department have] actually gotten rid of that language to emphasize any religion and any spirituality.

Across many of these examples, the terms used in participants' attempts was influenced by the institution they worked at, particularly true for individuals who worked at religiously

affiliated institutions. Interestingly, one would think that the participants who worked for a Christian institution would emphasize a religious perspective in training. However, two participants at Christian institutions reported their institution encouraged a general focus on spirituality and religion. As one such participant noted, the openness to religion and spirituality was meant to provide training that was inclusive to a variety of religious and spiritual belief systems.

Even though participants did not always know how attempts should be made and what should be included, participants understood that they had a professional duty, and personal desire, to train their students to be prepared to address topics of R/S. In fact, participants named several constitutions that they were serving in their efforts. Participants were attempting to meet the multicultural guidelines of the American Psychological Association, the social justice values of counseling psychologists, their institution's training requirements, and the needs of the students. At times, some the needs of these stakeholders felt that they were in competition with one another. Beyond meeting the needs of others, participants had their own thoughts and feelings towards their attempts, which added to the complexity of their efforts. The following section will describe one of these layers of complexity, which refers to participants' need to meet professional mandates to train students to provide multiculturally sensitive and social justice oriented care to their future clients.

Meeting Professional Mandates

While there are not specific guidelines (e.g., competency guidelines on religion and spirituality in clinical practice) to integrate topics of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training, participants felt a professional mandate from the American Psychological Association (APA) to train students to be respectful towards religion and spirituality as dimensions of

cultural identity that can be important to many people (e.g., clients). While the specific “APA guidelines” being referenced were not identified by name by the participants, there are two potential sources: the Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (APA, 2017a) and the Multicultural Guidelines: An Ecological Approach to Context, Identity, and Intersectionality (APA, 2017b). Participants also described their strong desires to aid their students in developing values of counseling psychologists as social justice advocates. These professional mandates hold as two stakeholders that participants are attending to during their attempts: professional standards and values and their students’ future clients.

In total, six participants commented on the professional mandate to train their students to provide multiculturally sensitive care around topics of R/S as relevant to future clients.

Participants also wanted to aid students to be willing to advocate for themselves and others with religious and spiritual needs. Here are some examples of what was said:

I think one of [the professional influences] is a recognition by APA and the guidelines about being culturally competent and recognizing diversity factors. Because religion and spirituality are part of that, I feel that that's a professional mandate to address and to train my students well in. (religiously affiliated institution)

So especially if we're thinking about APA, or thinking about mental health and wellbeing, I think it's important that clinicians understand the power of faith and also be able to talk with some comfort about it in counseling sessions. (secular institution)

I see integrating spirituality and religion in the classroom as a social justice advocacy piece, which [social justice] is a huge part of our program ... We want students to see religion and spirituality as another demographic feature that people need support in and need to explore that part of their identity in a safe space ... We want to train counseling psychologists to be comfortable hearing different perspectives. And being exposed to enough perspectives that they are not shocked by anything. But that also they see their role as social justice advocates who can advocate for themselves. But they can also advocate for their client. (religiously affiliated institution)

I think the biggest [professional factors that influenced my attempts] I can think of is really ... and I struggled with this, how to hold a student's or anyone's religious autonomy, respect the religious beliefs, when they might confront the rights and humanity of other groups. So, how do you help a student navigate being an ethical, culturally competent

professional and providing services to someone particularly around LGBT or reproductive rights, are the biggest things I can think of, when your religious beliefs disagree with that? How do you still hold those two at the same time? ... So I think for me, it's been trying to help students have some clarity around their own identities and then also not to hold true to doing no harm. And so how do we help them better have nuance, even if you don't agree with someone, what is affirmative, healthy, helpful counseling? (religiously affiliated institution).

When reflecting on professional influences that affected their attempts, a participant at a secular institution said, “Obviously, the professional ethical standards have an impact there. But I think more than coming from APA, I think being a part of counseling psychology has more of an impact in how I integrate [R/S topics].” When asked how their values as a counseling psychologist have influenced their attempts, they replied,

What's coming to mind for me is the [counseling psychology] emphasis on social justice and multiculturalism. I think that obviously, really guides everything I do as a psychologist. And so that makes me think about integration of religion and spirituality in terms of that oppression. It makes me think about it in this way that gets really confusing and complicated because my aim is to support people who are disempowered. Out in the world, I think that, often can be people with religious minority identities. But within the program, I'm the person that's in the position of power. Aside from valuing people in general, I feel like it's really important to allow students to feel safe in whatever they identify as, whether it's a majority identity or not.

In referencing their attempts, this individual often included conversations about systems of privilege and oppression related to religion and spirituality, a similarity found in the majority of other participants' narratives. This participant's comments also highlight another layer of complexity in training students on social justice advocacy (i.e., dismantling systems of power and oppression), that is also being in a position of power themselves as an educator. The discomfort that this participant expressed may be related to the fact that they were a first-time faculty member at the time of the interviews for this study, and therefore not as familiar with the position of power as an educator.

Ultimately, participants' training goals were to teach students how to uphold the professional values of doing no harm to clients, providing multiculturally sensitive care, and being a social justice advocate. In addition to their goal to meet the professional mandates to train students as multiculturally sensitive clinicians, study participants also navigated expectations set forth by their institution. For participants at religiously affiliated institutions, their institutions' religious mission provided both challenges to and support for participants' attempts.

“Double-edged Sword” of Religiously Affiliated Institutions

Working at a religiously affiliated institution meant that one of the levels of complexity that participants navigated was responding to their institutional mission that topics of religion and/or spirituality be integrated across all degree programs. One could assume that attempts would be easier at a religiously affiliated institution because this mandate already exists within the institution. Interestingly, however, only one participant at a religiously affiliated institution noted that their experience was exclusively supportive and positive. Indeed, the other four participants in such a setting spoke of the intricacies of working at a religiously affiliated institution as having both positive and negative influences. The complexity in having both support and challenges from an institutional standpoint contributed to these participants' experiences of integrating R/S into doctoral student training. In fact, one participant described the institutional influences as a “double-edged sword,” which seemed to capture the essence of many participants' narratives around this factor. This sub-section will start by describing the challenges of working at a religiously affiliated institution, and will be followed by the positive influences, which together contributed to participants' experiences of the “Doubled-edge Sword.”

Challenging Side of the “Double-edged” Sword

Four out of the five participants at religiously affiliated institutions described their attempts to integrate topics of R/S into their training as more challenging than expected, considering they worked for a religiously affiliated institution. Participants noted that integrating religion and spirituality at religiously affiliated institutions was tricky. Some participants felt pressure to meet institutional expectations, while others felt a pull to advocate for students with religious identities that differed from their religious institution. At other times, participants felt censored in what they could include in their attempts because of the institutions’ stance around certain topics (e.g., same-sex couples, woman’s reproductive rights). As a result of these complexities, participants felt pressured to meet their institutions’ mission, which could differ from either their own beliefs or the values of counseling psychologists. In general, the challenging side of the double-edged sword resulted in participants needing to be thoughtful in the way they approached their attempts.

Trickiness. Two participants had previous experience working at secular (not religiously affiliated institutions) prior to working at their current religiously affiliated institution and shared their thoughts about the differences they felt about integrating topics of R/S at each institution. The first participant shared their assumption that integrating topics of R/S at a religiously affiliated institution, “probably would be less frowned upon” than at a secular institution. They went on to describe,

So it wouldn’t be like, “What is this? Blah, blah, blah.” So it’d be more encouraged, but then also expected. So, there’s probably also some pressure. Like, “Oh, I bet students are coming to this program assuming that we’re going to talk about this, so I better be ready.” So, there’s that double-edged sword, whatever you want to call it. Pressure and encouragement.

This individual's comment speaks to their assumption that integrating topics of R/S at a religiously affiliated institution might be easy because of encouragement from the institution and openness from the students. However, that encouragement also came with a sense of pressure to perform well, both for the institution and for the students.

Similarly, the second participant also described their experiences at religiously affiliated institutions as being more challenging than expected when they said,

I had some background in [being at faith-based institutions as a student] but spent five years working in secular education. And so coming to a graduate program at a faith-based institution has definitely been tricky. It's definitely required a lot more thoughtfulness. One, because it is important from the faith-based institutions perspective, but also from psychology's perspective, emphasizing not only a biopsychosocial model but spiritual models in that. And knowing that they are protective factors against mental illness, as well as in the treatment, of mental illness. And so that was something that I was trained on. So it was something that I definitely emphasized when working with the students that we have.

One of the tricky things that we navigate is that we also don't require that our students sign a faith statement upon admittance into the graduate program ... What we have found ... is that you're teaching evaluations strongly reflect a Christian bias from your atheist students and they say, the Christian students complain that we're not Christian enough. And so that delicate balance has been interesting. So I found that I still have to use similar language that I used at secular institutions, like emphasizing spirituality rather than religion, because that's a more comfortable for people, and then emphasizing the importance that it'll be in their practice when working with diverse clients. And you need to be comfortable talking about religion, even if they're not comfortable with religion themselves.

This individual's story speaks to some of the challenges that many participants of this study, even those at secular institutions faced, which was including topics of R/S as one of many areas to cover, the need to attend to students' thoughts and reactions towards attempts, and the necessity of addressing the training need of teaching students how to be comfortable working with client diversity. In addition to all of these areas that participants are holding when making attempts, participants at religiously affiliated institutions expressed additional considerations when they are attempting to meet their institutions' mission. As expressed in the example above,

this requires participants to be very thoughtful in their attempts, even in being cautious with the language that they use.

This same participant went on to tell a story about a time when they made an attempt that was based on meeting their institution's teaching requirements rather than for the benefit of the students' learning. This individual was uncomfortable with their attempt and did not feel successful in their efforts. They said,

I was teaching factor analysis and psychometrics to a first-year cohort. And the provost did the teaching evaluation and the dean was in the room. So, I had to find this witty way of talking about why factor analysis is useful. And so, I used personality and I used a Bible verse out of Galatians 5 and connected it together with personality. And it felt disingenuous. It felt like I was checking a box to show my boss that I could do the research and integrate them if I had to.

When reflecting on the experience, they noted that the aforementioned scenario was a reminder that "I can't make a square peg fit into a round hole." This individual indicated that they would not use the portion of their lecture that was created for the purposes of their evaluation in future attempts because it did not feel genuine and did not fit the course curriculum. This example illustrates the difficulty that this participant faced and that faculty members in general come up against in juggling the needs of multiple constitutions, especially when meeting the needs of one stakeholder comes at a cost to other stakeholders.

Censorship. Another issue that three participants faced was feeling limited in what they could say, particularly around important social and personal issues that can become political topics, because of the ethos of their religiously affiliated institution of employment. One said,

I ... feel limited in what can I say or can't say given that it's a [religiously affiliated] institution. So, what can I say about abortion or women's reproductive health? Because we are accredited, we have some freedom to train students around ethical practice, and what are the competencies that we need to train students towards. So, I feel able to have conversations that I need to have and some hesitancy too.

This participant noted that it was difficult to balance the values of their religiously-affiliated institution and the values of counseling psychology to be able to discuss topics that are often at odds with or go against some religious values (e.g., sexual minority orientation or woman's reproductive rights). Though they felt protected by the expectations of their APA-accredited training program to say what they needed to, they also reported feeling hesitant, even censored, in what they could say while addressing these sensitive topics.

Likewise, a second participant shared that they felt a sense of pressure to remain neutral about these particular topics, a stance which went against their own values as a Christian, to provide a counter narrative against "politicized Christian views." They said,

Students want us to talk about political issues, cultural events, and the faculty want us to let the students talk about them, but not engage, and more facilitate, which is a good approach. One of the pressures I have always felt as a Christian is depicting an image that is different from more politicized Christian views. I think sometimes keeping that [different Christian image] contained is a little bit more difficult than it was at a secular institution. Just remembering that I am actually speaking on behalf of a university and keeping [our responses to political discussions] very neutral. And making sure that I'm drawing out balanced perspectives because I think even at this Christian institution, conservative ideals feel silenced. We've had students say that they didn't feel comfortable talking about their conservative views. And so, [I'm] just making sure that the balanced approach is being provided and not just nodding my head when I'm hearing what I'm liking and letting that opinion predominate in the classroom.

This individual did not disagree with the need to be neutral regarding conversations in their classroom and felt sad for students who reported feeling uncomfortable and silenced in classroom settings due to remaining neutral. As a faculty member navigating students' needs, institutional expectations, and personal feelings around the topic of religion and spirituality, this participant expressed a level of uncertainty about how to proceed in addressing these topics in counseling psychology doctoral training.

In a third example, a participant spoke about challenges they have faced when they felt censored by their religiously affiliated institution's policies. This individual shared a story about

working with a student on a research project using a sample of individuals with a minority sexual orientation identity. They described, with frustration, how the university's institutional review board (IRB) rejected the student's research because the population to be studied did not meet the faith standards of the institution. They described the scenario saying,

I think it's because of the particular population. And within our university, we have a biblical view of sexual ethics, and so that is represented in our community standards for our undergraduates, and they have to sign a statement of faith. And the faculty sign a statement of faith and agreement to conform to those community standards ... [The IRB] feels like having research that looks into these [sexually diverse populations] would be confusing to our constituents and would contradict our mission and our community standard. And I can understand the dilemma. At the same time, as a researcher, I think it's so important that we research even if the topics are uncomfortable or controversial.

Similarly, I think we have to think very carefully about what that might mean if we have research coming out of [this university] in which we're researching populations or behaviors that seemed in contradiction with our faith or our community standards. However, my stance is that, as researchers who have maybe a different lens than other researchers, I think we can contribute relevant, meaningful research that could be very helpful. And actually, I feel as a researcher that I have the responsibility of contributing research that has a potential of a lot of benefit.

This individual spoke about how upset they were by this situation when they said,

[The student] and I were talking about this as an ethical dilemma, a faith dilemma, and when that is related to our work as psychologists and researchers... I've been thinking about this non-stop. I will be bringing, some points that would be compelling and provocative, to our provost, and our administration is going to have to grapple with it. I am hopeful that over time that I can help steer the university to be willing to research topics that might feel controversial. Right now, that remains to be seen. In the sense of this particular student, she was devastated, so that I don't feel successful. I feel like I failed her.

In this example, the participant experienced an internal conflict in which they felt empathy for the university's stance; however, their own values as a psychologist (i.e., the need to complete research that they believed would make an important contribution) seemed to be the driving force in their desire to address this concern with the university administration. Professionally, they planned to advocate for the student to complete this research because they felt the research

could be important to the field of psychology. Personally, they felt this was an unsuccessful attempt to support their student, which was distressing to them.

All of these participants felt censored by the standards set forth by the religiously affiliated institutions they worked for, particularly around topics that are considered political or controversial. Some participants understood why censoring these subjects might be necessary, though each of them was uncertain how to remain neutral but also support the values of social justice advocacy within counseling psychology. Additionally, these participants expressed some internal tension when their attempts went against their natural instinct; however, they did not shy away from integrating topics of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training and rather proceeded with caution.

Supportive Side of the “Double-edged Sword”

Only one of the five participants at a religiously affiliated institution had purely positive comments about their university’s mission. This individual was one of several participants who chose to work at a religiously affiliated institution because they felt it would give them the academic freedom to discuss religion and spirituality in their professional contexts. When asked to describe any professional factors that have influenced their attempts, this participant talked about their university mission saying,

I’m at [Christian] University. The major aims of a [this University’s] education is that it should be spiritually strengthening. That is one of the explicitly stated aims, spiritually strengthening. I have been at [Christian University] for 25 years ... In student evaluations, we get evaluated along those four critical aims. And one of them is spiritual strengthening. And students have to rate us and give comments. And rate us on a zero to five scale on how spiritually strengthening this course was to them. That’s professional as faculty, yeah, it’s expected and evaluated.

They went on to describe, with pride, some of the things they have learned in their 25 years of teaching at a Christian institution. They said,

We've done some research at the University at our faculty center, taking student comments and student reactions to faculty's attempts to be spiritually strengthening. And the results are fascinating. So some of the techniques that faculty use, across the board, not just in counseling psych. is that they will start class with a prayer. Sometimes, they will start class with a spiritual thought. Students are sometimes assigned to come to class and say, "Here's a piece of spiritual literature I've been reading. Here's a couple of paragraphs." And they'll start class with that. Which are all wonderful things. The research shows that beyond that, the thing where students where really feel as though they have been spiritually strengthened by taking the class is by observing the faculty member him or herself. That they observe that the faculty members' own spirituality emerges in the course ... And it's not as much about the explicit techniques they use but is more about, they can read the faculty's own spirituality. And that's what comes out in the interviews and the research.

This person's story speaks to the freedom they feel to teach religion and spirituality at a level that feels authentic to who they are because of their university's stance on religion and spirituality. In reflecting on the way this participant described their attempts, it's this writer's perception that their attempts were meaningful and emotional for this participant because they could be their spiritual self as an educator.

Other participants also described how their university's mission was reflected in the culture of their departments and the values of the APA. Here are two examples of what was said:

Our program does say on our website that we have this unique focus, that we do faith integration within our program. And the ethos of our program is described as an emphasis on and weaving into our program an emphasis through — actually, this is a department, ethos. And it emphasizes on psychology, culture, and social justice. And so it's part our institutional identity to do faith integration. It's part of our mandate and a really important initiative of our department.

There's some expectations that we train students towards the mission, which is around training students to be socially responsible leaders or morally responsible leaders. So there's that expectation, but [the mission's] not religious, it comes from a [religious] framework, but it's not. Undergraduate students have a theology and [Christian religious] studies, requirements that our students don't need to have at the graduate level. So graduate programs have a lot of autonomy and leeway to — because we have so many courses that we have to teach for APA-accreditation, [the university doesn't] have a lot of say.

When reflecting on these examples, participants' use of the terms, "expectation" and "mandate" does reveal a sense of pressure being put on participants to include the university's mission into teaching. This suggests that even when there are positive aspects to the institution's mission, there is complexity around having a mission to include topics of R/S across all training. In fact, many participants at religiously affiliated institutions felt that their attempts were harder in some classes than others, which will be described in the *Thoughtfulness Around Attempts* theme. In one of the examples mentioned above, the participant felt that the requirements of the APA-accreditation standards ultimately superseded the university's mission standards.

Likewise, another participant described conversations they had with their colleagues who they perceived as having negative views towards the university's policies around integrating religion and spirituality into training. The fact that some faculty members at religiously affiliated institutions had negative attitudes towards integrating topics of R/S into training is an unexpected twist for a religious institution and presented some difficulty for participants to navigate. Several individuals felt they had to encourage their colleagues to think differently about integrating topics of R/S, which was an added layer of stress for the participants. When describing their conversations with colleagues, this person said,

I probably started working on [the phenomenon of this study] in the early 2000's. I mean, you're aware of the research that shows that psychologists are not highly religious people and, interestingly, even though I work in a religiously funded institution, the psychology faculty often have made a big deal about saying "but we don't fall under that, you know, we follow the religion of APA," is the way I snarkely say it.

This individual went on to share that being a part of a religiously affiliated university has helped their attempts in that they can use the religious focus of the institution as justification for addressing topics that may not be popular for all students. This participant also took the approach

of encouraging their students and faculty peers to look for the strengths in working within a religious institution rather than assuming the worst. They said,

I think being at a religious university might have helped because I could at least preface a statement with, “We are, after all, at a [Christian] university and we can’t pretend that we’re not. Let’s try to find some strength in that rather than just wondering if the IRB is going to have an issue with our sexual minority research,” which, just for the record, it didn’t.

Another supportive consideration of working at a religiously affiliated institution was having university sponsored seminars to help faculty members learn about topics of R/S. Four out of the five participants talked about how helpful attending these seminars were beneficial. They said:

I am participating in a [religious tradition] seminar for faculty, and ... I guess some universities have a clear recruitment of [Christian] faculty, and this is not one of them. So they are trying to get more faculty on board with a mission.

I would say some of the factors that we have embedded into our university that I think make us really unique and make us strong at what we do are the fact that the faculty themselves have to go through an entire year of faith integration and learning how to do it well in the classroom, which I feel like I'm still really learning how to do it.

So I first started really thinking about this as I was applying for the job and then launching about four years ago. I did have an opportunity during my second year teaching, our provost and associate provost teach a, basically, a faith integration seminar for the faculty, and it's just part of our development process as faculty. And so I was able to get together with about a dozen other faculty across the university in different disciplines to talk about this. And we had a couple of texts. One of them was more about just the academy and just learning how to be a faculty member and thinking about scholarship and pedagogy. But the other text was specifically about faith integration.

We are on a [Christian] campus and, and I see positive things about that. The university runs a seminar on Mission and Ministry, and it’s for all religions. I attended with people who were Christian, Jewish, Muslim, agnostic, all sorts of, you know, the faculty are very diverse, and I learned a lot from them. But I also learned more about what is the Catholic view of... there is actually a Catholic intellectual tradition; I had no idea before I took this seminar.

As you can see in these examples, some participants felt uncertain about how to best make attempts to integrate topics of R/S into counseling psychology training. These faculty seminars helped participants by increasing their own knowledge that they could then share with their

students and lead to more confidence to make attempts. Other participants felt that these seminars helped them by providing a space to discuss ways to integrate topics of R/S into student learning.

An interesting note across many of the examples about the faculty training seminars was that participants valued the opportunity to discuss topics of R/S with their colleagues. In fact, several study participants commented that a strength of working at a religiously affiliated institution was the access to colleagues who they could talk to about their attempts and collaborate with on research ventures around religion and spirituality. Simply stated, one participant said, “talking with other faculty, particularly my colleagues within the doctoral program, have been really helpful to assist me in just thinking about how to do this work.” Here are some additional comments that participants made:

The main professional factors [that have influenced my attempts] have been the availability of at least one supportive colleague at the time that I was trying to do this work. Because being the lone voice in the wilderness doesn't go very far. I mean, even if you look at the research on prejudice, just having one other person will sometimes cause people to listen. So, you know, I think that professionally having a colleague that wanted to work on this with me was huge ... Years ago a colleague and I started writing and presenting on the topic of why religion was dismissed by psychology, and we started working on trying to integrate more religion into our work on campus.

What's nice here at [Christian university] is I have the academic freedom to reference [religion and spirituality] at any time. That may be more difficult at other universities ... I have full freedom to form co-editorships or to co-author, to talk, to write, to explore together, to have these conversations with my colleagues. We have kind of different approaches. I mean, I and two others tend to take a foundations approach, right? Then one is really an empirical researcher, where he's going to show that religion and spirituality are healthy, and he is extremely good at it. But we kind of have different approaches to it, but we're all chipping away at the same issue.

Participants at religiously affiliated institutions shared that their institutions had both challenging and positive influences on their attempts. On one hand, participants also talked about feeling pressured to do well, challenged to remain neutral, and censored because of institutional

ethos. On the other, positive hand, some participants felt that the university expectation provided them the freedom, encouragement, and the rationale to make attempts at R/S integration. One of the strengths of being at a religiously affiliated institution was that participants often felt that they had support in their attempts through university supported training seminars and colleagues within their training program to talk about their attempts. The next section will discuss one of the primary constitutions participants were serving, their students.

Holding Space for a Range of Students' Reactions

Another element that contributed to the complexity associated with the participants' efforts to integrate religion and spirituality into doctoral training was the students. Ultimately, participants' attempts were centered on their students, and they were attuned to their students' reactions, which ranged from positive to negative. One member at a religiously affiliated institution summarized the range of student reactions well when they said, "It ranges from 'hmm, isn't that interesting, but it doesn't apply to me' to 'Yeah, nice ideas, but you're wrong.'"

Several participants felt that there was a "Christian and atheist" divide among students in which the students who were Christian appreciated attempts at integrating R/S, and the students who were atheist often did not. Part of the complexity that held for participants was making room to meet all of their students' needs while feeling that it is necessary to teach topics of R/S to students. One excellent example of this complexity came from a participant at a secular institution who shared,

I think [students' reactions] just depend on how they think about spirituality. They may feel like they have freedom to talk and begin to think about spirituality from their own perspective and how that's okay in psychology and therapy. And some are indifferent to it. They're like, "Yeah, that's fine. You want to talk about it, that's okay with me." And they may not [want to talk about R/S]. And when [the indifferent student] leaves here [they will] forget about it. And others, it's a bit of a challenge for them. There is some resistance there, I think. Again, not that I want them to take my worldview. I just want them to think that we are spiritual beings. But I have had students [on the] positive end

say it was nice because other professors don't address that with them. And those who think more from a religious spiritual perspective like engaging in that. And then there are those who really are not interested. Not that those people necessarily resist, and they may be just indifferent to it.

Participants who perceived students' reactions as positive seemed to be comfortable and confident in their attempts, and even encouraged to make future attempts. They shared,

When the timing is right, [the attempt] is just flowing naturally. [The students] feel that too, and they'll be like, "That touched my heart. I see the connection, I see the connection here. Typically it's very warm. (religiously affiliated institution)

It's generally been well received. So depending on the situation, sometimes it's people going, "Oh, I hadn't thought about that," or they're relieved to have processed [their feelings] with their peers or with me. A lot of times I have given people research, like reading resources. And that's usually well received like, "Oh, great. I didn't know there was literature on this," so people are happy to get that. (secular institution)

My perceptions is I think they've welcomed [my attempts]. I mean, I have a really good group of students who are constantly thinking about who they are as individuals and how they're going to impact the lives of the people that they're working with. I've never been met with any resistance on their end, yet. They've seemed to react to it well. (secular institution)

As shown in these examples, participants felt that many conversations felt natural, warm, and welcomed. They saw that many of their students with Christian identities were wanting a space to talk about topics of R/S, and participants wanted to meet those students' needs. At the same time, several participants expected that their students might have some resistance and/or defensiveness to discussions around religion and spirituality, which was revealed when the third participant said their efforts haven't been met with resistance "yet."

Some participants did indeed run into difficult interactions with students who were offended by conversations around R/S happening in their attempts. Participants saw their students struggling with topics when the beliefs of other religious people (including some of the students in their classes) intersected with other identities, like sexual orientation and gender, in

ways that were perceived to be negative or offensive. Here are some examples of what participants said:

And, I guess, one of the other things I think about is, we have had several very conservative students in our program who have had some initial struggle, like the intersection of sexual orientation and religion, and I feel like folks have kind of found their way through those discussions. (secular institution)

[We were discussing] how some of [the students'] own doctrine in their religious communities might clash with some of their values they have as counseling psychologists and social justice values and gender equality values ... but [one student] made a comment ... "I think it's because Western cultures are predominantly Judeo-Christian cultures that have these really ingrained gender, beliefs about gender, and what makes somebody a man and a woman and all of that." And a student wrote in their [weekly reflection] paper, and [said] at the moment [of the discussion], but they were very offended and upset by that, that we were essentially blaming Christianity for gender inequality and transphobia and all of that. (secular institution)

One of the challenges that half of the study participants navigated in their attempts was knowing how to respond to students who they perceived to be having defensive, resistant, or negative reaction to their attempts. Four of these participants were so taken aback by interactions with some students that they felt their attempts were unsuccessful in those moments. When describing these interactions with students, participants often felt frustrated with the students' reactions. Part of the challenge that participants experienced was their need to address their own feelings while creating safe learning experiences for students, which is hard when participants felt passionately about the topics they were teaching. One participant related that on several occasions students disclosed that they felt discomfort discussing their religious identities in their training program due to a fear that they would be (a) judged by their peers, or (b) associated with political beliefs they did not hold. This participant, like many other participants of this study, understood the importance of creating a safe space for all of their students, regardless of their identity. Perhaps this participant's own experiences as a Christian graduate student, who also felt unsafe discussing their religious identity within their own training program, made them so in

tune with creating a space for their current students. Because of these experiences, this participant was empathetic towards their Christian students' feelings and wanted to help students further their own identity exploration so that their students did not struggle in the same way that the participant did.

The need to create a safe space was challenging for several participants when they recognized that, often, a student who was expressing concern was in a privileged position and struggling to address that privilege. This same participant mentioned in the last paragraph related an incident that took place in their diversity course when some Christian students were reluctant to recognize their Christian privilege. The participant explained,

I found that the students seemed a bit more defensive around [the attempt]. I felt that they were less willing to challenge themselves and particularly for the Christian students, to see that as a privileged identity. It was difficult to engage them in that way. Particularly, there's one article, I think it's a social psychology article, but it's basically in a series of studies that documents discrimination toward atheists, more than almost any other group in the United States. [The students] were very defensive about that article, they didn't like it. I was just really shocked because any other marginalized group that we would talk about in the class they would be very open to talking about. The class is also mostly White students. We talk a lot about racism and many of the students have dominant group identities, and they are not defensive talking about their privilege in those areas. So it was really jarring to me. That one class where it came up, I was really taken aback at the kind of just guardedness and defensiveness that came up.

During the member check interview, this person shared their thoughts about factors that they believed contributed to their students' defensiveness. They said,

I reflected on some of the reasons why, what made it challenging. I think, first, I had assumptions about students going in, so I didn't properly prepare for what I might face. So number two, what ended up happening in that class is that it got very intellectual and cognitive, which I think it limited the students who were religious in the class. It limited their ability to really engage in reflection and to challenge themselves. For the students who did not identify as religious in the class, I think that intellectualization limited their ability to understand at an emotional level. I think what happened was that (a) students didn't know how other people were identified in terms of religion and spirituality and (b) didn't know how they would be perceived if people knew. Instead of going to a place of talking about their personal experience and that more emotional place, [the students] went to talking about facts because it wasn't as vulnerable a place. The

third thing that I thought about that I think made it challenging is my own lack of training in that topic.

This participant took their reflective process one-step further by considering ways that they could make future attempts more successful. One thought they had was to provide historical contexts for the topics of R/S they presented, with the hope that would reduce students' defensive reactions. Second, as will be discussed further in the section titled, *Motivations Are Not Just Professional, They're Personal, Too*, this participant felt the need to address their own "baggage" around topics of R/S in order to better facilitate discussions in the future. Third, they would like to incorporate a more "emotion-focused type of learning" in their future attempts in order to reduce intellectualized conversations. The participant explained changes they would make saying,

I would think about putting [my students] into smaller groups since [religion and spirituality] is such a personal topic, and kind of a taboo topic, so that they can maybe feel more comfortable sharing with a smaller group. And also, maybe going into a bit more history. Yeah, integrating that, as well as why Christianity became so politicized.

In another example, a different participant at a secular institution also reported experiencing frustration with students who express resistance to attempts made to discuss topics of spirituality. They shared,

I think [this challenge] comes about probably more so with individual supervision. I still find some students are resistant. Not that I'm forcing this on them, well, maybe I am forcing [because] I do feel that spirituality is important to us. I get a little frustrated when students refuse to think about that. [The students] just want to address any symptomology, they don't want to broach the topic or consider [R/S].

This participant worked through their frustrations by reflecting on the challenging interaction and identifying factors that might be contributing to the students' negative responses. Regarding the role they played in the situation, the participant said, "I think [my frustration] just makes me stop and think, am I pushing too much? Am I imposing too much on the student? Because I do see

supervision, I see it as a developmental process just like in therapy.” The participant went on to share their belief that the student and teacher relationship requires a working alliance similar to the therapeutic working alliance. They noted that sometimes conflict can occur within that teacher and student relationship. In considering the role of the student in the situation, they said,

When I get frustrated, well is this about that [conflict]? Or you know some students can be resistant to change. Students come in to supervision [and] some are very open to receive feedback and some it takes some time to get there. Am I looking at someone who just is not yet comfortable receiving feedback or is it feedback specific to spirituality that they're resistant to? I think what I do is I just try to slow down and back up and just put things down. Say, “Let's process it. Let's talk about what's happening. You're feeling uncomfortable, I don't want you to feel uncomfortable. I want us to be able to talk freely here.”

This participant shared a unique response in that they directly talked to their students about any conflict that occurred within their relationship. The opportunity to talk to the student in a vulnerable way might be related to the context of the scenario occurring during supervision rather than in a classroom with other students present. Other factors, such as this participants' personality, may also have contributed to their ability to address the issue with their student.

Similarly, a third participant reflected on their own feelings regarding their students' negative reactions. They used a “bracketing” method to set aside their own reactions in the hopes of reducing their biases when responding to their students. They said,

What I think about it is, if we're having a class discussion around this issue, or somebody brings up their reaction to a client or whatever it is, if I have that sort of internal reaction it's like, “Ewww, that's kind of yucky” ... All the yucky stuff is like, “My way is the right way. And everybody else is going to burn in hell or is unacceptable or deserves to be punished, deserves to be excluded, deserves less than.” When religion is used in the name of those things that seems yucky to me... What I would try to do with that is using a qualitative kind of frame, like bracket that, and just be able to sort of check myself and say, “This is where this person is at with their journey. It's a reflection of authenticity of what's going on for them in this moment and that it's not whatever I happen to think about it or whatever reaction I happen to have about it.” It's probably not helpful for me just to go, “Ewww, that's yucky,” and shame a student or put down a student or publicly correct a student. Even as I say that, it's not even a correction, it's a difference. So for me, I think that's the primary way that I think I handle those things.

The examples given in this section represent various ways that the participants navigated their own response to students who presented challenging reactions to the attempts that the participants made. The participants took some time to consider factors that were contributing to the lack of success, including looking at influences related to the students themselves. Participants also exhibited qualities of humility as they reflected on factors about themselves that might have contributed to the lack of success in the attempts. To address the challenge, participants thought about ways they could modify future attempts, attempted to set aside their own feelings to shift the focus onto the students' needs, and used interpersonal processing to directly discuss challenges with the students.

Participants experienced students as having a range of reactions to their attempts at integrating R/S into training and felt pulled to meet the various needs of students. Some students were generally inviting of conversations around R/S, others were indifferent, and some expressed dissatisfaction with participants' attempts. Part of the complexity was that participants genuinely cared about integrating topics of R/S, so they felt encouraged and successful when students actively engaged, and they felt frustrated and less successful when students responded negatively.

Participants named many elements that they felt contributed to their own reactions to the students, which can add to the complexity of the interactions with students. One such element is the religious and/or spiritual identities, beliefs, and experiences of the participants, which can be triggered in these interactions. Another contributing influence might be the personal characteristics of the faculty member, like patience and openness, which in this case probably helped unravel the complexity of the attempt. Regarding some professional characteristics, some of the participants felt unsure of how to handle their reactions because they did not have training around topics of R/S themselves on which to draw, and this decreased some participants'

comfort and confidence with their attempts. Additionally, one might think another professional factor could be years of experience as a faculty member. However, participants whose responses are included in this area had teaching experience that ranged from being a first-time faculty member to having over 20 years of teaching experience. They ultimately expressed similar responses to addressing their reactions to students; therefore, the amount of past teaching experience may not be as much of a factor.

This section has described participants' experiences of their attempts as being complex. The next section will discuss participants' thoughtfulness around their attempts, which was in part, a result of the complexity that participants navigated.

Theme: Thoughtfulness Around Attempts

Participants expressed a strong desire for their students to learn about topics of religion and spirituality that are relevant to the students' future careers as counseling psychologists. Study participants were thoughtful in the ways that they incorporated topics of religion and spirituality into counseling psychology doctoral training. They made attempts across all areas of training that participants were involved in, which included coursework, departmental diversity dialogues, interviewing for student candidates and faculty members, overseeing students' research, supervising students' clinical work, and aiding students in applying for internship. Not only were participants willing to include topics of R/S into multiple dimensions of training, but participants were conscientious about including a wide range of topics. Participants put a lot of care into deciding what assignments were likely to be most beneficial to students. Moreover, participants used a variety of teaching methods including readings, videos, experiential activities, and case conceptualization practice.

Comprehensive Inclusion of R/S Across Training

When describing attempts to integrate topics of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training, one might think that the study participants would teach courses dedicated to religion and spirituality; however, only two participants of this study taught R/S as a standalone course. All ten study participants made attempts to integrate topics of R/S across all coursework they taught, even the two participants who taught a standalone R/S course. Because participants taught a wide range of courses, there are examples of attempts made in assessment, diversity, human development, psychopathology, research methods, practicum and intern supervision, statistics, and special topics (e.g., addictions, vocational psychology, and family therapy). It is important to note that while the five participants who taught at religiously affiliated institutions did have mandates to include topics of R/S across training, they were careful in their efforts and seemed motivated to go beyond the bare minimum institutional requirement. In fact, participants were thoughtful to choose assignments that were relevant to the course they taught rather than a one-size fits all approach across classes. Here are some examples of the different areas of participants' attempts:

[In my practicum supervision course] we talk about, again, how they integrate a worldview into that, that is honoring to the client. Again, our approach is that if clients use faith as a way of answering conflicts or questions in life or coping, then I encourage students to go with that. Not that they're engaged in any kind of faith-based counseling but to not shy away from that, to be able to ask [the client], "How is your faith helping you? How is it not helping you? What does it mean to you when you struggle with your faith when you're in this kind of a crisis or conflict and so on." And so I encourage students to use the client's faith perspective, if that's their client's worldview and how they think about their issue. (secular institution)

So I've approached it in the sense of trying to integrate spirituality and religion in the context of career counseling or vocational psychology. So thinking about how religious context or how one's spiritual well-being or spirituality impact how individuals might make career-related decisions. So we've had conversations about that in class in terms of like a specific class, just focus on how to integrate this area into counseling psychology or into like counseling sessions, but more of an overview in terms of like, what are the

contextual pieces [that] can influence people's career decision-making? ... And then in my PhD level class [that I'm teaching next semester], which is a diagnosis and psychopathology class, I mean, right now, as I'm thinking about the material and the different lectures, I'm definitely going to be integrating aspects of religion or spirituality into how mental health might be conceptualized within the DSM-5 ... I always think of religion and spirituality as components within the multicultural frameworks. (secular institution)

I have an assignment that helps them explore how spirituality has helped shape who they are, also involves them kind of reflecting on trials and tribulations. And again, I leave this pretty open-ended. And I leave it very much to their discretion to figure out what's comfortable for them, what they feel okay self-disclosing to stay compliant with the APA standards ... And then, just within specific classes with the practicum series that we have focusing on how to do CBT for different religions. Sorry. I don't have the name of that book on me right now. But I think it's called *Incorporating Spirituality into Treatments*. It's a great book. It talks about prayer, talks about meditation. And so we talk about how to do that. We talk about spirituality as a component in the addiction class that I teach. They also attend 12-step programs, which often have spiritual components, a spiritual program ... I think for me, I see integrating spirituality and religion in the classroom as a social justice advocacy piece, which is a huge part of our program. (religiously affiliated institution)

Participants emphasized that they were training students to be respectful towards a client's religious and/or spiritual beliefs and values. A key element of these participants' examples was that they approached topics of R/S from a lens of multiculturalism and social justice advocacy, which are two professional values within the field of counseling psychology. Beyond these professional values, participants also spoke about multiculturalism and social justice advocacy as being a core part of who they are on a personal level, and participants wanted their students to develop similar identities as future counseling psychologists. Because participants viewed religion and spirituality as a cultural identity that can be important to many people, they were intentional to create assignments that addressed various aspects of religion and spirituality. Including topics of R/S across all of the courses they taught might be one way to diversify discussions around topics of R/S.

Four participants made attempts to incorporate topics of religion and spirituality into their coursework that focuses on multicultural content. One such participant, at a religiously affiliated institution, spoke with pride about how their department includes a special topics course on religion and spirituality as a required part of students' multicultural training. With the help of a supportive colleague, this participant worked hard to have topics of R/S be a training component separate from other cultural diversity factors, thereby guaranteeing that all students are exposed to topics of R/S within their diversity course. This participant commented, "I think having even added this required class [into our training curriculum] was a success for me that I pushed and got included in the curriculum." When describing the contents of the course they said,

So, it would be religious issues in psychotherapy, how certain religions view help-seeking, and how you may or may not support somebody who is strongly religious in therapy, or how you may inadvertently harm somebody who is deeply religious by having an attitude that is sort of disrespectful toward religion ... particularly in that one multicultural class students talk about their own religious backgrounds.

Another participant at a secular institution taught two different diversity related courses, one focused on multicultural topics in counseling and the other focused on developmental and psychological processes of identity development. This participant noted that one week of a 14-week semester is specifically devoted to focusing on topics of religion and spirituality. Here is what the participant said:

We talked about religion and spirituality and that, you know, there were a lot of ways that we could get at that. In some ways it was about coping and religious practices, but also thinking about the Nun, you know, from people who are in denominations to none of the above, then agnostic, atheist. And again in that [class] we read an article around Muslim graduate students in the U.S. and their experience. So again, these are always about that internal practice, but the external interactions and biases and discrimination, or supports that individuals' experience. And so I thought that was good for [the students] to think about their peers. That's why I wanted to pick that one. And ... both of the classes at the beginning of the year I have them really talk about their own identity or write it down and then share what they feel like sharing. And then in this class that we had Tuesday, I asked them to start to answer questions for a scale that was used for that the, I think it was the scale, or the questions that were in the Muslim graduate student [article]. 'Cause part of

that class is to understand measurement, how we gather data, because there is a large research component to that. But I had them for themselves answer the questions ... So I really wanted them to think and engage in a conversation about, "What does that mean? ... How comfortable are you talking about it?"

A third participant, at a religiously affiliated institution, referenced their old class syllabi during the initial interview to describe their attempts and indicated that there were multiple ways that topics of R/S were integrated in their courses. They said, "So I've taught this class for four years now, and it's a diversity class, and so I am trying to integrate, sort of, religion and spirituality in that class." They elaborated on specific attempts to integrate topics of R/S when they said,

[This one section] it focuses on Islamophobia and anti-Semitism to looking at oppressed religious identities in the U.S. and ways that that has influenced mental health [and] best practices around, like, culturally competent counseling ... And then with the readings around Islamophobia and anti-Semitism I think was really for some more of a wakeup call. Or just recognizing this aspect of diversity that maybe gets less acknowledged. And so having a space to just name some of the oppression that people are experiencing and hate crimes that are being up-kicked, increasing, speaking to some of that specifically.

When I first started at this institution ... I included an article on Christian privilege and also looking at how to help people be more aware of how that shows up or what that might look like. So recognizing religious privilege. [In the past] I did have readings that kind of helped them - oh yeah, it was from one of the *Handbooks of Counseling Psychology* (Hook, Worthington, and Davis, 2012) and looking at religion and spirituality, incorporating religion and spirituality in a counseling context or something like that. And I think it was Hook who probably published that chapter, and just giving folks some ideas about how to ask questions and what to do if you yourself are not religious ... And then I guess the other thing that I've done is had people write about their own identities and positionality and then reflect on them ... So they can choose two identities that they reflect on more in-depth and then in class, take turns talking about those identities and then getting feedback on their classmates and challenged, and so on and so forth. And so sometimes people do share their religious or spiritual identity in that process. And so that's brought more of a self-awareness or reflective component to it.

A fourth participant, a first time educator at a secular institution, shared multiple ways that discussions of R/S have been relevant in their diversity course when they stated,

So one of the articles [we discussed in class] was an article on working specifically with Christian clients because my assumption going in was that most of the students would be

non-religious just because that's what I had experienced in my programs and what I had heard about other psychology programs too. [The students are] all required to take a master's-level class, so I tried to include articles or to include content that they wouldn't have gotten there. And with Christianity being the dominant group religion, I figured that that may have been left out. And given that like, because the majority of clients are probably going to have at least some sort of connection with the Christian identity, I wanted to include that. So that was one of the articles. I included an article on Jewish identity and ... how they are often left out of multicultural conversations; that was the argument that this article was making. And just the complexity with the overlap between religion and spirituality and ethnicity [for individuals with Jewish identities]. There was an article on atheism and there was an article on specifically discrimination against atheists. And the fourth one was an article on navigating spirituality issues with adolescents.

As you can see in these four examples, participants were very intentional in deciding what topics to include in their trainings around religion and spirituality. First, participants considered material that would be additive to the students' previous learning. Second, participants strived to have their students understand the beliefs, practices, and experiences of various religious and spiritual identities, noting that students need to know about R/S identities that are likely to be relevant to their future clients. Third, participants wanted to help students understand systems of religious privilege and oppression. Finally, participants wanted their students to appreciate that there are both positive and negative aspects about both religion and spirituality. Here are two examples of faculty members wanting to provide a balanced perspective:

I have ... [presented] the literature on positive and detrimental aspects of religious involvement because there is a complex landscape there and being able to present both sides of that and present the nuance of it. But I'm also not going to shy away from research that would show that certain kinds of religious beliefs are associated with some other kinds of prejudicial attitudes and behavior. But I'm not going to just present that, and/or am [not] just going to present the research that talks about the social and emotional benefits of religion and spiritual involvement. I try not to present one-sided perspectives on those things. (secular institution)

We also talk a lot about religion where it can sometimes be harmful to clients. You know, I have done research with a student on sexual minority issues and how certain religious groups can, you know, have ideas that are harmful to them. So, but, [my colleagues and myself] have also written about how there are within all religions there are pockets of more supportive communities, so there are ways to have both a strong religious identity

and a strong GLBTQ and whatever you want on the end identity. So, you know, it's not all negative. (religiously affiliated institution)

What is interesting about these two examples of balanced perspectives is that participants came from two different institution types (secular and religiously affiliated). An assumption could be made that someone at a secular institution might have a more negative bias towards religion and that someone at a religiously affiliated institution could have a more positive bias. However, these examples reveal that regardless of the type of institution participants worked at, they acknowledged that there are both positive and negative attributes about religion and spirituality.

In an additional example of ways participants incorporated topics of R/S into training, one participant at a religiously affiliated institution was enthusiastic about teaching a standalone course dedicated to spiritual interventions in counseling. The significance of this example is that very few participants worked in settings in which their students gained exposure to topics of R/S as a standalone course, which is perhaps another reason why the participants incorporated topics of R/S into previously established curriculum so broadly. In this standalone course, this person attended to "five components," which they named as follows: "Know thyself," "Know thy God," "Know thy client," "Know thy craft," and "This process is ever-evolving." They explained the layout of the class as follows:

If you're going to be a spiritually integrative or sensitive or open psychotherapist, there's five layers. The first is to know thyself. We're spending the first fifth of the class, maybe four weeks, whatever, on "What's your experience with these various expressions of communing with the infinite? What's your experience with prayer? What's your experience with sacred writing, sacred literature? What's your experience with sacred music? What's your experience with sacred rituals? What's your experience, etc." And so the students kind of have to start reflecting on their own experience, their own spirituality ... But it's know thyself, then know thy God. And the question I said, "What's your history with God?" Man, the papers they wrote on that were fascinating. I mean, one wrote a four-page poem.

The next step is know thy client. Once you're open for yourself, and then you're open to the client, then that brings in this multicultural aspect. That these clients come [with a] huge diversity of experience themselves, [and] their own history with the infinite,

right? ... The more you understand about that huge diversity and know thy client, the better you will do this work.

Then the next phase is know thy craft. It's like, okay, we've got this foundation of understanding self, understanding my conception and experience, my history with the infinite. Knowing my client and that great diversity now what do I do? Know thy craft. There's research on spiritual interventions, however that's defined. But there's a craft to this. To being able to be open, ethically, appropriately, not imposing your values but being open.

[The fifth stage is that] this process is ever-evolving. It's not like you're going to come out of my class, 16-weeks, and be competent, right? You're going to have to keep thinking about this on all those levels. Because your own spirituality is going to evolve, develop, go through qualitative changes.

This example of the spiritual interventions as a standalone class is also one of the few examples of times when a participant had a whole section on helping students refine their “craft” around spiritual interventions in counseling.

Like this individual, increasing students’ awareness of their own religious and spiritual attitudes and experiences was a goal of many of the study participants. In fact, they spoke about increasing students’ awareness before helping students to think about how religion and spirituality might influence others (e.g., clients). The idea that students must have some level of self-awareness before learning about the worldview of others is interesting in that there is an implication that students might learn information about others better if they have thought about themselves first. Research has shown that increasing students’ self-awareness may be a precursor to increasing students’ knowledge because the former creates a personal and emotional learning experience that is associated with better learning outcomes (Buckley & Foldy, 2010).

Though participants attempted to integrate topics of R/S into all of the courses they taught, they noted that attempts were easier to make in some classes than in other classes. Specifically, four participants struggled with knowing how to integrate topics of R/S across all of their courses, particularly for assessment and research methods coursework. Here are some examples of what was said:

I teach personality assessment, which is pretty hard to find a way to make fit with religion. Outside of talking about how religious people score higher on the L scale of the MMPI, I don't have much for integration there. (religiously affiliated institution)

With the more clinically focused classes, especially advanced psychopathology, I'm thinking of, it's a greater component because it's an aspect of diversity, and so we really hit that home. It's really core to what we talk about in terms of conceptualizing clients, so I think that it's much more integral to clinical skills or a clinical focused class ... In psychological assessment we didn't [integrate R/S] as much, our focus was really on learning tests, like the Wechsler series. But I did attempt to, as students would go out and do some testing and try to include those results as a hypothetical case, I did ask them to think about aspects of diversity that they could bring in and incorporate into their conceptualization ... What I'm having a harder time with is content, like research methods. In research methodology ... sometimes aspects of faith have been [integrated by] helping [students] use their faith perspective in viewing research. We have addressed faith in that sense through those kinds of activities. (religiously affiliated institution)

While that is a [qualitative] methods course, I don't necessarily present anything specific to religion and spirituality ... but we talk about topics for which qualitative work might be appropriate in terms of difficult[y] to access and [that] many aspects of religious or spiritual experience [might] not being very amenable to quantification. (secular institution)

Despite the challenges, these participants persisted in making attempts at integration that they thought could be beneficial to their students. Furthermore, the participants were considerate of how they might improve on their efforts in the future. For example, the participant who spoke about attempts in their research methodology course said,

Some of the things that I think I can do better or ways that I can better integrate faith and religious factors into our discussions are just being more explicit about it. In our research methods class, for example, [we could] have more explicit discussions about how faith and science interact, and how our worldview may influence our research and the theories that we use that drives our research, and even how we interpret data ... But I think what I would like to do in my research methods courses is to make sure that we have some good in-depth discussions about how faith and our world view and our own philosophies intersect with what we do as researchers. (religiously affiliated institution)

One observation about participants' narratives was that even though religion and spirituality topics were integrated across all courses, they were only a small part of the topics they discussed in their coursework. Whether topics of R/S were being incorporated into diversity

discussions or other course topics, participants felt that they had a lot of important topics to cover and it was challenging to cover topics of R/S in the depth they wanted. For example, in diversity-related coursework participants had several important dimensions of identity to discuss (e.g., race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity) that it was hard to dedicate a lot of space to discussing topics of R/S at length. They said,

I think for me, discussions and integration of issues around people's identity and social locations across a broad range of topics is really important, and I consider religion and spirituality to be one of those social locations that are important to people, or potentially important to people in one way or another. [Religion and spirituality] is something that I try to include in the classes that I teach. I teach a, sort of, orientation to the profession course. It's really just super introductory toe-in-the-water on diversity kinds of issues broadly construed. And so I always include readings on religion and spirituality in working with those topics in that class ... Percentage-wise, [R/S are integrated] one week out of 15 weeks. That doesn't mean it doesn't come up in conversation other times, but as far as formal assignments, the readings are formally assigned for one particular week. (secular institution)

I mean, if we're really talking about integrating faith and spirituality conversations specifically, I think it's a small part of maybe what we cover within one of our classes, a small fraction. Like maybe less than 5%, because we are trying to make sure that we cover all of the content knowledge and train everyone in the specific skills that they need too. (religiously affiliated institution)

I think [religion and spirituality] comes up in the first day in our referencing the university mission, and I'm at a [faith-based] university ... So that's the first day and a smaller amount of just introductory to the class. A whole three-hour session is devoted to religion and spirituality. And then it comes up [when] we have a lesson on indigenous healing practices, so that's a separate lesson which connects to spirituality. So that would be two full class periods out of a 16-week course. That's still not very much ... And so that's my struggle with teaching this [diversity] class, anyways, is trying to fit multiple identities and intersectionality into one semester. So it feels challenging ... Well, I think part of it feels challenging in just focusing on having to pick and choose and give justice to topics in a full semester class, knowing that a whole field of study focuses on any one of these topics ... There's ways that [religion and spirituality] gets incorporated or embedded particularly within communities of color, even if it's not like the sole topic of focus. (religiously affiliated institution)

It is very likely that other faculty members, particularly those without institutional expectations to integrate topics of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training, might feel similar

challenges in finding the time and space to incorporate topics of R/S among the variety of diversity topics and, without expectations, might not incorporate at all. As reflected in the final quote above, many participants attempted to alleviate the concerns about adequately covering topics of R/S by discussing topics of R/S through a lens of intersectionality, that is, that religion and spirituality are dimensions of identity that can intersect with other dimension of identities (i.e., race and ethnicity).

While the previous examples provided insight on comprehensive attempts across coursework, participants also made efforts to include topics of R/S in other forms of training beyond traditional classroom activities, like lectures. One participant who was a first-time professor at a secular institution described some interesting ways that they attempted to integrate respect for and sensitivity to religious and/or spiritual beliefs and practices of others. One of those ways involved statements in their syllabi:

One of the things that I've incorporated into my syllabi as a result of having some of these discussions is giving students time off for religious holidays and making that a priority. Saying that at the beginning of the semester [and] revisiting it throughout the semester as needed. I think that's one major way of being able to [integrate topics of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training].

In another example of attempts made outside of traditional classroom settings, a participant at a religiously affiliated institution encouraged their students to write about spirituality within their autobiographical internship application essay. They shared,

Students write one year in advance of applying for internship. So [religion and spirituality] is something that I want them to kind of help develop their autobiographical essay because at the beginning levels of a biographical essay, they kind of read [like] a "Why did I want to go to grad school?" essay rather than "Who have I become as a psychologist?" essay. And so, incorporating the spirituality piece is one of those things.

For two other participants, supervising research with students around topics relating to R/S was a means of having an impact in an alternative way:

I also do a good deal of research supervision, and I've supervised several dissertations and thesis projects that have involved topics related to religion and spirituality in various ways. So it's something I'm open to. I don't tell students, "Oh, no, you can't research that. That's not psychology, that's something else." That's not my perspective on things. (secular institution)

I've had students who joined my research team, and have worked on projects related to religion and spirituality, and I think they've had "ah-ha" moments. Often there are religiously diverse students involved in these research teams and so the students, like I said before, will learn from each other. (religiously affiliated institution)

Both of these participants talked about the impact on the learning environment through supervising student research. One learned a lot about the definitions of religion and spirituality from reading their students' literature reviews on the subject. The other led by example by having a research team that incorporates R/S topics and confirmed that by exposing students to religious diversity within the research team they learned valuable lessons from one another.

Beyond training activities themselves, participants also appreciated having cohorts of doctoral students, in their training programs, who hold diverse religious and spirituality identities. Participants saw value in having their students gain exposure to peers with diverse identities, and they experienced their students as being open to learning about their peers' diverse religious and spiritual cultures. In one example, a participant working at religiously affiliated institution described their training programs' intentional recruitment of students with religious and spiritual diverse beliefs and practices when they said,

I mean we do try to have a diverse student body, so we are on a [Christian] campus, but we have had several Orthodox Jewish students. And I think that being exposed to people who are of other religious backgrounds [and] understanding that, when we schedule events, we have to avoid the High Holidays, for example, is something that I think maybe a lot of Christian students had no clue. That it's maybe Rosh Hashanah or that we have to be aware when it is Ramadan if people are fasting.

These examples illustrate ways that participants, and members of their training programs, implemented strategies to model appropriate behaviors for students to respect and celebrate

religious diversity. Unfortunately, not all participants felt that their student body represented a variety of religious and/or identities and those particular participants craved more representation of religious and spiritual diversity for the reasons shared above.

In summary of this section describing participants' efforts to comprehensively include topics of R/S across training, participants put a lot of thought and effort into choosing assignments that they felt would help their students develop into multiculturally sensitive clinicians around topics of R/S. The following section will continue to explore participants' thoughtfulness in the types of teaching strategies they used in those attempts.

Using Multi-Modal Teaching Strategies to Meet Students' Needs

Participants' attempts were centered on meeting the students' training needs and participants were thoughtful in approaching topics of R/S in a variety of ways. This could be because the study participants recognized that students learn best in a variety of ways and thus used multi-modal teaching strategies to increase the likelihood of reaching students in ways that are most beneficial to them individually. One participant acknowledged this motivation when they said,

In that very first class, one of the questions I asked [the students] is, how do you learn best? Some people learn by writing a paper and reflecting, and it's like, some people learn best by painting. Some people learn best by writing poetry. Some people learn best by going and doing service, acting them. I said, "I want you to learn in the way that you learn best," and so I've really made it very flexible. Some students learn best, one, probably in debate. There's always an edge of contention to it. And that's not my favorite way. I try to modulate that, moderate that, but there's lots of ways for them to learn it. (religiously affiliated institution)

Some of the most commonly used classroom activities were (a) presenting questions to write about, (b) reading articles, and (c) watching videos. Participants assigned these reading, writing, and video activities hoping that students would self-reflect when doing the assignment and then use the class discussion to share their personal thoughts and reactions.

Participants were thoughtful in creating assignments that they believed would help the students reflect at a deep level. One participant, working at a secular institution, often assigned writing assignments to prompt students to explore aspects of their worldview, including R/S. They said, “We do a lot of reflective writing. But sometimes it may be a formal assignment where I may give them [the prompt], ‘Give me your theoretical orientation, including worldview in six or eight pages,’ just so it can be formal.” This participant further described what they hoped students would be reflecting on, saying,

[In my theories class] we talk about, obviously, theoretical orientations. And so in that, I have students talk about their worldview. So in that, I encourage them to start big globally with their worldview. And for many students, that is a faith-based worldview. And for some, it's not and that's okay. So we start with that, and as we talk about those kinds of papers, I do encourage them to be comprehensive, to really consider in-depth how the worldview, how they bring the worldview into their theoretical orientation, how it makes sense to them ... Not that I want students to have the perfect answer, but I want them to begin to think that how they live in the world, how they think about life can't be totally forgotten in therapy. You are who you are, and you can't not be who you are.

As you can see, this participant, like others, took a developmental perspective meaning that they did not expect their students to have the “perfect answer,” rather, the participants allowed space for their students to explore their religious and spiritual attitudes and values.

When talking about techniques they use to integrate R/S content, some participants described the use of readings:

So the way that my [diversity] class is structured is each week the students are assigned between four to six readings or videos that they do outside of class. And then the entire class is discussion that's facilitated by two of the students as a team. (secular institution)

The purpose of [assigning readings are] that we actually have discussion around them. I don't just have students turn in something written and then that's the end of that. Or just assume they're going to read it and that's the end of it. So discussions go in whatever direction they go. (secular institution)

[In my] doc seminar I wasn't necessarily lecturing, but trying to facilitate discussion about how they saw the articles, or what they thought about that. And so in that way it was, I think, useful. (religiously affiliated institution)

Within specific classes with the practicum series that we have focusing on how to do CBT for different religions ... I think it's called Incorporating Spirituality into Treatments. It's a great book. It talks about prayer, talks about meditation ... And that book has a lot of questions that you can ask clients, open-ended questions that you can ask clients about what religion means to them, what spirituality means to them, what they do to feel safe, what they do to feel connected to a greater purpose. And students really enjoyed those questions. And so [in class] we talk about how to [have those conversations with clients]. (religiously affiliated institution)

A couple of the participants shared about their use of videos:

I know there are movies and videos that we've shown [in the diversity class] like we've shown *Paper Clips*, for example. It's a really neat story about just sort of like a small Midwestern town. I think it's in the elementary school or middle school where they want to teach the kids about the Holocaust. They collect paper clips to represent the six million Jews that were exterminated, and it takes the students down all these paths of learning different things about religious intolerance, and they end up creating this ... memorial at the end of it [with] six million paper clips. Showing things like that and having discussion around them would be a tool. (secular institution)

[In my diversity course] I've showed videos about indigenous healing from SAMHSA that has incorporated a spirituality aspect and how they kind of see things in harmony with nature and with spirits that are within things and how to honor that and believing that mental illness comes from a spiritual disconnect. (religiously affiliated institution)

Participants used reading, writing, and video assignments as “tools” to facilitate their students’ learning. Participants’ selection of assignments allowed students to self-reflect and create spaces for students to explore their thoughts and reactions in vulnerable ways. Indeed, participants experienced many of their students reacting to their attempts (the activities) in emotional ways. The range of students’ reactions was discussed above in the *Theme: Managing the Multiple Layers of Complexity*, the following example gives a sense of some of the students’ responses:

I kind of say, "Okay, here's where we were. What have you guys been writing, what have you been thinking? Let's discuss. Let's challenge. Let's probe." And I guarantee you, in every class so far, somebody tears up and cries because it's just tender. These things are so sensitive and tender. (religiously affiliated institution)

Beyond these assignments, five participants used experiential activities in their attempts to address topics of R/S in training. In many cases, these experiential activities could be considered more “hands-on” learning exercises where students are more directly engaging in activities relating to topics of R/S. In general, participants assigned experiential activities as ways to increase students’ knowledge about diverse religious and spiritual cultures and/or to increase students’ skills around clinical application. Some of these activities included doing case conceptualizations using vignettes, resistance assignments, offering in-class prayer, inviting guest speakers, and participating in cultural immersion experiences.

One participant gave an example of using a resistance project as an activity to increase students’ awareness around topics of R/S when they said,

[In the diversity class] we try to do a lot of experiential kinds of exercises with folks to heighten awareness, and we have [students] do a resistance project. A lot of times [students] will pick, sometimes it’s sort of approaching religion as a whole, but oftentimes specific denominations like Christian or Muslim and say, "I’m resistant to this group." [Students] are then required to meet people from that group, have conversations with them, attend public events that are based in that particular faith. So those kinds of experiential things like that would be a tool. But we don't require that everyone do a resistance project on religion. So that's more like to a particular student. (secular institution)

Some participants used case vignettes to address religion and spirituality as diversity factors. These assignments offered chances for students to practice case conceptualization skills in addressing topics of R/S, particularly in classes where students are not actively seeing clients (e.g., in theories courses). Participants said:

[In my special topics in counseling course] I create mock families, and [students] do mock therapy. And the way I create the families is people have to role-play someone in a family who has at least two differences in social vocation than what they actually are. And so I actually sort of survey the class initially, and I create the families and almost because the predominant religious background is some variation of Christian, I end up creating families that are Jewish or Hindi or Muslim so that at least some members of the mock families are of a different religious background. And then there is a

component of that course where people have to research the different identities that are present in their mock families and present on those. (secular institution)

In psychopathology we used a lot of case scenarios and to think about various diversity factors, including faith and religion and spirituality. And I chose specific vignettes in which there were those kinds of factors presented for various hypothetical cases. And then we did do a discussion about it. I found a book, it's now several years old, but a book about when we used to [use] the Axis for DSM-IV, I found a great book written by a social worker in which she talks about kind of an Axis VI [related to religion and spirituality]. She used that as a way to really bring out an emphasis on diversity and strengths as well. And I do see faith, and religion, and spirituality as an aspect of strength that needs to be incorporated in both conceptualization as well as treatment planning. (religiously affiliated institution)

In other examples, two participants from religiously affiliated institutions shared that their classes often start with a prayer. One person said,

I always start class with a prayer, but I'll say, "Who would like to offer prayer today?" So it's great when I see some of these folks who are kind of from other faiths here at [Christian] school, when they'll say, "I want to offer the prayer." And they'll offer it in their tradition, whether that's in Hebrew or Hindi or whatever that might be. Oh, man, those are great moments.

This participant's use of prayer was a way for students to share a common experience of prayer from a variety of cultural backgrounds, which could serve two purposes. One purpose may be that the use of prayer increases the comfort of the student who is leading the prayer with sharing their own religious and spiritual background. This in turn might increase the other students' awareness about the student who is sharing. Second, this activity may provide students with an opportunity to learn about other cultures, thereby introducing a knowledge component of increasing competence around topics of R/S. The other participant who mentioned the use of prayer in class, also included a meditation activity meant to increase students' skills around ways topics of R/S can be integrated into clinical practice:

We pray together, we have mindfulness meditation in the classroom. So I usually start with a quick prayer. And then, somewhere around the middle...[after our break] we usually do a five-minute guided meditation so that they also have that in their toolkit to work with clients.

In other examples of experiential activities, three participants invited guest lecturers to talk to students about topics related to R/S. In one example, a participant described their experiences with a guest speaker coming to their class when they said,

I've had guest speakers come in. And in [City], we have the largest [Ethnic minority] population outside of [Country of Origin]. And so I had a guest speaker come and talk about mental health with the [Ethnic minority] community, and then someone talk about mental health experiences with the Southeast Asian community because we have a pretty large [Ethnic minority] population here. And so in those presentations, they've talked about religious beliefs in those communities. So with [an Ethnic minority], it is included. But [the lectures] also included Shamans and traditional healing practices. And then, in reference to indigenous healing, we've talked about what that can look like within indigenous populations, or Native American populations, which has also included indigenous healing practices and traditional healers and traditional spirituality. And so there's those guest speakers that have come in. (religiously affiliated institution)

This person went on to describe their thoughts about the students' reactions to the guest speakers when they said,

And so they've just really appreciated thinking outside traditional counseling methods or psychology. And that often integrates a sense of spirituality or the cosmos or ancestors or that sort of thing.

Similar to inviting a guest speaker, three participants use cultural immersion experiences in order to provide students with in-depth experiences learning about various religiously and spiritually diverse cultural groups. One individual shared that every few years their students have opportunities to travel the world and spend a few weeks learning about the culture of the community they visit, which does include religious and spiritual aspects of culture. This participant indicated that these cultural immersion experiences have been valuable ways for both the students, and the faculty, involved to learn first-hand about various religious and spiritual cultural groups. Here are some other examples of cultural immersion activities:

I took them to the local Mosque to meet with the Imams. That was because I wanted them to understand [the] refugee immigrant experience, [like] what would the issues [be] for the families, but then in this counseling center and having people talk about that directly.

And then I had the Imam come over and talk about what are the issues for these Muslim families and then he took us into the Mosque, which was just really awesome. He was really open about asking the question that people were probably afraid to ask, but you know it was on their mind. He just said, “You know we’re not terrorists, right?” (secular institution)

In [a] site visit, they performed a drum circle and some singing, which then incorporated traditional healing, indigenous healing methods to draw on or enhance believing that spirit-mind-body are interconnected. (religiously affiliated institution)

Using experiential activities, guest speakers, videos, and cultural immersion experiences are all powerful teaching tools that can serve several purposes. First, these types of activities can be ways for students to move out of intellectual learning towards more emotional learning. One participant gave an example of emotional learning when they described a time they attempted to facilitate their students’ learning about religious diversity by using a privilege walk activity, similar to privilege walks done for other cultural variables like race. This participant described this exercise as a way to “name ways that people benefit from Christian privilege” by having students step forward if they hold the privilege named and step back if they do not. However, the participant felt that this activity was hurtful to a student with an oppressed religious identity, and thus considered it not a helpful attempt. They described the attempt by saying,

I was talking about Christian privilege and tried to engage in this experiential activity because I remember having [experiential activities] helps people better connect to their emotional experiences, and so [the students were] staying in their head. We've tried to talk about Christian privilege [in an activity] similar to the privilege walk, but it was a little bit different, and [in this activity we were] naming ways that people benefit from Christian privilege, or don't, if they don't identify as Christian. And it was particularly upsetting to a student who identified as Muslim, I think, in ways that she hadn't necessarily thought about. I think she was kind of coming to her own identity, coming to terms with her own religious identity and where she was vacillating between trying to distance herself from Islam versus not. So I think this idea of having things named explicitly and having to kind of step forward or step back was not helpful. So I don't think that went well... There's other experiences, too, but with that particular activity around other identities of a privilege walk that made me think like, “I don't know this is the best activity to use,” particularly for the folks who were experiencing oppression around their identities, and it can feel even more problematic.

This example of an attempt that did not go as planned can help future educators who attempt to integrate topics of R/S consider the costs and benefits of completing activities like a privilege walk. For example, it may be that students who have a better sense of their R/S cultural identities may benefit from an experiential activity like a privilege walk, indicating that this activity may be better suited for advanced doctoral trainees than beginning trainees.

A second way that the use of experiential activities like guest speakers, videos, and cultural immersion exercises can be powerful teaching tools is that these activities provide students opportunities to hear stories related to topics of R/S directly from participants within a cultural community. The significance of students learning about religious and spiritual diversity from individuals who are experts may take pressure off faculty members to be knowledgeable on all topics. As some participants of this study reported feeling limited competency to address topics of R/S, the use of experiential activities could provide opportunities for faculty members to learn alongside the students. As one participant said about a guest speaker, “I plan on bringing in or identifying somebody who does have training in this area and organizing a training for the students. But it would also be for me too.”

Six participants passionately shared stories about the use of modeling as a personal and helpful means of integrating topics of religion and spirituality into doctoral training. The use of modeling signified the importance of participants’ ability to represent themselves as religious and/or spiritual, both personally and professionally. This was true for both of the male participants as they spoke about the importance of being their authentic selves and indicated that their religious identity was a part of that genuine self in professional spaces. One such participant (at a secular institution) said,

I think that my value is if I'm going to take a Judeo-Christian worldview, I don't need to compartmentalize it. I think that it should be able to be relevant wherever I am, whatever

I'm doing, and I believe that. I guess I genuinely try to exhibit that, model that, where I am and not apologize for that. I think sometimes in academics people of faith sometimes, it's like you have to apologize, and I don't want to do that. I just want to be genuine with it, and certainly from my own perspective, just believe that I can live my faith wherever I am, and yet not impose it on people, but just simply be who I am and live accordingly. And that includes how I think about psychology and how I think about people.

This participant's story also alludes to a tension in academic settings when people of faith sometimes feel like they cannot share the religious part of themselves while also upholding the ideals of the counseling psychology profession. Participants who referenced this experience spoke about helping their students see that they can be genuine to who they are without imposing their values on others.

The other participant (who is at a religiously affiliated institution) also noted the importance of being able to model an authentic integration of religious identities within the professional role of a counseling psychology educator. This participant shared that some of their departmental colleagues created a study soliciting students' feedback on training, and this participant reflected on the results related to instructor authenticity when they said,

The research shows that beyond [prayer and other teaching techniques] the thing where students really feel as though they have been spiritually strengthened by taking the class is by observing the faculty member him or herself. That they observe that the faculty members' own spirituality emerges in the course ... And it's not as much about the explicit techniques they use but is more about, they can read the faculty's own spirituality.

Both of these participants' descriptions of modeling imply that students learn as much from how they see faculty representing themselves as they do the specific methods used to integrate religion and spirituality.

In a more overt way of modeling, three participants described their attempts with modeling through self-disclosure. One person said,

I try not to talk too much about myself, but I think that talking about ourselves and our own development and process as clinicians and professionals and researchers, I do think it's helpful. And so in a measured way, I do discuss, and I want to be more thoughtful

about how I do this too, but I have engaged in measured discussion of my own process about how I integrate my faith with my clinical practice and research. We all learn, I think, from examples. And I think talking about my own process is a helpful example to my students about how they can integrate their faith into their practice as professionals. (religiously affiliated institution)

An important note of this participant's example was their thoughtfulness around sharing their personal experiences with students and self-disclosure as a way to facilitate their students' learning. This use of self-disclosure mirrors how clinicians might use self-disclosure when working with their clients.

Another participant also talked about self-disclosing but in a slightly different way. This person shared a story about how they respond in class to traumatic national events, such as the "mosque bombings in New Zealand, just like the synagogue bombings in Pittsburgh." They shared that,

When those things have happened, I basically toss whatever the plan for the day is out the window because people usually need to process it. And we could pretend nothing was happening that didn't impact people deeply, [that] it didn't make people feel scared to be whoever they were, Muslim, Jewish, Christian, whatever, and pretend that wasn't happening. But we don't do that. I always check in with people. And almost invariably, we're going to end up spending the time just processing it, just holding space to talk about it and people's reactions to it. I share my own personal reactions to those things.

In addition to allowing space to process traumatic events when they occur, this participant also offers a moment of silence in their class. They said, "It felt important to me to demonstrate solidarity with the Muslim community and to model that." This example of showing solidarity and sharing their own personal reactions is a way that this participant modeled qualities of a social justice advocate.

This sub-section, *Using Multi-Modal Teaching Strategies to Meet Students' Needs*, speaks to participants' efforts to use multi-modal teaching strategies to help students learn in a variety of ways. Participants valued when they perceived their students to be actively engaged in

the learning exercises presented. While participants generally seemed to put a lot of pressure on themselves to make meaningful attempts for their students, they released some of that pressure through the use of experiential exercises that would prevent them from having to teach about diverse religious groups for which they hold less familiarity. In fact, participants were excited that they too could learn about new religious and spiritual cultural groups alongside their students.

The following section will describe some of the participants' thoughts about what made their attempts successful.

Successes

While participants' attempts did not come without challenges, they generally defined the success of their attempts based on the students' engagement. Just like participants were being thoughtful about what they were including in their attempts, participants also valued when they saw their students being conscientious around topics of R/S. One individual explained,

I'm not sure exactly how I would assess [success], it's multilayered. I think about, at a very simple level, are students thinking about stuff? Do they retain content if there's concrete content that they could write about or incorporate into a case study or into their comprehensive exams or whatever it might be. There's another level of in what ways might I know if students are incorporating a self-reflective piece? Do I see it in their therapy work? Do I see them then having conversations in their therapy work? I might be remiss to attribute that solely to my talking about it in my class because I think [the students are] getting it a lot of other places, too. Ultimately, if we're talking about psychotherapy, then is it impacting their clients in a positive way when those conversations occur? Or just in the ways that students are in the room with their clients so that their clients feel welcome to be who they are. (secular institution)

More specifically, success seemed related to students' ability to think reflectively about what topics of R/S mean for them personally, thereby focusing on increasing self-awareness.

Participants said,

[In my theories class] I guess for me success is when students feel free to honestly think about religion and spirituality in terms of their worldview. When I think of worldview,

I'm thinking of, how did humans hit the planet? What brings meaning to us in life? Where does morality come from? Some big questions like that. For some, even what happens after death? But to bring that into these papers we need to think about what is it that humans basically need? What is it we fundamentally need to thrive and flourish as humans? And then, where do things go wrong ... How do people think about that in terms of their worldview? To me I feel like that's successful. (secular institution)

I think [my attempts in my diversity course are] successful in that [the students] really were thinking about their own experience, and I think a willingness to bring it into the room in conversation. They, in asking questions about, "What do I do when my beliefs really clash with somebody else" ... and I think those are really authentic questions, like, "what do I do, who do I call for help? ..." So one way I might express [success] is being able to show some vulnerability, which [the students] are able to do in learning. And just being curious in a way. (secular institution)

As this last person alluded to, many of the participants' examples of success indicated a perception that students were actively engaging in activities around religion and spirituality in vulnerable ways. It's important to note that participants did not only consider positive reactions from students to be successful, but also times when students were honest about their thoughts, questions, or concerns regarding topics of R/S.

Seven participants shared stories about times when students initiated conversations around topics of R/S, and many of these participants named their students' initiation as a successful attempt. Participants were enthusiastic to see that students were thinking about R/S, even when the participants' had not made intentional plans to discuss R/S during the activity. In many ways, these activities reinforced for the participants the relevance, to students, of topics of religion and spirituality, thereby increasing participants' recognition that these topics are important to integrate into counseling psychology doctoral training.

During their spiritual interventions course, one participant (working at a religiously affiliated institution) described a successful experience as when the students engaged in discussions around topics of R/S in meaningful ways. They recalled that their planned lecture

had come to a natural stopping point, and they proposed that they end class early for the day. The students responded in the following way:

[The students said,] “Let's continue something.” [the participant] said, “Well, we could do sacred music. We could go sing hymns.” [The students] said, “Oh, that's a great idea ...” So, they all took a hymn book and chose one of their favorite hymns and had to say, “This is my experience with this piece of Sacred music.” Oh my goodness, the feeling in that room. It was spontaneous on their part. One [student] talked about, “This hymn got me through really hard times earlier in my life,” and she's crying and everyone else is tearing up. And the next [student shared]. Oh, my goodness sakes! It was like, okay, that [sacred music activity] worked. That was not part of the plan. I was wrong to cut them loose early.

Similar to this example, a different participant (at a secular institution) described a time in which their students were vulnerable in sharing their thoughts and feelings about R/S. During the participant's member check interview, they reflected on some student-initiated conversations around topics of R/S during departmental diversity dialogues attended by both faculty and students. Some students spoke about feeling challenged by talking about their own religious identity. When describing this experience, the participant said,

[In] these diversity dialogues, we have started doing these activities where the students split off into pairs and talk about, we didn't ask them explicitly to talk about religion, but [there have been] two times that we've met and intentionally done this. One time we asked them to talk about a dimension of identity that isn't widely known about them, and the other was talk in your pairs about a dimension of identity where you differ. I think in those conversations, I imagine religion probably came up. And then, when we come back together as a larger group, not to talk about really the content, but the process of what it was like for them. So, in one of those meetings where we came back together as a larger group, students did voice that they felt scared to talk about religious identity ... [The students] talked about how, with the label as a religious person or the label of a conservative person, comes with all of these assumptions that may or may not be true for them.

This participant had some mixed personal reactions to this discussion, saying,

I think where it gets complicated for me, personally, is that I think most of the people who feel afraid to talk about their religious identity are Christian. And that is a dominant group identity, right? So even though it's not as common in the field, it's sort of like men in counseling psychology programs saying that they're oppressed, which maybe in some ways that's true. But, yeah, I felt like that wasn't being acknowledged. But the successful

part is that we were at least able to process those feelings. So one thing that the students talked about was that there's this fear of judgment from others. But is that fear kind of grounded in reality? And as a group, a lot of [students] were like, "I wouldn't judge anyone in here for being Christian."

This participant's personal feelings about topics of R/S led them to feel conflicted about the students' narratives. As indicated throughout their interview, this participant recognized the need to work through their own personal feelings around topics of R/S in order to better engage in attempts to integrate topics of R/S into doctoral training. The example that they gave about these student-initiated experiences likely contributed to their desire to keep addressing their own awareness, knowledge, and skills around teaching topics of R/S in counseling psychology doctoral training.

In a final example of student initiation and vulnerability, a third participant, who worked at a secular institution, explained that a student in their career development course brought up religion and spirituality during a classroom discussion. They stated,

When I teach a career class, I usually like to start some of my lectures by just throwing a question out there like, "What factors influence people's career decision-making?" and leave it very open-ended. I think one of my PhD students had brought up the idea of, "Well, what about religion? What about spirituality? Do you think those are up-and-coming trends, so to speak, in the field?" So that really started a discussion about how [R/S] could be integrated, what the research says.

According to this participant, as the semester went on other students also began thinking about how religion and spirituality may be relevant in vocational psychology work. The participant said,

[Students] in my class brought up questions, "Well, what role has your family played in shaping your career interests?" "What role has your religion played? What role has spirituality played, if any?" [The students] were clear in thinking about it, and this was kind of towards the end of the semester, and this kind of followed weeks after somebody had originally brought up religion, spirituality in class. I thought that was a success story.

Later in the interview, this participant shared that another positive outcome of this student-led experience was that it fueled their desire to integrate similar questions in future attempts integrating R/S. They stated,

I think [the classroom experience] was more conversational. It felt really natural to be talking about [R/S] and given that, I think I'm trying to be more intentional about integrating that into my classes ... I've kind of adopted [the student's] framework a little bit in thinking about, "Well, if you're spiritual, can you be religious? If you're religious, can you be spiritual?" and thinking about those existential ... questions.

In general, participants described these experiences as positive learning opportunities for both the students and for themselves. The implications of these student-initiated discussions were that faculty members do not always have to strategically integrate topics of R/S for students to learn about these subjects in meaningful ways. Participants noted that the students' spontaneous integration of the topics influenced their desire to make further attempts at integrating topics of R/S into future training curriculum.

This theme, *Thoughtfulness Around Attempts*, described participants' thoughtfulness in the attempts that they made across a variety of courses, such as diversity related classes, supervision of practicum students and interns, and psychopathology. Some participants felt that content related to R/S was more challenging to include in assessment and research methods courses than in other classes, like diversity focused courses. Despite these difficulties, participants continued to consider ways to integrate topics of R/S into the more challenging courses.

Inclusion of content ranged from having one class discussion around an article relevant to topics of R/S to having an entire class devoted to spiritually integrated interventions. Still, several participants noted that attempts to integrate topics of R/S as a distinct area represented a small part of diversity-related topics that participants included in their course content. Some

participants indicated that topics of R/S were challenging to integrate in depth, like in diversity-focused coursework, because there are many content areas to cover.

Participants noted the use of a variety of ways of integrating topics of religion and spirituality into doctoral training, including assigning readings and holding discussions. Other ways included cultural immersion and modeling. Participants also shared about ways that topics of R/S can be integrated in counseling psychology doctoral training outside of classroom discussions. Methods used by participants to integrate topics of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training mirrored the methods often used in counseling psychology training around other topics of cultural diversity (e.g., race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, and more). Moreover, the content of attempts made appears to fit well with the tripartite model of cultural competence (Sue et al., 1992), which looks at increasing students' awareness, knowledge, and skills around topics of R/S. Participants felt that their attempts were most successful when they saw students' engaging in attempts in meaningful ways.

Theme: Pressure To Do Well

Pressure to do well refers to times when participants described a sense of pressure to have their attempts go well. There were several areas that contributed to this sense of pressure. For some participants, the sense of pressure was because participants at religiously affiliated institutions were being evaluated on their inclusion of religion and spirituality into counseling psychology doctoral training. Other participants described a sense of pressure to include topics of R/S because they were aware that not all faculty members do integrate these topics into their coursework, therefore, participants of this study were aware that their students may only gain exposure to topics of R/S in their classes. Another area that contributed to the sense of pressure

came from study participants' desires to do right by their students, and the future clients that their students will someday serve.

Pressure Due to the Expectations of Religiously Affiliated Institutions

As previously noted in the *Theme: Managing the Multiple Layers of Complexity*, participants who worked at religiously affiliated institutions were cognizant of their institutions' mission to incorporate topics of R/S into all aspects of training. As such, participants felt some sense of pressure to perform well in their efforts. As you may recall, some participants were being evaluated on their ability to integrate topics of R/S into their courses, which presented some challenges for participants who felt pressured to meet their institution's needs rather than the training needs of the students. Additionally, some participants were aware that many students who came to their institution had religious and/or spiritual identities and beliefs and participants described a self-imposed pressure to do a good job for those students. While one might assume that incorporating topics of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training would be easier at a religiously affiliated institution than at a secular institution, this was not the general experience of participants of this study. Those at religiously affiliated institutions did hold different levels of considerations and stress around their attempts than their peers at secular institutions who were also making attempts.

The Responsibility to Make Attempts Falls on Participants

As previously mentioned, in cases where there was a lack of department-wide or specific training program standards around the integration of topics of R/S, the decision to integrate R/S become a personal choice of each departmental faculty member. Each individual department faculty members' attitude towards these topics (e.g., topics of R/S are not appropriate for training,

religion and spirituality are an important part of some clients' identities) was highly associated with whether they are incorporated into counseling psychology doctoral training.

Eight participants explicitly commented that, in general, faculty members' buy-in is a determining factor of whether topics of R/S are integrated into the training. To be clear, this area is describing participants' thoughts about faculty members in general, not directly describing their own perspectives, the latter of which will be discussed in the *Motivations Are Not Just Professional, They're Personal, Too* section below. Here are some examples of participant comments about individual faculty member choice about integrating topics of R/S:

[Integration] really comes down to each particular faculty member. We have some faculty members who have a very strong faith identity and others that don't, so I think it just varies person to person. (secular institution)

[Integration of topics of R/S] is dependent on having a faculty member who bought into the other courses. You have the one religion class that everybody has to take, but beyond that it's really hit or miss. You know, if you have a faculty member who is sympathetic and is willing to discuss religious issues, then the students get it, if you don't, you don't. (religiously affiliated institution)

The significance of the idea that the individual department faculty member determines integration is that students receive different training around topics of R/S based on the opinions and worldviews of their faculty members. As exhibited in the two quotes above, the participants felt that faculty members with religious or spiritual identities, or those who recognize topics of R/S as being an important cultural factor, are more likely to integrate them into training than those without those identities and beliefs. The effects of attempts at integrating R/S occurring through individual pursuits was that participants felt (a) alone in navigating successes and challenges around attempts, (b) a need to perform the attempt well, and (c) pressure to continue making attempts despite having a variety of program required training areas that need to be included.

Another implication of a lack of clear expectations around integrating topics of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training was that participants' attempts were some of their students' first exposure to topics of R/S in their graduate training. This circumstance represented another demand on the faculty members. Five participants, all from secular institutions, shared this observation regarding students' first exposure. Two examples of their experiences were as follows:

When [students] turn [in] their papers [on their worldview, including spirituality], [I will ask] how was that for you? Many of them will say it was the first-time they've had to think of their theoretical orientation in terms of a worldview. (secular institution)

I think before [R/S] was integrated into that one session of that one [diversity] class that I was teaching in the fall it was just never talked about at all. My students in this class said, "This is the first time we've ever talked about [R/S] in our professional contexts and in a professional context in this program..." So if you remember, I'm brand new to this program, so teaching that multi-cultural course, I had no context at all for who the students were, the program culture. Now I think (a) I feel more compelled to integrate it more into the training because I do think it's really important and (b) I guess, I understand that because it's never talked about, there's a lot of protectiveness on the part of the students and maybe defensiveness, and so being more cautious about how I bring it up. I don't know how to do this yet, but I know the next time I try to integrate [topics of R/S], I'm going to have to think a lot about how to do it in a way that will open people up instead of people just closing off and protecting themselves. (secular institution)

It is well documented in peer-reviewed literature that students within the broad field of psychology have typically received little formal training on topics of R/S (Brawer et al., 2002, Hage et al., 2006, Saunders et al., 2014; Schafer et al., 2011; Schulte et al., 2002; Vogel et al., 2013). Comments by participants of this study about students' lack of previous training on R/S topics confirms this literature, and also reveals efforts that participants of this study are making to rectify this training limitation.

Pressure of Wanting Better for Their Students

One concern that participants navigated was their own levels of competence, confidence, and comfort addressing topics of R/S as educators. Participants generally described receiving

minimal formal training about R/S through their own graduate coursework leaving several participants feeling underprepared and uncertain about how to approach various aspects of R/S training. Moreover, several participants shared that training around topics of R/S was not only minimal, but that their experiences in graduate training around their own R/S identities were negative and hurtful. As a result of their own experiences as graduate trainees, many participants expressed a self-imposed desire, perhaps even mission, to create better learning experiences for their students. This section will reveal participants own experiences as graduate trainees to help the reader understand the participants' urge to give their students' something different. The scenarios described add to the complexity of attempts because participants had to address their personal feelings that were triggered during their attempts while also attending to the feelings of their students.

This first example is a story of a participant for whom religion and spirituality was not a salient identity at the time of their graduate training. This meant that they had limited experience with exploring religion and spirituality in their personal life and this participant felt underprepared to address topics of R/S in their clinical work. Here is what they said,

I don't remember getting any training on religion and spirituality and how to integrate that into my clinical work ... I don't think I ever got a course around it, or I don't think I read an article about it in my PhD program. Not to say that there wasn't research or practice stuff out there. It's just not something I actively looked for. (secular institution)

Without intentional training from the professors in this participant's graduate program, this participant missed opportunities to explore the relevance of R/S for others, leaving them without the knowledge and tools they needed to address these topics with clients. This participant was already in clinical practice when they began addressing R/S as relevant to the needs of some clients. They said,

I remember I was at a practicum site. It was very religious-based. And I remember my supervisor talking about [religion and spirituality]. Well, my clinical supervisor and I had talked about how most of my clients were Jewish at this agency, and I was [a different religiously diverse identity], and how I could become more knowledgeable about that specific religion or specific culture ... I remember whatever training I did have, it was because of my supervisor, and it was more informal with him saying, "Okay. You need to understand. These are the differences. This is what Sabbath is." Just so I came across as more competent ... I wouldn't say that my professional training has really helped in how I do things now.

Like this participant, three other individuals talked about topics of religion and spirituality being integrated into their supervision training during either practicum or pre-doctoral internship. Previous literature on the integration of topics of R/S into clinical or counseling psychology doctoral training has revealed that if students do receive training on these topics elsewhere, during practicum or internship supervision is often when they are addressed (Brawer et al., 2002; Hage, 2006; Hage et al., 2006; Saunders et al., 2014; Schafer et al., 2011; Vogel et al., 2013). Vogel et al. (2013) noted that a limitation of a student's first exposure to training on topics of R/S occurring when the trainee is seeing clients is that, like described in the example above, they do not feel prepared to address R/S topics when they are relevant to the client. While the participant in the above example felt that their own graduate training experience did not directly help their attempts with integration of R/S, their attempts were fueled by a desire to ensure that their students received some preparation in areas that this person learned are important to address. They said with passion,

I think I'm more attuned to [topics of religion and spirituality] because it's something I didn't get in my program. And because I didn't get it, now I want to make sure that my current students get it. So I fill that gap and if I'm supposed to help train future counseling psychologists, I want them to go out, and I know the field's always changing, but I want them to go out with the most amount of knowledge and feel empowered with that knowledge as they can. So I think my lack of exposure to these topics really propelled me into making sure that my students don't feel a lack of exposure to it. (secular institution)

This participant's drive to make sure their students don't feel a lack of exposure to topics of R/S suggests a sense of personal responsibility to give their students a different learning experience than they had.

In addition to the example above, four other participants expressed feeling underprepared for how to discuss topics of R/S with students and how to address students varying responses to their attempts at integrating R/S because of the participants' lack of training as graduate students themselves. This lack of adequate preparation and exposure to R/S in their own training history seemed to leave the participants of this study feeling additional pressure now in their educator role. When describing an attempt that they felt was challenging, one participant reflected the lack of preparation to discuss therapy implications for diverse religious groups like "Judaism and Islam" when they said,

With regards to religion and spirituality, specifically, part of the challenge is my own lack of knowledge and comfort. So [I was] fumbling around with teaching, or talking about, or facilitating a discussion about something I don't particularly know a ton about myself.

In a different example, a participant talked about how the lack of modeling, specifically for addressing religion and spirituality, within their own graduate training contributed to noted challenges for responding to their students' negative reactions. They shared,

So much of my training was just based on watching my professors and supervisors and emulating them, and I never had any modeling [around topics of R/S]. And so I didn't know what to say or how to react to students because I never saw it done.

Likewise, another participant also reported that a lack of modeling around R/S made it challenging for them to know how to integrate their personal religious and spiritual identity into their professional roles. They explained,

I also think about my own training in which that was just about completely absent at the [University], and I want to do a lot better. In fact, I have been a Christian all my life and that's really been core to my identity, both as a person and as a professional, and as a

psychologist. Although I haven't known how to incorporate that well, and so I feel like I'm learning because I didn't get any training on that.

These three participants felt that if they had received opportunities to enhance their competencies around topics of R/S during their own training then they might be better equipped as faculty members to effectively attempt to integrate topics of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training.

Beyond feeling that their own training program did not integrate topics of R/S well, three participants also described feeling that their own religious beliefs and identities were unsupported within their graduate training program. As a result of the negative experiences these participants had as graduate students, they put pressure on themselves to ensure that their own students-in-training felt safe to discuss their religious and spiritual identities and beliefs. The following examples will describe participants' hurtful experiences as graduate students and reveal how those experiences contributed to their attempts as faculty members.

One participant reported that they felt challenged while in training because of the views within the field of psychology, and similarly their training program, that religious beliefs were associated with psychopathology. This participant had wished to incorporate their spiritual beliefs into their understanding of human behavior and psychology and felt their exploration of religious beliefs was discouraged in their training. They described their experiences saying,

My professional training did not involve [topics of R/S]. In fact, when I went to the University of [Midwest City], a wonderful school ... the first meeting I had with my advisor, he said, "Hmm, it's going to be very interesting having someone around here who has a religious commitment." I'm like, "What? I'm a novel case?" [Religion] just wasn't part of the game.

Despite feeling that their religious beliefs were unsupported by their training program, this participant was intentional to include spiritual topics, like determinism, when they wrote papers and completed their comprehensive exams, revealing their personal drive to make their training

fit with their value system. As a result of these experiences as a graduate student, this participant has been intentional to, as an instructor, model for students the ways in which religious and spiritual beliefs can be fostered within psychological frameworks and to authentically express their integrated religious, spiritual, and psychological worldviews. These efforts were influenced by their desire to have their students experience a more supportive learning environment than what they experienced through their graduate training.

Similar to the last example, a second participant sensed that their own training program was not a place where they could explore how their religious beliefs might fit within psychological perspectives. This participant described their experiences in graduate school stating that they felt that they could not discuss their R/S identity because of the negative reactions they might receive from others in their training program. They said,

I didn't really get trained in how to approach religion or spirituality with clients. I have a lot of my own personal baggage with that. I mentioned that in college and beginning of graduate school I was very religious and spiritual. Toward the end of graduate school and now, it was a gradual process, but I gradually became less and less religious over time. Now I can remember what it was like [as a religious person in graduate school], but now I'm in such a different place. I think I avoid that topic in my personal life because it's distressing. So, to tackle [religion and spirituality] as a psychologist, where so much of the professional is personal, I think that that made it difficult too.

This participant felt hurt by their experience in their training program in ways that led to emotional distress that they have not been able to process. This person recognized a need to address their personal thoughts and feelings around topics of R/S in order to prevent having reactions towards students that could be perceived as “anti-religious” attitudes.

In a different example, a third participant also described negative experiences they faced within their own graduate training program when they said,

To be perfectly honest, when I was in my graduate training there was not a recognition [of religious and spiritual identities]. In fact, Christianity, sometimes, was ridiculed and I felt like I had to be in the closet as far as how important my faith was to me. And so I

didn't even get to talk about it. And even in my professional life, for many years, there would be jokes about Jesus, and it didn't feel like a safe place to talk about my faith. And so I felt like I've been on my own for much of my professional life, as far as myself learning how to integrate my faith with my work. And so that's been another impetus to me to try to do as well as I can to help my students. And even if [my students] don't subscribe to a particular faith, or if they subscribe to it in a different way than I do, I want to make sure that I give them the opportunities and the training to think about that for our clients as well as ourselves. (religiously affiliated institution)

This participant felt unsafe disclosing their religious and spiritual identities and that sentiment carried into later professional roles. As a result of their experiences within their graduate training program and early professional roles, they really wanted to help their students explore how religion and spirituality may be important for them and/or for their clients. This participant also felt that they were still learning about the best methods for integrating topics of R/S in ways that feel safe for their students.

While participants generally felt that their training experiences as graduate students were insufficient in helping participants gain the necessary knowledge to make attempts as faculty members themselves, there were a few notable exceptions when participants did find their training to be helpful. One such participant had a mentoring experience and felt that they learned about R/S topics during their graduate training from a mentor who modeled being a professor who lived by their faith. This participant said,

[One way my professional training influenced my attempts was] in my graduate doctoral program I did have a mentor or professor who again, like me, is actively trying to live his faith. He would challenge us and I think I appreciated that. So really it was something that was modeled for me. I'm not saying this is something I came up with strictly on my own. I did it because it was modeled to me. And so I guess what I saw in him was the fact that I can genuinely be who I am and live my faith, and still be a good psychology faculty member, still work with people from all backgrounds, and work in an APA-accredited program and be okay with that and not have to apologize or hide it or be worried about it.

For this participant, their attempts to integrate topics of R/S into training were influenced by having watched their mentor. This participant spoke passionately about their own desire to be a

mentor to their students by authentically integrating their religious self into their role as an educator.

As another example of how a participant's own graduate training supported their future attempts at integrating R/S, one individual who attended both secular and religiously affiliated institutions for their graduate education, said,

I definitely think it helped going to a Christian institution that did not require a faith statement. Because I got to be exposed to what it was like to be a Christian thinking that I was going to be going to a Christian counseling program and realizing they're very different. Even upon acceptance, I didn't quite understand the differences between learning psychology at a Christian college, versus learning Christian counseling. We had to do a three-hour didactic on [a specific Christian] religion, and learning how to work with coworkers, patients, and community. And I was also really grateful for that because I think that, with anything that we learn in psychology, exposure to different demographics, different religions, different ethnicities [is helpful not only] for our personal development as psychologists, but just for our growth as humans. That was one thing that I was trained in that I'm super grateful for.

Additionally, this participant noted that their peers in their graduate training program came from diverse religious backgrounds, which helped this participant to learn about the experiences of members of various religious groups. They said, "Well, [religious and spiritual diversity is] something that I am comfortable talking about based on my own religious training and my own self-exploration of religion." Based on their comments, this participant's education at a religiously affiliated institution did help them to engage in self-exploration and increase their knowledge around topics of R/S in ways that increased their comfort to attempt to integrate religion and spirituality as a faculty member. Moreover, this participant was one who used cultural immersion exercises to help students learn about different religious groups, similar to their own learning experiences in graduate training.

In summary, many study participants generally expressed that they received minimal training or experiences around topics of R/S when they were graduate students. Some

participants reported that their lack of previous training around topics of R/S presented challenges as they reported feeling uncomfortable and/or unprepared to address topics of R/S with their own students. One observation about participants' responses was that several participants who graduated from their degree program over 20 years ago felt that there has been a shift towards more openness around topics of R/S within professional literature and training. Despite a greater sense of openness and an acknowledgement that more research around topics of R/S might exist, several participants who graduated more recently (even within the past couple of years) still felt that topics of R/S were difficult to approach and included minimally in their own graduate training experiences.

Some participants also felt their graduate training experience was an unsafe venue to discuss topics of R/S, including their own religious and spiritual beliefs and affiliations. Participants' experiences in their own graduate training was an influential factor in wanting to do better for their students than they had in their own professional training. This idea of doing better came in two forms. First, participants wanted their students to have exposure to training on the ways that R/S can be relevant to the work of counseling psychologists, training the participants felt was lacking in their own graduate education. Second, participants strived to create a different (e.g., supportive and safe) learning experience for their students.

In addition to feeling pressure to make attempts and to have those attempts go well, participants were traversing several tensions. Participants talked about how they moved through those tensions, which is described in the following theme.

Theme: Moving Through the Tension

Seven study participants told stories of times when they perceived there to be tensions that created challenges in their attempts to integrate topics of R/S into counseling psychology

doctoral training. First, participants talked about some professional tensions within members of the general field of psychology, tensions that trickled into the specific field of counseling psychology. These professional tensions included (a) anti-religious attitudes bias held by some psychologists, (b) questions of whether the field of psychology is the right place for discussions around religion and spirituality, and (c) concerns that talking about religion and spirituality will take away from valued discussions around other dimensions of cultural identity, like race and ethnicity. Participants saw these three tensions playing out in their attempts with students and in their interactions with colleagues. In another area of tension, three participants observed what they perceived as a “Christian and atheist” divide among students regarding discussions of religion and spirituality. An important note about this theme was that participants worked hard to move past these tensions in efforts to create better learning experiences for their students. They also saw changes within the professional field of psychology, specifically within the field of counseling psychology, that suggest a shift towards more in acceptance toward the inclusion of religion and spirituality into doctoral training for psychologists.

Tensions Across the Field of Psychology

Participants noted three areas of professional tensions that affected their attempts. In the first area of tension, participants specifically referenced a well-documented historical bias within the field of psychology that psychologists tend to hold negative views towards religion. These negative views are often associated with a recognition that some religions have expressed beliefs and practices that are oppressive, discriminatory, or conflict inducing (Allport & Ross, 1967; Hall et al., 2010; Hunsberger & Jackson, 2005; Nelson, 2009). Three participants at religiously affiliated institutions and one participant at a secular institution expressed their thoughts about negative attitudes that some members within the APA hold about religion and spirituality, and

one participant at a religiously affiliated institution described how this could negatively affect clinical practice. They said,

Not [all psychologists are], I don't want to say, anti-religious, but the psychological community is, and the U.S. population is not. And you are going to see a lot of people in therapy that you could harm by disrespecting their religious beliefs. You are not going to be a competent therapist, or competent career counselor, or even a competent researcher if you have a very narrow and negative view of religious experience.

This participant's recognition that having negative biases against topics of religion may mean that a therapist is not competent to include R/S in treatment and may unintentionally harm clients who are religious and want to address topics of R/S. Much of the social science literature on integrating topics of R/S into clinical practice suggests that trainees need training around topics of R/S in order to better serve clients who want to address religion and spirituality (APA, 2017b).

In a second example, a participant at a religiously affiliated institution thought that members of the APA have shown progress in their work to be inclusive of "all individuals," but suggested that there is still work that affiliates of the APA must do to reduce the bias against Christians. They said,

I think based on the history of APA, they are very much dedicated to righting the wrongs of their past, and not repeating mistakes. I think that they want to be an organization that protects the public, research, and psychologists. I think that they have good effort and guidelines in place to make sure that all individuals feel [a] welcomed and accepted, [b] have access to education, research, treatment, and information. But, I think they still have a long way to go in helping people who identify, specifically, as Christians. I feel that there's still a bias against Christians, even at the APA level. And that's based off of memberships in organizations that I've held and just personally seeing persecution against Christians.

This second participants' comment spoke to a tension that was present for several participants of this study who identified as Christian at some point in their life, and who did not (and currently do not) feel supported by their governing professional association.

A third example from a participant at a religiously affiliated institution revealed not only the tension caused by negative views, but also a divide among sub-disciplines of psychology regarding whether topics of R/S are appropriate to include in psychological research, clinical practice, and training. This participant reflected on both of these areas of tension they experienced when they said,

On the one hand, APA has divisions that acknowledge spirituality. On the other hand, APA has divisions that see religious institutions as homophobic and bigoted. So, there's a tension there that I think I experience ... I think within APA there's tension among divisions, which just ends up playing out in our backyard. Whether we exist or not, those tensions would be there.

This individual felt that this tension within the APA was happening in their own “backyard,” meaning their academic department. They taught in a counseling psychology training program housed in a multi-disciplinary department. This participant described an “us-versus-them” phenomenon within their department in which their colleagues in another discipline of psychology did not feel the need to address philosophical, or spiritual, psychology. Alternatively, their counseling psychology colleagues did use spiritual philosophies in their training. This participant explained,

I think the differences between the [two specializations of psychology within the] department emerged because of the difference in personnel and in their allegiance to certain philosophies or professional organizations. So while [the specialization A training program] is APA-accredited, [counseling psychology] is also APA accredited. But I think [faculty members in specialization A] hold APA in a higher status position than we do relative to our underlying philosophy and how we see the world. So I think in a lot of ways, [faculty members in specialization A] are more modernist, post-modern. We are more open to integrating spirituality. I think their modernism, and this can be a pejorative term, I don't mean it as a pejorative, but their scientism precludes them from opening up to some of the things that my faculty tend to open up to. Not that we don't understand science and publish, and can do all that stuff, but we don't hold it in the same privilege as perhaps they do.

When asked how the perceived tension between different divisions within the APA and within their department affected their attempts to integrate topics of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training, this participant stated,

I think it makes [members of his counseling psychology training program] be more careful and nuanced in how we do things because we know we can be misperceived. We know we can be misperceived by some in APA as simply religionists rather than psychologists. And we can be discounted and dismissed. I think it forces us to become deeper and more nuanced and a little more sophisticated in how we navigate those crosscurrents.

They went on to describe the “deeper and more nuanced” approach that they took and that they saw their counseling psychology colleagues using when they said,

I find that a lot with students, at my university, is that they have to navigate crosscurrents. Actually, [navigating crosscurrents] drives their development. One of the things we frequently hear from internship sites is, “Your students are much more advanced in their philosophical understanding than most of our interns.” I think that's because they're forced to be. It's like, "Look. Here's a tension. You're going to have to transcend or navigate this." And it forces them to go deeper. And I think that it does that to us as well.

It seems that the tension this participant experienced was a driving influence for them, and their colleagues, to help students understand the religious and spiritual perspectives of psychology.

Participants described a third area of professional tension which was a perceived hierarchy among diversity topics within the field of psychology, particularly within counseling psychology, in which religion and spirituality often come in last place. This hierarchy fits with previous social science literature around the nature of the inclusion of topics of R/S in the training of psychologists (Vogel et al., 2013). The participants said,

Now, [faculty members who support topics of R/S being integrated into training] have turned over and new people come in and have been educated in programs that didn't think religion was a big deal. And so they're kind of like, “Well, why are we doing that? But cultural training should be about race. That's what I learned at XYZ University,” the other stuff as well, fluff that goes along with it, but really it's all race. (religiously affiliated institution)

Counseling psychology as a field, I think, is very traditional in the sense that it focuses so much on race, ethnicity, age, gender differences, and I think in the past couple of years, it's started to get better about gender and sexual identity issues. But, I don't think religion or spirituality are things that counseling psychologists are regularly thinking about to be completely honest ... I don't think we've done a good enough job as a field to consider religion and spirituality as part of the contextual factors model. (secular institution)

I think [in the field of psychology], we are quicker to recognize race relations as an important area to target. And then gender, age, and disability. I feel religion is the last one that's kind of come on the scene. (religiously affiliated institution)

Given that individuals with White or European American identities, the privileged group in this dynamic, may be more likely to share the critique that topics of race and ethnicity are too much of a focus in a multicultural diversity conversation, it is important to note that not all of these examples came from individuals who are White/European Americans. Participants in this study felt that the field of psychology, particularly counseling psychology, could be doing better at integrating topics of R/S into doctoral training.

Several participants spoke to how these professional tensions within the field of psychology are trickling down to negatively affect their relationships with their colleagues and their students. These will be further discussed in the next two sections.

Tension With Colleagues

Four participants discussed challenges that occurred when they perceived their colleagues as having negative views towards religion. One participant at a secular institution shared that it was challenging for them to talk to their colleagues about their personal thoughts on topics of R/S due to fear of criticism. The participant shared,

One way I struggle in my department is I don't necessarily feel that free to talk about religion and spirituality. You know, I feel like I can talk about it with students maybe, but I'm not as comfortable talking about that with colleagues. It could just be a few people with strong opinions that are very critical of our own personal religious practice, so that kind of shuts down the [conversation]. I guess I would say my lack of success would be, I would be hesitant to say a lot about what I do with colleagues.

The participant did not directly expand on what contributed to their inability to talk to colleagues about their attempts to integrate topics of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training.

Based on the participant's comment that they are hesitant to share with their colleagues, it is possible that the participant might feel they are missing opportunities to discuss with others how to integrate topics of R/S into training. This participant's sense of not being able to talk to their colleagues was brought up when they were asked to describe an attempt where they did not feel as successful. The fact that this participant noted that their lack of success was not about the students or their own approach, but rather a discomfort with their colleagues, speaks to the importance of having a supportive training environment around topics of religion and spirituality.

Likewise, three other participants spoke about how negative views held by their colleagues created tensions within the participants' departments. For two of these participants, the tension was over whether all faculty members within their respective departments were actually invested in integrating topics of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training. One participant at a religiously affiliated institution described a history of faculty turnover in their program. They noted that in their almost 30 years of teaching there have been periods when topics of R/S received support from the members of the training program and other times when some faculty members have not held strong investment in the integration of topics of R/S. They shared,

All the faculty, back then, [had] bought into the idea that religion was something that we should include. As they have retired, and we have hired new faculty members, we're going back to the "religion is something that we put up with because we are on a religious campus, but we certainly don't subscribe to any religious ideas"... It's a struggle that regenerates itself every few years.

In times when this participant felt less supportive attitudes from their colleagues, they reported a sense that they needed to stand up for religious students in their training program. They said,

I've had some deeply religious students in this program, and I feel like I sometimes need to protect them. They'll come and have some painful discussions about how do they make sure that they are being true to themselves, and their own religious identities, and also not harming their clients. [The students] work really hard to walk that line. I've had a couple who are clergy in different religions and those discussions have been hard. I try to make it safe for them to come and talk about it because I don't know that it is in all cases. I think that they may have been told [by other faculty members in the department] "Well, you have your religious thing, but this is psychology, and we are not going to put up with those ridiculous ideas here."

In response to that struggle, this participant shared that for them and their colleagues who are invested, there is a need to work hard to bring non-invested individuals along. They shared,

Whenever we have faculty turnover, it's a matter of trying to bring people on board ... I think it made [my invested colleagues and myself] feel like we needed to push harder, that we were going to get resistance. Maybe we had a little chip on our shoulders. And so, when you talk about attempts to integrate it, it's kind of like, "We're going to have to work hard to do this."

Similarly, a participant at a secular institution also described a need to work with colleagues to help "bring along" some faculty members within their department. This participant noted that some faculty members outside of the counseling psychology discipline have not always share the same investment in addressing general issues of diversity, including religion and spirituality, within training. They said,

I think, even if I talk about it in professional issues, not everyone [in my department] is a counseling psychologist, and not everyone's going to have diversity concerns front and center on their radar. Probably what I've experienced [is that] there [are] students not even coming back to me directly so much, as just sort of recognizing bias in another faculty member or feeling certain comments may not have been well-received.

This participant divulged that in response to being in a department where some faculty members are not invested in diversity topics, they work hard to help them become more sensitive to these areas. They said,

And [my colleague] and I have had several conversations about, just in general, how to bring along faculty members in the department who may not be as sensitive to issues of diversity including religion, among others. Again, people are on a spectrum there in terms of how attentive they are to those issues.

Both of these examples revealed an important process that seems to positively influence attempts made to integrate topics of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training. The process is to work alongside colleagues to convince other faculty members who are not invested in topics of R/S to be willing to be more sensitive to religion and spirituality as areas of diversity and to then integrate topics of R/S into training. It would be interesting to have a better understanding of what participants specifically did to attempt to bring their colleagues along in the effort to integrate R/S topics. Nonetheless, efforts by these two participants to work with their supportive colleagues suggests that attempts are better supported by having a community of individuals who are advocating for the same cause.

Students' Hesitancy and Difficulty

Participants noticed that many of their students seemed to be hesitant to want to discuss topics of R/S in counseling. Participants thought that their students were hesitant for multiple reasons, ones that echo the professional tensions previously mentioned in this theme. These tensions included questions of whether topics of R/S were (a) scientific enough to integrate into academia and (b) taboo, or too personal, to discuss in training or in clinical work. It is notable that participants across both secular and religiously affiliated institutions saw this hesitancy from students, indicating that despite working within a religious institution, students still questioned the appropriateness to incorporate religion and spirituality into their professional work.

Participants made the following comments:

I also have heard peers and students say that they do avoid that topic with clients because they don't think it's within their role, as a therapist, to talk about this stuff. It's more for the role of a pastor or a spiritual leader. And so an analogy that I think about a lot, and that actually one of my students mentioned this in their reflection paper, is that it's a lot like talking about sex in therapy. [Student therapists] feel very incompetent, because [they] don't have a lot of training about sex or sexual satisfaction. It's such a huge part of most people's lives and is so important for well-being and a part of who you are. And we

just don't touch it in therapy. So yeah, it's how I think about [religion and spirituality as a] taboo subject. (secular institution)

The other thing that I thought of was that maybe students just, it may not be their prior training, it may be just it feels like a very personal topic, and people aren't maybe sure that something that they consider is often personal or somewhat private is okay for scholarly inquiry. (secular institution)

I think sometimes students are a little fearful that they don't understand themselves enough to go there, or maybe they're afraid that if I talk about that in therapy, it may get too complex for me, or may go down the road I'm not prepared to go down. I think that maybe some of their timidity with that. (secular institution)

As shown in these three examples, participants' thought that students assumed that topics of religion and spirituality were too personal or outside of their role as therapist to address with clients, and thus speculated that is what made it difficult for the students to talk about R/S in their coursework.

Participants also perceived hesitancy from students to address topics of R/S in doctoral training due to uncertainty about how religion and spiritual fit within scientific models. Some shared,

[The students expressed] some confusion about whether or not this is the place [to discuss topics of R/S]. In the academy there seems to be a very clear, "We are science-based. We are objective." And so it might feel unsafe to them to bring this up, or "Is this evidence based?" So I'm wondering if that's part of the hesitancy, too, is just how you've been socialized in the academy. (religiously affiliated institution)

I think students who come into our doctoral program directly from a bachelor's degree, I think the doctoral level of training in psychology is still sort of like, "We do science. We don't do religion. Those things are different." There is evidence that students can exhibit some hesitancy to address topics of religion and spirituality within counseling or academic professional roles. (secular institution)

Some participants explored the potential conflict between R/S and the field of psychology, and share their efforts to move beyond that tension to bridge the gap. They stated,

I think in psychology, a lot of times, we detach ourselves from [spirituality]. We don't want to address that. Especially, if we have some kind of script that we're following for [Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)] intervention or stuff like that, I think, sometimes,

we lose the person for the script ... I think sometimes [the students] feel like, "If I'm going to take a CBT orientation, I have to hold it there. I can't explore people, just the reality of living life" ... I think students almost sometimes they need permission to go beyond [the CBT orientation] because you're still a student. You're still a student, and you start by formulating this thing, you get this image of what's there be like, and how am I supposed to act in there as a therapist and what can I talk about and not talk about? I think what I'm trying to do is to help students begin to see that spirituality is a part of human life thing, and it's okay to talk about that. (secular institution)

[One challenge with integrating R/S] is the scientific nature of psychology, and psychotherapy, and evidence-based practice. That's not something I'm particularly pressed about in my class because I'm already trying to push a little bit against [the scientific nature of psychology]. I think evidence-based practice is important but also how we can still integrate conversations of identity within that. I think when it comes to spirituality, people, maybe myself included, if you think of Western psychology, there's less ability to say or measure whether there's some divine presence or some metaphysical force or something like that. (religiously affiliated institution)

I think this part of a greater need to expand [my training program's] diversity and inclusion in general. I feel a ridged adherence to the cannon of psychology and developmental scientists, in that way, an evidence-based practice, which is important. There [is] some diversity in evidence-based practice as well in that who has written about that. I think that the students read a lot of researchers who are straight, White, men and I think once you are in more traditional literature, I don't know if you are going to find a lot of exposure to thinking about religion and spirituality in training. (secular institution)

Some participants' noted that many traditional psychological theories are grounded within the framework of Western perspectives, and created by individuals with dominate cultural worldviews. Their concern was that perspectives based on dominant cultural groups may exclude topics, like religion and spirituality, which can show up differently across cultural groups. Both of these participants were people of color and their comments express a need to expand the research and theories used in training that are specifically comprised of perspectives of diverse populations, including those that are religious and spiritual. Participants of this study seemed to be proactively accomplishing this goal of expanding diversity training for counseling psychology doctoral students in their attempts to integrate topics of R/S into the courses they taught.

In addition to recognizing that students might be hesitant to address topics of R/S in training, five participants commented on how they perceived students to respond differently to topics of R/S as compared to other topics of diversity, such as race and ethnicity. While one participant at a secular institution expressed that discussing race was the most difficult dialogue they had within their program, the other four participants felt that students had difficulty with conversations around religion and spirituality more than other diversity topics. Two participants shared,

In some ways, it seems like for our students to think about how faith is a diversity factor, I think sometimes it is harder than other cultural factors. And I wonder if it's, I'm hypothesizing that it stems from, potentially for some students, less familiarity with spirituality and religion and thinking about how it might affect people's daily lives or their functioning or their thinking and well-being. (religiously affiliated institution)

I was just really shocked because any other marginalized group that we would talk about in the class they would be very open to talking about. The class is also mostly White students. We talk a lot about racism. And many of the students have dominant group identities, and they are not defensive talking about their privilege in those areas. So it was really jarring to me. (secular institution)

In these examples, participants found religion and spirituality to be a more challenging discussion to have than other diversity topics, such as race. This highlights another aspect of tension, that of R/S with other areas of diversity. It is important to note that there could be a lot of reasons why topics of R/S may be more difficult to discuss than other topics of diversity. These may include factors like faculty members' comfort with and competence to lead such discussions, the identity development of participants in the discussion, and interpersonal dynamics of students in the class. In the future it could be helpful to further explore how some of these factors interact with one another to effect attempts made to integrate topics of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training.

This next section will describe another form of tension that participants experienced, the Christian and atheist divide among students.

Christian and Atheist Divide

Three participants spoke about some perceived tensions between students based on religious and/or spiritual identities. One participant at a religiously affiliated institution described what they referred to as a “Christian and atheist divide,” in response to their integration of R/S, which was also a concern expressed by another participant at a secular institution. The participants said,

I think the biggest [considerations when creating assignments] is some of the biases that students come in with. So, especially, in the first one to two years, again, the Christians want it to be more Christian. The atheists want it to be way less Christian. And I know there's more than just Christians and atheists. But right now, that's the big divide in our program. (religiously affiliated institution)

I think the identity of the students really impacted the process regardless of how they identified. I think in the class, it was only Christian students and atheist/agnostic students. I don't think we've had any Muslim or Jewish or other religious identities in there. But I think that the religious students felt in some way, kind of, attacked might be too strong of a word, but sort of like they were being challenged. And I think that the atheist students were sort of unwilling to, not all of them, there were two students who identified as atheist that they were very open to exploring and kind of stepping into the world of the religious person. (secular institution)

The second individual went on to share more about the challenges for Christian students. They noted that for some students their religious identity tends to be associated with conservative political views. They indicated that some of their students who identified as Christian “talked about how the label as a religious person or the label of a conservative person comes with all of these assumptions that may or may not be true for them.” Similarly, a third participant (from a religiously affiliated institution) talked about their students’ frustration with their peers’ assumptions about students’ religious identities being linked to political affiliation. They said,

But then [the discussion on Christian privilege] so sparked [frustration for] folks who identify as Christian feeling lumped into this right-wing fundamentalist Christianity. And so ways they've felt frustrated about that, and felt like they didn't want to out themselves as Christian because of that and the assumptions people make.

Students who identified as Christian did not seem to feel safe identifying religiously during discussions within classroom settings or during department-wide diversity discussions. As a result of the religious divide, all three participants were influenced by a desire to reduce this tension and divide for students by creating safe spaces.

One way that participants responded to students' range of reactions was to consider how to present attempts in ways that are more sensitive to students' concerns. One participant reported that they (and their colleagues also) have attempted to be "sensitive" towards the ways they discuss topics of R/S in efforts to "error on the side of caution." Specifically, this participant discussed their efforts to create a safe space for students of all identities to explore topics of R/S when they said,

[Student's] need to feel that they can explore that [R/S] part of their identity in a safe space. And so we want that to happen in the classroom for any spiritual affiliation. We want them to feel comfortable talking about their religion in a safe space.

To create that safe space, this participant went on to note that they set expectations in the beginning of their class by talking about the APA guidelines and the need to be sensitive towards religion in order to be culturally competent therapists. Additionally, this participant explicitly took the time to "[remind] people that I don't tolerate interrupting one another, that I will challenge people to be mindful of their assumptions and their language and their reactions."

Other ways that this participant showed sensitivity towards their students was by using the term spirituality rather than religion, encouraging respectful conversations among their students, and attempting to draw out balanced perspectives in conversation.

Similarly, in response to their students' varied reactions, a different participant who was working at a secular institution also encouraged their students to be open to integrating topics of R/S. This participant found that they were being conscientious towards the way they presented attempts when they said,

I think [students varied reactions] make me just consider how I'm presenting [my attempts]. Because I want to make sure that students hear me. That I do believe it's an important topic, but I am not going to impose my worldview on them. I think that's the thing I think about more than anything. I want to make sure that I think it's important to talk about spirituality, but I don't feel like I'm imposing my worldview on you and, if you don't agree with me, then I'll think less of you. Of course, the students, they think, "Oh, now I'm going to get a worse grade." Or whatever it may be. I've been doing this long enough, I'm not worried that somebody's going to complain to the department chair and somebody's going to complain to the dean.

In a final example, a third participant at a religiously affiliated institution made an attempt to discuss reasons why religious people would be drawn to certain careers and a student responded in a way that the participant perceived as being "hostile to the idea of religion." Upon reflecting on the scenario, this participant talked about being more cautious in future attempts when they said,

I want to think that I wouldn't have made [my attempt] more watered down than it should have been, but I think it was. I mean it kind of really set me back to have a reaction like that. And so, I think I probably added disclaimers the next time around and a Seinfeld [statement like], "not that there's anything wrong with that. Yes, you can be an agnostic and an atheist and have passionate belief in social justice," and all those kind of things.

Across these examples, participants expressed a desire to continue with their attempts to engage in dialogues around topics of R/S with students but felt that they needed to make modifications (e.g., proceed with caution and preface the conversation) in order to increase students' ability to safely engage in the conversation.

The Climate Around R/S is Changing

Despite the tensions reported thus far in this section, it is important to note that three participants shared stories of how the field of psychology has changed over time to be more sensitive towards religion and spirituality as cultural factors. One participant at a secular institution shared their thoughts around the growth of the field. When asked to describe what they felt was going well in their attempts, the participant reported that their attempts have gone very well due to the students' openness to discuss topics of R/S. They contrasted their students' current (more positive) reactions to past experiences when students were more dismissive of the idea of R/S in psychological training. They said,

I've been in the field for 30 years. I've seen changes over time, and I think there's less push back [about topics of R/S] than there used to be. But I've certainly had those kinds of conversations where they are like, "Well, I was taught in undergrad that psychology and religion don't mix. And those are two different things. Or it's not scientific or whatever." Those kinds of conversations. But I can't think of an instance of somebody saying like, "I just don't think it's appropriate that we talk about this; this is off limits."

This participant felt that over time their students have expressed fewer negative reactions to their attempts to integrate R/S into doctoral training. They indicated this has had a positive influence because students are actively engaging in learning around topics of R/S.

Two participants at religiously affiliated institutions discussed recent changes they saw within the field of psychology to increase research around topics of R/S. One of these participants believed that when compared to other dimensions of cultural identities, topics of R/S are only recently being recognized as cultural variables within psychological research. They said, "I feel it's really been this movement that's happened within the last 10 to 15 years to recognize in the [psychology] research that spirituality and religion matter." This comment suggests that beyond having recent research that has come out around topics of R/S within the field of

psychology, this participant felt that the literature supports the notion that topics of R/S are important.

When asked to describe any professional factors that have influenced their attempts to integrate topics of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training, another participant at a religiously affiliated institution said they have experienced more openness to topics of R/S within psychology. In reflecting upon their own graduate psychology training program where research and discussions of philosophical, and spiritual, perspectives were not well received by faculty in their department, they said,

There wasn't much in my professional training or professional alliances that led me [to discuss topics of R/S in training], no. And it may be because I grew up in a different era than you're growing up. I mean, for you to do this dissertation and to have this conversation, 40 years ago, when I was young in the mountains, it wouldn't happen. So the times have changed and things are much more open now for you than they ever were for me.

Both of these examples speak to the growth these two participants (both at a religiously affiliated institution) have seen in the field of psychology to integrate topics of R/S into research, as evidenced by research being done on this topic (including this research study). As topics of R/S continue to be integrated into psychological research, it is possible that new perspectives will continue to increase openness and reduce many of the tensions that have been discussed throughout this section.

This *Theme: Moving Through the Tension*, described several dichotomies of opinion among some psychologists regarding the appropriateness of including topics of R/S into psychological perspectives, research, and clinical practice. These dichotomies included tensions between (a) psychologists with anti-religious attitudes and those who are respectful of religion; (b) science and religion; and (c) psychologists who believe that diversity training should only be on demographic variables of race and ethnicity, and those who believe several demographic

variables, including R/S, are important to address. While participants reported experiencing more openness in the psychology field to the integration of topics of R/S, it is clear that the tensions described in this section also continue to present challenges for these participants, particularly around receiving social support from colleagues. Participants are also working hard to reduce the tension for their students.

As noted at various points throughout this chapter, participants had a vested interest in training their counseling psychology doctoral students around topics of R/S. The following theme will describe participants' personal motivations to make attempts.

Theme: Motivations Are Not Just Professional, They're Personal, Too

As previously noted, the choice to integrate topics of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training is often dependent on each individual faculty member. Even for participants at religiously affiliated institutions, there was a sense that R/S should be included in counseling psychology doctoral training, but the areas of content and depth to which those topics were integrated was up to each individual. Participants of this study were highly motivated in their attempts, in part, because of their personal feelings that integrating topics of R/S is an important part of training. This section will explore how (a) participants personal beliefs, identities, and/or experiences around R/S; (b) personal attribute of valuing others; and (c) investment in learning about topics of R/S contributed to their attempts to address R/S.

Participants' R/S Beliefs, Identities, and/or Experiences

All ten participants had some religious or spiritual beliefs, identities, and/or experiences that influenced their desire to integrate topics of R/S into training and understand the value of R/S to others. This section will be broken into multiple sections. First will be a look at the influences of participants who identified as religious or spiritual at the time of the study. Second

will be a discussion on participants who were raised with religious upbringings, but no longer identify as religious. Third will be a look at a participant who currently identified as spiritual, which is different from the beliefs and affiliations of their upbringing.

Participants with R/S Identities

Five study participants self-identified as religious and spiritual. Their personal religious and spiritual beliefs and practices were described as being so much a part of who they are personally that R/S have become a part of their professional identity as well. R/S was so important to them that each participant wanted to incorporate topics of R/S into their teaching, which may be different for faculty members who are not religious or spiritual. Following are statements by participants; the first two are from individuals at secular institutions, followed by three examples from participants at religiously affiliated institutions.

As far as the students, in some ways I talk about my own experience. I'm active in the [Christian] church, so [talking about my own religious experience is] a way of introducing who I am and why [topics of R/S] is something I think about. (secular institution)

[I live] my life is from a Christian perspective, and I do believe that we do need a hope. I do believe we're spiritual people, we need deep affirmation in order to thrive and flourish in the world. And I think that I want to try to live that out. I think [that] I do want students to feel like that faith is important to me, that I can genuinely live my faith as a psychologist, and that I can be sensitive and open to people and new experiences, and have a faith that is reasoned. It's a faith that is based on reason and intellect, not based on belief in Santa Claus without proof. So I think I try to model that, but I try to do it not [only] as a teacher, but in my community or wherever I am. (secular institution)

I think personally, having a religion has been a very important part of my development, as a human, as a psychologist. I did a 10-day Vipassana meditation retreat in India during grad school. And during that time, I got to see and explore different ways that Christianity, Buddhism, and psychology really do fit well together. There's actually more ways, that they can be incorporated and coincide than really are different ... Culturally, it matters because I think different religions cannot only shape our individual human behavior, but they shape our systemic values and behavior. And then at the undergraduate level, I was exposed to a very atheistic science of psychology. And then I got into grad school, and I was exposed to a balanced view of spirituality and religion, and got to actually read research on the importance of having spiritual practices in your

life. Those [experiences] are definitely things that are inherent in how I conceptualize a case when working with a client, and it's embedded into how I structure classes or the curriculum for the classes that I'm teaching counseling psychology. (religiously affiliated institution)

I believe that the prophets, holy folks, have as much to say to me, as do the philosophers and the psychologists and theorists. I trust them. Their writings touch my mind and my soul as much as reading anybody else. I'm of an era when it was truly the belief in psychology that if you were religious, you were crazy. Thank you, Albert Ellis, right? I mean, it was very clear that having a religious orientation was an expression of psychopathology ... But that was always a challenge early on in my doctoral training, and I had never bought it because I knew I'd had my own experience with the infinite, and so I couldn't deny that ... [Spirituality has] always been part of me. (religiously affiliated institution)

One of the ways that my own personal values have influenced me is that I think it's so important that we emphasize faith ... I want to value and prioritize it as a component of our curriculum. Again this is coming from my own personal value, but I think this is maybe a helpful perspective for others. I'd like to talk about with students the rationale of why I think understanding others is a requirement to really accept and care for them. I believe in order to fulfill the second biblical mandate of loving others as ourselves, we can't really do that truly unless we seek to understand them, and to not seek to understand them, I think, is only communicating that we really don't care. And so that's one of my own personal values that I think is relevant to as a psychologist. (religiously affiliated institution)

There are a variety of ways that participants' religious and spiritual identities influenced their attempts. For example, two participants from secular institutions shared that they use their religious beliefs and identities to show students that topics of R/S are important to them and acceptable and encouraged students to do the same. One participant at a religiously affiliated institution shared that their R/S values influenced their decision to explicitly incorporate topics of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training through discussions and activities centered on clinical application of religion and spirituality.

As suggested by several of the aforementioned quotes, another way that participants' religious and spiritual beliefs and values influenced their attempts was through their professional worldview and theoretical orientation, as clinicians and educators. Four of these five participants

who identified as religious and spiritual described their theoretical orientation to clinical work. They incorporate a holistic approach that includes religious and spiritual aspects and stress that students need to receive training on topics of R/S in order to address the religious and/or spiritual aspects of clients. They shared,

I think some of the main [factors] would be doing training early on from a biopsychosocial-spiritual model and holding that model for how I do case conceptualization and how I train counseling psychologists. (religiously affiliated institution)

Another part of my answer [for factors that influenced attempts made] has to do with my own theoretical orientation and part of that is I believe that we're not only biological beings and emotional beings, and we have to think about our intellectual functioning and all of these different aspects about ourselves. And I'm probably way out there, although not as way out there as I would seem 20 years ago, but I think it's part of that, I think we're spiritual beings also. (religiously affiliated institution)

I think that we need to be tri-lingual. We need to be really fluent in science, we need to be really fluent in philosophy, and we need to be really fluent in our spirituality, so that when issues come to us, we can speak all three languages in addressing that issue. (religiously affiliated institution)

So I do believe that we are spiritual beings and my worldview is a Judeo-Christian worldview. So I see things through that lens. I believe that psychology has a lot of good help for people in a research-wise, and then there's a lot of things that psychology can do promoting mental health and also intervening, but I also think that most people are deeply spiritual, and I think we need to address those things in therapy as they're relevant ... My background is more interpersonal and psychodynamic, so I really like the idea of understanding people. ... I think spirituality aspects in [therapy gets to] deeper levels. I think sometimes we want to treat the symptomology and not see the whole person in the midst of someone who's struggling with depressive symptoms. (religiously affiliated institution)

As revealed in these participants' comments, they were training their students to consider spiritual aspects in counseling because R/S can be salient for clients. Participants also used spirituality to conceptualize some client issues, noting that spirituality is one of several factors that could be contributing to a client's presenting concern.

Generally speaking, these five participants' personal R/S beliefs and identities seem to have been a positive contributing reason for why they made attempts. However, two other participants (one at a secular institution and one at a religiously affiliated institution) were aware that their personal R/S beliefs and values could also have a negative influence on attempts if they imposed their R/S beliefs and values onto students. One of the two participants felt that during a supervision exercise they had imposed onto their student their beliefs that spirituality should be integrated into a case conceptualization and felt challenged when the student responded in a defensive way. They talked about the need to be cautious about not imposing their beliefs, and thus negatively impact the learning environment, when they said,

I do believe [spirituality is] an important topic, but I am not going to impose my worldview on them. I think that's the thing I think about more than anything. I want to make sure that I think it's important to talk about spirituality, but I don't feel like I'm imposing my worldview on you. And if you don't agree with me then I'll think less of you, or of course the students they think, "Oh, now I'm going to get a worse grade." (secular institution)

Similarly, a second participant revealed that their students did not feel connected to what they were learning because of the inappropriate timing of an attempt. The participant shared,

I don't want this to be true, but I think it might be true. I think sometimes because I'm enthusiastic about this, that I might force the issue. And you can tell when you're like, "Oh, and this and this and this." And the students are like, "This is not connecting." And I think it's probably because I'm enthusiastic. I want to go there, and I misread the opening, that's not really where they want [to go] to right now. (religiously affiliated institution)

Both participants indicated a need to monitor how their own beliefs about spirituality come out in attempts made, though how they will increase their self-awareness is unknown.

Participants who held R/S beliefs and identities felt that topics of R/S were important to integrate into counseling psychology training and relevant for some clients. The next section will

describe the experiences of some participants who had previous experiences with religion, but who did not identify as religious or spiritual at the time of this study.

Not Currently Religious or Spiritual

Similar to the previous examples of individuals who were religious and spiritual, several participants without current religious and/or spiritual identities also noted that topics of R/S can be important for many people (e.g., clients); therefore, they are important to include in training. Three participants grew up in religious households and previously held religious beliefs, but no longer identify as religious. Their religious upbringing helped them be empathetic towards the value some students and clients may find in addressing topics of R/S, even though these participants do not characterize themselves as religious or spiritual currently. Here are a few examples of what they said:

I'm sure there [are] factors in myself. I'm not a deeply religious person myself ... My family is very multicultural: I have Jewish relatives, Christian relatives, [and] agnostic relatives ... The [Ethnic minority] relatives, as far as I know, don't subscribe to a religion, but have cultural rituals. But, I was raised in a [Christian] culture and married into a [different Christian denomination] family, and I am the only person in my family who is not [Christian]. [My family's Christian church is] my religious home; it is the only place I have gone consistently because I go with my family, for 30 years. So, that I'm sure is a factor. (religiously affiliated institution)

I don't identify as religiously Jewish now, but I was raised in a Jewish family. And the idea of do good on earth, which is a fundamental religious teaching in Judaism, that's very consonant with the values I hold as an adult. And I still identify culturally as Jewish even though I don't necessarily follow the doctrine to the letter. (secular institution)

This second participant also talked about how their own thoughts around R/S have changed over time. They indicated that at some points in their life they had held negative attitudes towards religion. Though this participant did not hold religious beliefs at the time of this study, it seems that their ability to be open to the experiences of others has helped in their attempts. They said,

I think a big factor has been my own [openness]. I have grown in how open I am to especially the positive aspects of religion and spirituality because I think for a long

time I was fairly negative about those things. I was never totally shut down around it, or I never had it in a black and white, or all bad or all good, category either. But that was definitely a factor for me in terms of my willingness to have the conversations and to engage in those conversations with my students.

Both of these participants indicated an openness to religious cultures outside their own personal belief system, which seemed to be a factor that contributed to their attempts to teach students to recognize the value of the religious and spiritual cultural beliefs of others, including clients. This desire to teach about multiple perspectives of religious and spiritual cultural identity was relevant when these two participants advocated for recognizing that religion can have both positive and negative traits. They also indicated that it is important to train counseling psychology doctoral students to have exposure to balanced perspectives around topics of R/S. They said,

I have ... [presented] the literature on positive and detrimental aspects of religious involvement because there is a complex landscape there and being able to present both sides of that and present the nuance of it. But I'm also not going to shy away from research that would show that certain kinds of religious beliefs are associated with some other kinds of prejudicial attitudes and behavior. But I'm not going to just present that, and/or am [not] just going to present the research that talks about the social and emotional benefits of religion and spiritual involvement. I try not to present one-sided perspectives on those things.

We also talk a lot about religion where it can sometimes be harmful to clients. I have done research with a student on sexual minority issues and how certain religious groups can have ideas that are harmful to them. But we have also written about how there are, within all religions, there are pockets of more supportive communities. There are ways to have both a strong religious identity and a strong GLBTQ, and whatever you want on the end, identity. It's not all negative.

The significance of the comments by both of these participants was that they emphasized the importance of presenting a balanced perspective of both the good and the bad, rather than a single-sided story of religion and spirituality.

On several occasions during the interviews, another participant noted that their personal experiences with R/S have influenced their attempts to integrate topics of R/S into doctoral training. This participant said that in the past they had been both religious and spiritual but felt

challenged to talk about that part of their identity within their own graduate training program because they felt misunderstood by their peers. Their experiences with feeling “alienated” within their training program because of their R/S identity seemed to be a driving force for why this participant incorporated topics of R/S into their own courses as a faculty member. In addition to feeling like they could not talk about their own R/S identity during graduate training, this participant noted that their R/S identity has also changed over time, and this has raised some feelings that they have not yet addressed. They said,

So I think just like the students, I tend to go more intellectual and cognitive when that topic comes up because I don't want to touch it personally. And I also think that because I have my feelings about my experiences [around religion and spirituality] are so mixed ... I think I can come off as anti-religious because of not really dealing with the issues that came up around (a) having that negative feedback in graduate school and (b) having mixed feelings as an adult. Now I can see some of the stuff that I learned in my church was not good for me psychologically, but a lot of it really was [good] ... I think having a spiritual or religious practice is really awesome and healthy and there's tons of research that says that. And it was really good for me, but yeah, I get more emotionally stuck on the bad things.

This participant suggested that they may need to do some work on personal and professional experiences with topics of R/S in order to better facilitate attempts to integrate these topics into doctoral training. Their willingness to reflect on how religious and spiritual identities, beliefs, and experiences have influenced their attempts speaks to a personal attribute of practicing humility in order to grow personally and professionally.

In this sub-section, *Not Currently Religious or Spiritual*, we find evidence that participants' history of religious beliefs, identities, and/or experiences has allowed them to understand the significance of religion and spirituality for people (e.g., students and clients) who are religious or spiritual. Even though participants did not identify as religious or spiritual at the time of the study, they acknowledged both positive and negative aspects to religion, and wanted to help their students understand R/S topics from a balanced perspective. The next sub-section

will discuss two participants who at the time of this work held spiritual identities but acknowledged that these beliefs or affiliations were different from those of their upbringing.

Currently Spiritual

Both of the participants who came to identify as spiritual as adults also identified their racial and ethnic identity as being more salient for them than their religious identity. As such, both participants reported that topics of R/S were not an area of cultural diversity for which they actively sought training until they were in clinical experiences where R/S was relevant for a client, and they felt unprepared to address that therapeutically. The following examples describe these participants' clinical experiences around topics of R/S that raised their awareness of the importance of being able to address such topics in training.

The first participant was raised in an underrepresented religious culture and did not practice this religion at the time of this study, but identified as spiritual and having a belief in a higher power. This participant had one semester of teaching experience at the point of participating in this research and previously worked as a psychologist in a clinical setting. They identified as a "woman of color" and noted that many clients have made assumptions about their religious identity based on their name and race. They stated,

I think the one main thing that influenced how I address religion or spirituality with my students has actually been the results of my clinical work in the [clinical] settings just because I think a lot of my patients in the past have made assumptions about my religion given my name, given how I look, [and] given my racial and ethnic background. And for a lot of my patients ... my perceived religious background was a trigger for them. So that's the thing I've always tried to [be more] mindful about when I'm talking to my students about religion and spirituality, more so religion than spirituality, that people will make assumptions about your religion ... and you have to kind of figure out a good, ethical, comfortable way to address those assumptions in your work with them.

This participant went on to further describe how their professional experiences have influenced their role as a faculty member and their attempts to integrate R/S topics into doctoral training when they said,

When I work with my students, I think about my salient identities, and I really encourage them to think about their salient identity. And for all of the [students] that I've worked with so far, I mean religion isn't a salient identity. It wasn't for me, but then in my class, we often do like thought experiments, "Well, what if you did encounter a client who did have a salient religious identity? How would you work with that?" I think mostly it's because of my clinical experiences.

This participant strived to be intentional in attempts to integrate topics of R/S into training, which was apparent in their use of thought experiments to bring a topic into students' awareness. Even though R/S may not be prominent for either the participant or their students, there is still the potential that topics of R/S will be important to clients with whom the students will work. At another point in the interview, this same participant indicated a desire to be more conscientious about integrating topics of R/S in their work with students, particularly students with salient R/S identities, through research mentorship and classroom dialogues. They stated,

I wonder if there are students where religion and spirituality are more salient [identities] for them than for me, and if there are any hesitations [from students] in bringing that up ... I think because I'm aware that students might be hesitant to talk about religion and spirituality with me, it's just always in the back of my mind now like, "Should I be asking about this? Do I ask about this?" And [there is a need to] just ask more structured questions around religion and spirituality. If this was an easy topic for me to talk about or address, I feel like [asking structured questions about R/S] would become second nature for me. So it's always in the back of my mind like, "Okay, I should talk about these things because they are important" ... So I think that's just an extra level of awareness and, I mean, it translates in other ways ... above and beyond religion as well. I would do that with racial and ethnic minority students of mine.

This participants' ability to be mindful of times when religion and/or spirituality are important to their students reflects respect towards an identity that is different from their own, and models for students a way of engaging in cross-cultural conversations in their own professional roles, such as with clients who have different beliefs. Of note, this participant seemed to be primarily

engaged in conversations around topics of R/S when they were aware that religion or spirituality was important to the student. However, if conversations around topics of R/S only occur in training scenarios with students for whom the topics are relevant, then it is possible that this individual, or other like faculty members, could miss some opportunities to address these topics with students who do not hold salient religious and/or spiritual identities.

The second participant, who identified as “Black bi-racial” and worked at a religiously affiliated institution, was not raised religious or spiritual, but identified as spiritual at the time of this work. Like the other participant, this individual also reported that the only professional training they had gained around topics of R/S in graduate school was during their internship when clients brought up religion or spirituality, and this participant processed those interactions with their supervisor. They reported that they did not feel as knowledgeable about or as comfortable with integrating topics of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training as compared to their knowledge or comfort discussing topics like sexual assault or racial issues; areas where they had received more training and had more experience. They said:

I think that making clinical application, in general, is probably a growth edge for me. But then around spirituality, specifically, because it's not my area, because I haven't necessarily worked with clients in the same way around those issues I have with, like, sexual assault. And I guess, because I was working with college students, didn't necessarily bring [topics of R/S] up in the same way. So anyway, so I guess that's probably why I felt more of a struggle is because I didn't have as many examples. I could probably think of one or two clients to draw on to give clinical case examples as opposed to a multitude.

As a result of feeling less knowledgeable and comfortable in their attempts, this second participant reported that they fumbled in their discussions of R/S applied to clinical practice, which is a different experience than when they lecture on the subjects with which they are more familiar. They explained,

I think [integrating topics of race or gender are] more natural because I identify as someone who's historically minoritized racially and as a woman. So I think it's probably more salient to me, and thus I know the literature better, and I can think of numerous examples of ways things might show up. So it feels a lot more easy or natural to plug an example in, in order to connect it. And I have to work harder and more intentionally to think of examples where religious persecution may come up and not feel like I'm fumbling with that example. Because I don't identify as historically minoritized in my religion ... I have been becoming more ... exposed to Judaism in different ways, and I'm becoming more comfortable talking about anti-Semitism, but not necessarily as comfortable as I am with other areas.

Like some of the other participants, this individual discussed how their own faith development has influenced their attempts with R/S. They shared,

I think my own spiritual identity development is pretty young and so only recently starting to have a clear sense of my own identity in that regard, which then makes it harder for me to have conversation or understanding about where someone else might be coming from [with regards to religion and spirituality] ... Being a part of a faith-based community now, and integrating that as part of my own identity that makes me more comfortable to explore [religion and spirituality] and see the benefits of how [R/S] shows up in someone's own ... identity, or mental health, and thus have some language and comfort around talking about it with students as future psychologists.

This sub-section, *Currently Spiritual*, revealed that two participants who hold racially and ethnically diverse identities reported that those identities were more salient for them than religion and spirituality. As a result, the latter areas became an area of focus in their own training, research, and clinical application. Each of these participants expressed some uncertainty, and even discomfort, with how to engage in conversations around topics of R/S when they themselves had limited insight on the topics. What is interesting about these examples is that for these two participants, their clinical experience during either graduate training or professional work was a catalyst to increasing their awareness of R/S topics in academic work, more so than their own spiritual identity was a factor. This was different than the responses of participants who had a history of religious and/or spiritual beliefs and affiliations. As these two participants recognized that religion and spirituality could be important topics for students and/or clients and

began to explore their own spiritual identity, they reported feeling more prepared and comfortable in engaging in conversations around topics of R/S with their students.

In this section about R/S beliefs, identities, and/or experiences, participants talked about how their own salient identities, specifically their religious and/or spiritual beliefs, identities, and/or experiences, have influenced their attempts to integrate topics of R/S into doctoral training. These results suggest that there are differences in the ways that faculty members integrate topics of R/S based on their salient identities. Participants who valued R/S as an important identity for themselves, or for others (e.g., clients or students), tended to feel more prepared, knowledgeable, and comfortable making attempts than individuals who did not hold R/S as a primary identity. Though maybe not surprising, participants who did not have a history of R/S beliefs, identities, and/or experiences did note that they were less comfortable and aware of topics of R/S. However, these participants also indicated that when they became more aware of their own spiritual identity, and/or gained knowledge around topics of R/S, they felt more comfortable with their attempts.

Across all three sub-sections of religious and/or spiritual belief and identities, participants shared examples of how their own personal awareness and/or knowledge around topics of R/S presented challenges in their professional attempts to integrate topics of R/S into doctoral training. These challenges included (a) a risk of imposing one's values on students, (b) unintentionally expressing anti-religious biases because of unresolved feelings about their own religious and spiritual journey, and (c) participant discomfort and uncertainty as to how to address topics of R/S in counseling psychology doctoral training settings. The significance of these examples was that participants expressed an awareness of their need to increase their

competency in the areas of awareness, knowledge, and skills in order to make more effective attempts to train students about religion and spirituality.

Valuing Others

Another aspect of the participants' motivation for integrating religion and spirituality into doctoral training being not just professional but also personal was valuing others and their religious and spiritual beliefs as cultural identities. Their desire to help students learn to respect diverse religious and spiritual groups seemed to be driven, at least in part, by the professional values of multiculturalism and social justice advocacy. Seven participants shared that the value of respecting others was a personal value that contributed to their passion for helping students learn about R/S as cultural variables. As you will see in the following examples, participants shared how their value of respecting others helped them advocate for students and potential clients with R/S beliefs and affiliations. More uniquely, participants described ways they felt that the attribute of having respect for others leads to human connection that can benefit the learning environment among peers, as well as the students' future clients.

In one example, a participant talked about their reactions to movies and plays they had seen that portrayed stories of painful experiences related to a person's religious beliefs. The participant said,

I've always felt like people need to be treated fairly and equally. Even as a child. Maybe this is going back to your factors question again, but those things really, really stuck with me; the belief that everyone has the right to be treated well, that you shouldn't be excluding people or causing them pain based on your religion. If you are religious you also should be treated with respect by the people who are there to care for you.
(religiously affiliated institution)

This participant's personal value that all people should be treated fairly and equally seemed to influence their attempts in several ways. One way this value influenced their attempts was that this participant felt passionately about having all faculty members within their department show

respect towards students with R/S beliefs, identities, and/or experiences. As a result of this passion, this participant was one of the previously mentioned people who felt the need to bring their colleagues along in their investment to integrate topics of R/S into training. Moreover, this participant also felt the need to protect students who experienced faculty members as not respectful of the students' R/S beliefs, identities, and/or experiences. This participant's comments suggest that when they are educating counseling psychology trainees on topics of R/S, they are doing so from the perspective of instilling respect towards individuals with diverse religious backgrounds. For example, within their psychotherapy course their training goal was to have students consider the following prompts:

How [students] may or may not support somebody who is strongly religious in therapy [and] how [students] may inadvertently harm somebody who is deeply religious by having an attitude that is sort of disrespectful toward religion.

This participant's aims were geared towards helping students increase their awareness around topics of R/S in order to reduce the likelihood of causing harm to clients.

Like the first individual's examples, other participants also gave examples of their value of respecting others, and how it is a way to obtain connection and relationships with them. They said,

I have [a] strong personal value, and I think this is biblical as well, that we seek to understand each other, and love and respect each other, even though we may be different ... I don't think that we can truly love someone else unless we seek to understand them. And it's a strong focus from the New Testament in Christ life, to love people who were different and even people who were living in a way that was not thought of as moral but loving anyway and hobnobbing with and socializing with and talking and respecting. And that's what I try to live in my own life. It's so important to me that we take time, and we put effort into truly seeing people and knowing people. I don't think that we can do that without intentional effort. (religiously affiliated institution)

Our gift as psychologists to be relational and connect across differences is pretty powerful. And that there's maybe a calling or something around that people can draw on or that I can at least have tap into and then, like, helping people feel inspired to do the same. (religiously affiliated institution)

I think that what is important in integrating my values [into counseling psychology doctoral training] is seeing the importance of how we come together as a community to take care of each other. (secular institution)

Each participant also spoke about their use of cultural immersion activities in which students had opportunities to connect more personally with individuals across diverse religious and spiritual communities. Within these cultural immersion activities, the participants encouraged their students to be curious by asking questions of the facilitator of the cultural immersion activity, and thereby get to know someone at a deeper level.

In summarizing this *Valuing Others* sub-section, attempts at integrating topics of R/S were centered on the desire to teach students to be respectful towards others, including clients who may have religious or spiritual identities, beliefs, or practices. The following section will describe participants' investment in learning about topics of R/S for themselves, so they can better incorporate them into counseling psychology doctoral training.

Invested in Learning

One important quality about the participants of this study was that they valued learning, and this was another aspect of personal motivation that contributed to their attempts to integrate religion and spirituality. As previously noted, the majority of study participants felt that they had minimal professional training around topics of R/S as graduate students themselves. Eight participants shared stories about increasing their own knowledge about topics of R/S to support future attempts to integrate in training, however, their investment in learning about R/S was also to grow personally. For example, one participant enjoyed reading and conversing with others to learn about a variety of topics, including R/S. They said,

[One factor that has been important is] my own increased exposure to people of different faiths, which involved personal contact with people with different faiths [like] colleagues, friends, friends of my family. And also traveling abroad, which has also been really good

too, it always is good in many levels, for challenging a very US White middle-class focused view of things. (secular institution)

In another example, another participant talked about their use of reading to inform themselves of topics to integrate into their own attempts when they said,

So kind of reviewing the handbook and different chapters that have come up there in the Counseling Psych. Handbooks to help me better, just be better informed and identify readings for students, or other articles. Videos that I've watched that have been of psychologists doing lectures or whatever, or mock counseling sessions that I've seen and then shown to students to give them some ideas of how it can look in-session. The biggest, I think, self-teaching was really just reading on my own. (religiously affiliated institution)

This participant was likely referring to the *APA Handbook of Counseling Psychology* (Fouad et al., 2012).

In addition to learning through seeking information about R/S as cultural factors and best practices for integrating topics of R/S into training, two other participants noted that they have also engaged in spiritual activities in order to increase knowledge of mindfulness. One such person shared a story about one of their students who had been researching mindfulness and this participant sought additional training around the topic to better support their student's learning.

They said,

I went to a week-long training in mindfulness by [Z person], and again that was really looking at, it wasn't just like we were doing mindfulness so we are going to be, so we can perform better, it was like, "What is the really religious practice, spiritual practice in mindfulness."

As you may recall, several other participants also reported that they sought to continue learning alongside their students by inviting guest speakers and engaging in cultural immersion activities that would help both the students and the study participants learn new information about religiously diverse cultural groups.

An interesting observation this researcher made about participants was their personal attribute of showing humility, openness, and flexibility. There was a sentiment through participants' narratives that they were not looking for a one-size-fits-all solution to integrating topics of R/S into their training, rather they went in the direction that fit well with their students' needs. For example, when students expressed a desire to learn more about skills relating to integrating R/S into clinical practice, some participants thought about ways they could increase this area in their future attempts (e.g., through videos). In another example of this flexibility, one participant was willing to engage in an activity with students who wanted to continue their discussion around R/S after the planned lecture for that day had ended, but there was still class time remaining. On a more personal example, yet another participant felt like they were joining their students in engaging in conversations about topics of R/S from an intellectual perspective, rather than an emotional place, and showed humility when they began thinking about how they could address their own thoughts and feelings about R/S in order to better facilitate future attempts. These are a few examples that express participants' willingness to learn about R/S, not only because they care about making a rich learning experience for their students, but because they were also invested in evolving as faculty members.

In addition to their more personal pursuits of learning, participants did describe their professional experiences of training around topics of R/S. Though most participants felt that their efforts to gain training on topics of R/S was more happenstance than intentional, a few participants were generally happy when professional learning opportunities around topics of R/S presented themselves. Specifically, some actively sought professional trainings dedicated to R/S topics (such as APA's Division 36 annual conference on religion and spirituality). As another

example, a participant attended an international conference with a theme of including topics of R/S and presented a paper. They said,

I had presented a paper at an international conference [in a Middle Eastern country] and of all places, the conference was [about] Psychology, Religion, and Culture. And I presented a paper [about a Middle Eastern country] integrating the Judeo-Christian worldviews. But they had people talking certainly about Muslim worldviews and also Hindu worldviews. So there is sort of this international group informally of people who are attempting to do the same thing from their own perspectives. (secular institution)

In attending a conference devoted to addressing topics of R/S, this participant found a group of people who had similar research interests to their own. While this participant did not comment on how this conference attendance did or did not directly support their attempts to integrate topics of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training, they were excited to be able to talk with professional colleagues about their shared interest in topics of religion and spirituality.

Most study participants did not actively seek professional trainings around topics of R/S but were open to engaging in conversations and presentations about religion and spirituality when these topics were integrated into professional trainings about other topics (e.g., attending a workshop on race and R/S is a part of the discussion). Here are some examples of what participants said,

What I have sought out in terms of workshops that I want to go to, or continuing education, or conference kinds of stuff, I think I have tried to seek broad training out. And sort of get up to speed, or stay up to speed, as much as possible. I wouldn't say I necessarily have specifically sought out, "This time at APA, I'm going to make sure I go to five things on religion and spirituality." I haven't been that intentional about it. (secular institution)

[Conversations on religion and spirituality have] just kind of always [been] in the water more than going to specific training. I'm always open to having these conversations or when I go to a conference, if there's some presentation or workshop, I go to that. But not in terms of, "Oh, I'd better get special training from somebody who's an expert." I haven't done it that much. (religiously affiliated institution)

Professionally, I actually don't attend any Christian conferences [One conference I attended last year], there was such a strong emphasis on, "Let's not forget spirituality, and

this is something that we failed at for many, many years in psychology.” And so I felt most inspired after attending that conference to kind of reintegrate faith. (religiously affiliated institution)

In a final example about conference attendance, one participant shared, “I think when I attend conferences, [topics of R/S is] an area that I try to attend. I attend talks in this area and workshops and those kinds of things.” This participant also talked about joining a graduate student mentorship lunches at an APA conference when they said,

The person [on the mentorship panel] talked about ... starting to conduct research on this idea of Christians experiencing themselves as a minority group, and that's actually something that I had felt before when I identified as Christian. I felt like a minority, even though I knew I wasn't. And so, having somebody else say that [Christians experience themselves as a minority group] ... is a phenomenon that happens, it helped me with my Christian clients. And also, I think that's something that sort of helps me to understand the graduate students a little bit better. (secular institution)

This participant felt validated when they heard other researchers discuss the phenomenon they experienced in graduate school, of feeling like a minority with regard to R/S. Noting that many of their own students have experienced the phenomena of feeling like a religious minority, even though they belonged to a dominant religious group, this participant took what they learned from this event to normalize and validate their own students' experiences. The participant also acknowledged a need to continue to work on their own conflicted feelings around this idea of Christians feeling like a minority group, in order to better serve their students.

This *Invested in Learning* sub-section revealed that some participants actively sought their own knowledge and engagement around topics of R/S in order to feel better prepared to integrate topics of R/S into training. Participants' openness to learning about topics of R/S shows that beyond simply mentioning topics of R/S, participants were invested in making meaningful attempts. Alternatively, faculty members who have less interest in topics of R/S may not be seeking information around these topics and may be less adequately prepared to integrate them.

The *Theme: Motivations Are Not Just Professional, They're Personal, Too* identified three personal and/or professional factors that contributed to participants' attempts to integrate topics of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training. Participants' salient identities, particularly those of religion and spirituality, were highly associated with participants' attempts. Participants who had religious and/or spiritual beliefs, identities, and/or experiences expressed enthusiasm to integrate topics of R/S into counseling psychology training, though they noted not always being certain of how to authentically integrate their own personal religious beliefs into their professional roles. Participants who did not become spiritual until adulthood reported feeling discomfort and uncertainty about how to discuss topics of R/S with their trainees, until those participants gained knowledge about R/S topics or did some self-exploration. Their attempts were centered on a recognition of, and respect towards, the religious and spiritual cultural identities of clients that their students would be serving. Participants also expressed an investment in learning about topics of R/S, both to better their future attempts for students and to grow personally. Overall, participants of this study expressed passion and care towards their attempts to integrate topics of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training.

Conclusion

This chapter provided a detailed account of the themes found across participants' stories about their attempts to integrate topics of religion and spirituality into counseling psychology doctoral training. The five themes included the following: *Managing the Multiple Layers of Complexity*, *Thoughtfulness Around Attempts*, *Pressure To Do Well*, *Moving Through the Tension*, and *Motivations Are Not Just Professional, They're Personal, Too*. In the next chapter, the writer will answer the research questions, discuss how the results relate to previous literature

around this subject, explore the influence of this research on the field of psychology, highlight any limitations, and recommend future directions.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss and interpret the results of this study, which were presented in the previous chapter. The overarching research question the researcher was attempting to answer was, “What are the experiences of faculty members at APA-accredited counseling psychology training programs regarding their attempts to integrate topics of religion and spirituality (R/S) into counseling psychology doctoral training?” The first sub-question asked, “What has influenced the attempts of faculty members at APA-accredited counseling psychology training programs to integrate topics of religion and spirituality into counseling psychology doctoral training?” The second sub-question asked, “How do the personal and professional attributes and values of faculty members at APA-accredited counseling psychology training programs influence their attempts to integrate topics of religion and spirituality into counseling psychology doctoral training? Eight participants completed both the initial interview and member check interview, and two participants completed only the initial interview. All interviews were transcribed and the member check interview data were integrated into the initial interview transcript in the area relevant to the information being clarified. Therefore, the data analyzed refer to the transcripts including the participants’ responses to both the initial and member check interviews.

The researcher used the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) method of data analysis (Smith et al., 1999) to make sense of the data. The researcher will begin by talking about the interpretation and influence of the results of this study by looking at how the participants’ experiences fit with existing literature on this topic. Because of the influential role the researcher holds in the IPA process, the researcher will then reflect on her experiences throughout this

research process. Later, the researcher will discuss the limitations of this research study and explore lessons learned throughout the research process. Finally, the researcher will propose future directions for research and integrating topics of religion and spirituality into the training of counseling psychology doctoral students.

Interpretation of Results

In this section, the writer will review the findings of this study, answer the research questions, and explore how this research fits within the existing literature around the ways topics of religion and spirituality are integrated into counseling psychology doctoral training.

Overarching Research Question: Participants' Descriptions of Their Experiences

Participants' descriptions of their attempts revealed that they were thoughtful in how they planned for and approached their attempts. They were conscientious to integrate attempts across a wide array of training opportunities, including both classroom attempts and non-classroom related attempts. Moreover, participants were thoughtful to tailor their approaches to meet the needs of their students as well as the context of the learning environment they taught in (e.g., meeting institutional requirements or professional mandates, and the relevance to the class they were teaching). Without clear guidelines on the details of what to include in their attempts, or the best methods for making attempts, participants often relied on their own personal knowledge and experiences throughout their efforts. However, participants generally reported having little training around how to integrate topics of R/S into their own clinical work, therefore, they found it challenging to train their students around this topic. Participants felt varied levels of support around their efforts, but often felt alone when making attempts. There were various tensions that participants contented with throughout their attempts, which made their efforts feel risky. Knowing that many of their colleagues were not including topics of R/S into their courses,

participants felt pressure to make meaningful attempts for their students. Between serving multiple constitutions, holding their own personal thoughts and feelings around their efforts, and navigating a lack of clear guidance on their attempts, participants' experiences of integrating topics of R/S was categorized as being complex. However, participants' personal values, and desire to give their students all the tools they would need to provide culturally-sensitive clinical care around topics of R/S, helped participants in making attempts despite these challenges. In fact, participants continued to reflect on ways they could improve their efforts moving forward which showed continued investment.

Where and How Often Attempts Occurred

Much of the research around topics of R/S within clinical and counseling psychology doctoral training has examined in what classes and how frequently topics of R/S are integrated (Brawer et al., 2002; Hage, 2006; Hage et al., 2006; Saunders et al., 2014; Schafer et al., 2011; Vogel et al., 2013). However, there are no established guidelines within the field of psychology, including counseling psychology, that indicate best practices for either the R/S topics that should be integrated or appropriate methods for integration leaving decisions about integration up to study participants.

In general, participants in this study revealed that inclusion of R/S topics into coursework ranged from having one class period devoted to reading and discussing topics of R/S to having an entire class devoted to topics of religion and spirituality. Participants perceived that their attempts to integrate topics of R/S were only a small part of the content that they included in a course and noted that topics of R/S were often difficult to cover in depth because there are so many diversity-related topics to cover in one course. Added to this concern about the depth of course content, many participants, at both secular and religiously affiliated institutions, felt

pressure to address topics of R/S in their courses because they believed the topics were not being incorporated in courses taught by other faculty members within the department or training program.

Many study participants made attempts to increase their students' knowledge about R/S as a cultural identity that can intersect with other identities, and it makes sense that this content would fit well in diversity-focused coursework and training experiences. Participants' responses support previous literature on integrating topics of R/S into psychology training which revealed that when attempts are made, they often occur in coursework related to multicultural, or diversity-focused, training (Brawer et al., 2002; Hage, 2006; Hage et al., 2006; Vogel et al., 2013). However, there were some challenges to their efforts to integrate topics of R/S into diversity coursework. First, participants' were concerned with how to do a good job of integrating topics of R/S into diversity training when it felt like there was limited space to do so, which contributed to a perception from some participants that topics of R/S were being integrated minimally, at best. Similar sentiments were expressed in previous literature when Adams et al. (2015) and Schulte et al. (2002) both expressed concern over how to give space to religion and spirituality within multicultural classes when there are many other important topics of diversity to cover, such as race and ethnicity.

Another challenge participants contended with was tensions they experienced among faculty colleagues within their department regarding how topics of R/S fit within the social justice perspectives of counseling psychology, which often emphasizes training on race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity over other dimensions of identity. The field of counseling psychology is well known for its emphasis on integrating training in multicultural competence, typically focusing on cultural identities of race and ethnicity (Sue et al., 1992), and

social justice advocacy (Constantine et al., 2007; Goodman et al., 2004; Kozen & Blustein, 2018; Speight & Vera, 2008; Vera & Speight, 2003). Schulte et al. (2002) reported that faculty and trainees within counseling psychology training programs have expressed sentiments of a hierarchy around diversity topics where religion and spirituality are often last on that list. Similar results were confirmed by Vogel et al., (2013) who studied faculty and training directors in both clinical and counseling psychology training programs.

Moreover, researchers have also noted that psychologists, particularly within the field of counseling psychology, might believe that multicultural courses should focus primarily on topics of race and ethnicity, and conversations of R/S might take away from those conversations (Adams et al., 2015; Crook-Lyon et al., 2012; Hage, 2006; Schulte et al., 2002; Vogel et al., 2013). Given these sentiments within the field of counseling psychology, faculty members who want to integrate topics other than race and ethnicity may experience pushback from their peers, which was the experience of some participants of this current research. To address concerns about how to include a variety of cultural identities within diversity training, participants of this study often integrated topics of R/S through a lens of intersectionality, meaning they talked about how other identities such as race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity intersect with R/S identities.

Participants felt so strongly about their desire to train students on topics of R/S that they attempted to integrate topics of R/S not only through diversity coursework, but across all of the courses they taught. This was particularly true for the participants who taught at religiously affiliated institutions who noted an institutional requirement that these topics be integrated across all curricula. Unique to this research study, the researcher was able to learn more about attempts to integrate R/S across a wider range of types of courses, including research methods, assessment,

and special topic courses (e.g., family therapy, vocational psychology, etc.), which was not widely discussed in other research on this topic. Some study participants felt that religion and spirituality were easier to integrate into some subjects, like diversity or theories coursework, than other classes like research methods. Other researchers have commented on the challenges of presenting social justice topics in technical courses, like research methods, noting that doing so takes some creative teaching methods that can feel time consuming (Motulsky et al., 2014). Participants of this current study shared similar sentiments. Despite expressing difficulty knowing how to make topics of R/S fit with some course subjects, participants of this study showed that attempts can, indeed, be made in technical coursework. Participants talked about their plans for attempts in future research method courses, suggesting that participants saw value in continuing to make efforts to include topics of R/S across all coursework.

Beyond attempts to integrate topics of R/S into training coursework, some participants integrated topics of R/S outside of traditional curricula. For example, they advised students who chose to complete dissertations on topics of R/S and had research teams where student researchers from various religious backgrounds were given opportunities to learn more about each other while completing research. They also supported students in incorporating R/S aspects of their identity in autobiographical statements and in extra-class professional development activities and discussions. Descriptions of participants' attempts to integrate R/S in non-traditional classroom settings revealed that they were supportive of students' decisions to incorporate topics of R/S into non-clinical professional tasks, which is a sentiment that was echoed in previous research in counseling psychology training programs (Schulte et al., 2002).

Participant's Reliance on Their Own Knowledge and Experiences With R/S

It is important to note that when participants attempted to integrate topics of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training, they often drew on their own experiences for information. The majority of study participants described having little to no formal training around topics of R/S in their own graduate programs, which is consistent with previous literature around this topic (Brawer et al., 2002; Hage, 2006; Hage et al., 2006; Saunders et al., 2014; Schafer et al., 2011; Vogel et al., 2013). As a result of receiving minimal training around topics of R/S themselves, several participants felt uncomfortable or less competent in their ability to train students around these same topics. Participants' sense of feeling underprepared created some sense of internal pressure for them to ensure that their students had the training they needed to address these relevant topics. It may be important to remind the reader that not all of the participants were trained in counseling psychology programs and thus the influences may represent other psychology and related mental health fields. Because participants had minimal professional training around topics of R/S, they independently sought training about these areas. One way of independently attaining training was through speaking with supportive colleagues and being open to conversations of R/S when they were relevant to the workshops that participants attended. Most participants learned through reading about topics of R/S or self-initiated participation in R/S activities (e.g., spiritual mindfulness retreats). Other research examining factors associated with teaching multicultural competence found that faculty who were motivated and engaged in efforts to improve as a multicultural educator tended to have high levels of multicultural sensitivity and these sources suggested that it is important for educators to continue to foster openness to learning (Mena & Rogers, 2017). Participants of this study reflected this quality by exhibiting traits of openness to learning, cultural sensitivity, and

humility in their willingness to learn about topics of R/S themselves. These are traits that likely helped foster their desire to integrate topics of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training.

Participants brought their own knowledge of religion and spirituality into their attempts, beginning with how they defined the constructs of religion and spirituality. According to participants, religion was defined as the rules about the beliefs and practices a person holds about a higher power, which are typically sanctioned by an organizing body. Participants' definitions were similar to those of Pargament et al. (2013b) who said, "Religion is defined as the search for significance that occurs within the context of established institutions that are designed to facilitate spirituality" (p. 17). Pargament et al. (2013b) defined spirituality as "the search for the sacred," (p. 17) which involves any "beliefs, practices, experiences, or relationships with a sacred object or being that are embedded in nontraditional settings" (p. 17). Similarly, study participants defined spirituality as a personal connection to a higher power. Unlike with religion, participants identified spirituality as being a more individual experience that is less structured (e.g., does not conform to the rules and rituals of religion) and harder to define.

While participants' defined religion and spirituality as separate constructs, they also noted that religion and spirituality are sometimes interconnected, noting that religion can be the vessel within which spirituality is practiced. Participants' comments revealed an understanding that someone can be both religious and spiritual, religious but not spiritual, spiritual but not religious, or neither religious nor spiritual, which fits within existing literature (Pargament et al., 2013b). Participants also noted that religion and spirituality can be so engrained in a person's beliefs and values that their religion and spirituality can become a cultural identity that becomes a lens through which they see the world. In fact, participants' attempts were generally center on

training students about religion and spirituality as a dimension of cultural identity that can be important to many people.

In their attempts to integrate R/S into training, some participants noted that they intended to primarily and explicitly make attempts around topics of religion (but not spirituality), spirituality (but not religion), or both religion and spirituality. Interestingly, participants who indicated their attempts were meant to be about religion only, also told stories about discussions of spirituality, and vice-a-versa, participants' whose attempts focused on spirituality also referenced religion. This suggests that it is difficult to teach about one topic without also discussing the other topic.

Participants' decision about terms used in their attempts was based on either personal choice or their institutions' expectations. Regarding personal choice, participants who had previously been religious or currently identified as being both religious and spiritual seemed to define R/S using more personal language than participants without those identities. Specifically, participants with both religious and spiritual identities used more feeling words in their description (e.g., when one participant said "I can feel [spirituality]") and use of personal pronouns (e.g., my faith, my church) suggesting that their definitions may be drawing on their own experiences. Alternatively, most of the five participants who worked at religiously affiliated institutions, worked for an institution that was specifically Christian and an assumption might be made that a Christian institution would emphasize a religious, specifically Christian, mission. Yet, most of these participants reported their institutional mission was around integrating spirituality and/or a variety of religious belief systems. This suggests efforts to be inclusive of a variety of religious and spiritual belief systems.

Given that participants made efforts to teach about a variety of combinations of religion and spirituality, it would be helpful to understand if there are differences in students' understandings of R/S based on the terms their faculty members use in training. The current APA Standards of Accreditation (APA CoA, 2019) and Counseling Psychology Core Competencies (CCPTP, 2013) both specifically name religion as a cultural variable that should be respected by psychologists and that future psychologists should receive training around culturally-sensitive religious treatments. Yet, neither of these documents define religion and spirituality thereby giving little guidance as to what "religion as a cultural variable" means. The APA Multicultural Guidelines (APA, 2017b) do identify both religion and spirituality as dimensions of cultural identity that someone can hold, but do not define religion or spirituality. It could be helpful for the APA-accrediting board to implement competency standards around R/S, which define religion and spirituality for faculty members to use in their attempts.

Participants were thoughtful in choosing content to integrate religion and spirituality into training that they thought would be most beneficial to their students. Participants also used a variety of teaching methods in their attempts with the hopes of meeting the various learning styles of the students. The following section will elaborate on some of the main ideas participants wanted to impart on their students and some of the ways they pursued their attempts.

Awareness, Knowledge, and Skills

While participants often drew on their own experiences and knowledge to inform their attempts, the content of participants' attempts generally fell in line with the tripartite model of multicultural competency (Sue et al., 1992). This tripartite model is a commonly used framework within the field of counseling psychology to teach students about dimensions of diversity. Using

this framework, participants' attempts focused on helping students to increase their awareness, knowledge, and skills around religion and spirituality as a dimension of cultural identity.

Study participants sought to raise students' awareness of their own attitudes and biases around topics of R/S. This could be because as graduate students themselves, several participants with religious identities had negative experiences in which they felt they had little support in their training program when they attempted to discuss topics of R/S, or did not feel safe to discuss their own R/S identities. As a result, participants' were motivated to create a better learning environment and training experiences for their students than what they had experienced.

To increase awareness, participants asked their students to reflect on their religious and/or spiritual journeys and worldviews and how these beliefs and worldviews may inform their professional work, like their theoretical orientation. Additionally, participants provided opportunities for students to reflect on religious and spiritual identities regarding systems of privilege and oppression, to better understand hierarchical norms relating to religious identity. The goals of increasing students awareness were to (a) reduce the likelihood of unintentionally imposing the students' values onto clients, thereby, doing harm to clients, and (b) to gain comfort addressing topics of R/S with clients as appropriate. Specifically, all participants talked about some sort of reading, writing, and/or video watching assignment, which was then discussed in class. Participants emphasized the importance of having students engage in thoughtful discussion around any reading and writing assignment, noting a goal of having students think for themselves about it might mean for them and how to apply it in practice. Similar practices were reflected in literature related to faculty members in counselor education training programs (Shaw et al., 2012).

A second area largely addressed by participants of this current study was increasing students' knowledge of topics of religion and spirituality from a cultural context. Participants wanted their students to recognize that topics of R/S are a cultural identity for some people and that this identity can intersect with other identities that someone holds. As such, participants felt that students needed to be prepared to provide culturally-sensitive treatment around topics of R/S by understanding how topics of R/S can be relevant to a clients' presenting concerns, identity, or coping skills. An important note was that participants' attempts were meant to train students to address topics of R/S when religion and spirituality were important to the client, and not to address R/S with every client, which fits with recommended competencies in these areas (Vieten et al., 2013; Vieten et al., 2016).

Several participants used experiential activities to increase students' knowledge of multicultural competence and social justice advocacy, for example doing a privilege walk, offering in-class prayer, inviting guest speakers, and participating in cultural immersion experiences. The use of experiential exercises to train students on topics of multiculturalism and social justice are commonly used techniques within the field of counseling psychology (Vera & Speight, 2003; Pieterse et al., 2009) and counselor education (Ratts et al., 2016). These experiential learning activities are considered advantageous because they offer students opportunities to directly learn from members of a cultural group (Arthur & Achenbach, 2002; Burnett et al., 2004) and provide opportunities for students to challenge their biases and stereotypes (Koch et al., 2014). Participants indicated a plan to continue their efforts to include experiential activities in future attempts because they felt it was a good training experience not only for the students, but also for themselves.

Beyond increasing students' knowledge on topics of R/S, participants of this study also talked about increasing students' skills around integrating topics of R/S into clinical work. Generally, participants indicated that attempts to teach skills happened less frequently than efforts to increase awareness and knowledge, which is common across counseling psychology training around other issues of multicultural and social justice training (Motulsky et al., 2014). Given that many participants of this study taught non-clinical coursework (such as techniques or practicum), it makes sense that their efforts to train students would focus on increasing knowledge and awareness, with a more abstract discussion of what skills they might integrate in the future rather than an opportunity to actually practice clinical skills. Because in the types of courses that participants taught, students would typically be at earlier developmental levels within their doctoral training program and skills-based training would probably occur later in the students' curricula.

When they were teaching skills, participants were focused on students learning how to (a) initiate dialogues around topics of R/S; (b) assess for the relevance of topics of R/S with clients; (c) use mindfulness in counseling; and (d) refer to religious or spiritual leaders when appropriate. These are common skills that would be important to also know about any other cultural dimension of a client. Several participants used case vignettes to integrate topics of R/S into skills training. Participants' use of these techniques is similar to the role-playing and case scenario activities that are commonly used in classrooms to allow counselor trainees to practice skills in evaluating ethical scenarios and skill development (Briggs & Rayle, 2005).

Despite participants' efforts to integrate some skills, they reported that their students requested additional training around skills to integrate topics of R/S into clinical treatment and participants felt some pressure to meet those student needs. When considering future attempts,

participants thought that using APA-endorsed skills-based training videos around culturally competent clinical practice with topics of R/S might provide students with examples of skills. Some participants reported that they were unaware of helpful texts that could support these efforts. Of note, however, is that there are relevant APA published books pertaining to topics of religion, spirituality, and psychology, like the *Casebook for a Spiritual Strategy in Counseling and Psychotherapy* (Richards & Bergin, 2004), *Spiritually Oriented Interventions for Counseling and Psychotherapy* (Aten et al., 2011), and *Handbook of Psychotherapy and Religious Diversity: Second Edition* (Richards & Bergin, 2014), that these participants or faculty member in general might use in future attempts.

Interestingly, several participants of this study described their own efforts to train students around topics of R/S included mentoring and modeling relationships, yet, most participants reported not having a mentor during their own graduate training. In fact, only one participant reported that they had a mentor who integrated religion and spirituality into graduate training and that participant was emulating that mentor in their own attempts. To this researcher's knowledge, there is no other study that has described faculty members' experiences with modeling as a method to integrate topics of religion and spirituality into counseling psychology doctoral training; however, modeling is described generally as a powerful teaching tool in promoting students' cultural competencies and social justice (Heppner, 2017).

Participants' descriptions of their efforts to mentor students fit with Heppner's (2017) pedagogical structures of modeling which is described as a way to create real-time learning opportunities for students to develop cultural awareness and skills around cultural competence and social justice. Participants of this study modelled living authentically as a spiritual person in their professional roles. Other participants self-disclosed about their own personal religious

attitudes, beliefs, and experiences or exhibited ally behaviors for religiously diverse cultural groups. Heppner's (2017) model noted that mentor and mentee relationships can often develop an empathetic and influential relationship that is bi-directional, meaning that students and their mentors learn from one another. Participants of this current study described meaningful relationships they had with their students which was evident when students confided in these participants, shared their personal (and emotional) stories of their experiences with R/S, and offered to share spiritual experiences together (e.g., prayer, singing of hymns). Participants seemed to value the mentors they had in their life, even if those mentors were not specifically mentoring around topics of R/S, and participants sought to create a similar experience for their mentees. Given how important it was to the study participants to model professional behaviors around topics of R/S, it would be interesting to hear how students perceived those types of attempts and what those might mean for the students' training experiences.

Successes and Challenges

Participants' experiences of their attempts came with both challenges and successes. Success was difficult for some participants to define because there is a lack of APA-accreditation standards or guidelines around topics of R/S, or measures to adequately define criteria for being a clinician who is competent around topics of religion and spirituality. This is a sentiment that is echoed throughout other research on this subject (Oxhandler et al., 2019; Vieten et al., 2013; Vieten et al., 2016). Participants of this current study expressed two thoughts about what made their attempts successful or less than successful. First, the students' engagement with their attempts was a primary indicator for participants about whether those attempts were successful or not. Keeping in mind that participants of this study generally taught lecture-based courses rather than clinical coursework, it makes sense that participants would be assessing successful

outcomes based on students' engagement in reflection and discussion around topics of R/S, not client outcomes. Second, participants' ability to overcome challenges in order to make attempts with the phenomenon was another consideration for success.

Students Engagement with Topics of R/S. Participants perceived that their students expressed a range of reactions to discussions around topics of R/S. The range included positive student reactions, which were characterized as including naturally flowing conversations and an appreciation for the discussion. Participants attributed students' ability to engage in the attempts with thoughtfulness and vulnerability as a factor that fostered success. Vulnerability included times when students engaged in difficult dialogues around topics of R/S, reflected on their own religious and spiritual journey and beliefs, and expressed curiosity about the experiences of individuals with different religious or spiritual beliefs and practices than the students.

In some cases, participants perceived their students' responses to attempts to be intellectual rather than coming from an emotional, or personal, place. These participants described a need to create more spaces for emotion-focused learning and increasing students' self-awareness around topics of R/S. Journaling is a recommended teaching tool to increase multicultural competence around topics of race and ethnicity because this activity facilitates students' self-awareness through reflection of emotions, opinions, experiences, and questions the students have about the cultural factor (Jones et al., 2013). Some participants of the current study did use journaling exercises in their attempts and expressed that these exercises were helpful in allowing students to explore their own thoughts, feelings, and experiences around topics of R/S.

In other cases, participants perceived their students to be hesitant, though not necessarily opposed, to discussing topics of R/S. They guessed several reasons why students would be hesitant. One reason might be due to fear that such discussions might not be appropriate for a

counseling context or academia (i.e., religion is not scientific). In other cases, participants wondered if their colleagues within their department or program may have expressed negative attitudes towards topics of R/S, which made students uncomfortable talking about topics of R/S in an academic setting; a suspicion that was confirmed by some students. Moreover, participants reported experiences with some students with religious identities who reported that they were uncomfortable discussing religion and spirituality in their classes due to fear that their peers, or even professors, might judge them for their religious beliefs. Participants considered their students' willingness to disclose this vulnerable information and/or about their worry and discomfort as being successful.

On the other hand, several participants identified less than successful attempts as times when they perceived some of their students as having a defensive, resistant, or negative reaction to the attempts. Some of the students reported that they were offended by conversations, particularly when they felt religious beliefs were being used in a way to discriminate against, or oppress, groups of people (e.g., individuals with sexual minority identities). Participants of this study indicated that they had personal reactions to the students' defensiveness, which ranged from feeling frustrated with the students' response, to feeling uncertain of how to respond. Participants tended to have two ways that they addressed their personal reactions to their students' challenging responses. One, participants reflected on the role they played in the attempt that might have led to the students' response, thereby showing some humility. Second, participants considered factors about the students (e.g., R/S identity and developmental level) that might have contributed to their reactions and noted ways they might address student factors in future attempts.

Given that many students expressed concerns and/or negative reactions towards topics of R/S in training, participants expressed a desire to create a safe space for their students to explore topics of R/S without fear of needing to have all the right answers or the fear of being ridiculed by individuals who do not value R/S topics. Talbot and Anderson (2012) stated that faculty members across higher education settings have a responsibility to create safe learning spaces for college students to discuss topics of R/S as important to students. Other researchers have also discussed the need to create psychologically safe classroom spaces in order to effectively facilitate learning around multicultural topics in general (Buckley & Foldy, 2010; Jones et al., 2013; Mena & Rogers, 2017). Psychological safety is understood in the literature as a space in which students can take interpersonal risks without fear of embarrassment or repercussions (Edmondson, 1999). A second factor of psychological safety is thought of as a space where sharing differing opinions is valued and done openly (Edmondson, 1999). Ways that participants of this study created safe spaces included (a) setting clear expectations (e.g., interrupting one another will not be tolerated); (b) holding a stance that students are not expected to know everything, but need to know where to find information; and (c) having open and respectful discussions about topics of R/S. There would be benefit to further understanding the experiences of students in counseling psychology doctoral training regarding their felt sense of safety in addressing topics of R/S in training. Additionally, it would be helpful to understand students' perspectives on the qualities of their professors and training program that contributed to, or hindered, a felt sense of safety to discuss topics of R/S in training.

Participants Ability to Overcome Obstacles. In many of the participants' stories about successful attempts, there was a sense that they had overcome some kind of professional or personal obstacle in order to make their attempts. As you will see in the following sections

describing the contextual influences of participants' attempts, when participants faced an obstacle they did not give up, rather, they persisted to work past challenges in order to make attempts happen. Participants expressed a sense of pride when they were able to include topics of R/S in training despite facing (a) a lack of clear guidelines around integrating R/S set forth by the training program; (b) challenges from institutional barriers and rules; and (c) negative attitudes from colleagues within their training program, department or the larger psychological profession. When facing these challenging situations, participants generally responded in ways that fit with their values as counseling psychologists and proceeded in ways that they thought were in their students' best interests. Participants expressed a sense of accomplishment in their ability to stand up for what they believed would benefit their students.

Study participants also reported that they had to overcome their own personal challenges relating to integrating topics of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training. For some participants their personal challenge was in addressing their own beliefs, attitudes, and experiences towards R/S in order to reduce the likelihood of imposing their personal values on students. In other cases, participants had to work through their feelings of discomfort associated with training students on topics of R/S when they did not feel knowledgeable about those subjects themselves. Generally, participants who felt more competent and comfortable addressing topics of R/S tended to report their attempts as more successful than those who did not. Similarly, participants who had more years of professional experience seemed to be more confident in their attempts, suggesting that they have gained experiences to draw on over time.

This section has summarized participants' experiences of their attempts. The following two sections will further explore specific elements that influenced participants' attempts, first starting with professional aspects and then moving into personal characteristics.

Sub-question One: Elements that Influenced Attempts

Beyond seeking an understanding of the participants' experiences with their attempts to integrate topics of R/S into doctoral training, this researcher was interested in learning about elements that influenced participants' attempts. The first sub-question of this research asked, "What has influenced the attempts of faculty members at APA-accredited counseling psychology training programs to integrate religion and spirituality topics in the training of counseling psychology doctoral students?" Participants named a variety of constituents that they were serving in their attempts and participants felt responsible to each. These stakeholders included professional organizations (the American Psychological Association and the specialty field of Counseling Psychology), their students, and their students' future clients. At times, participants felt challenged to meet the needs of all entities and there were even times when constituents' needs were at odds with one another, creating a sense for participants that their attempts were tricky and risky. Moreover, participants described their relationships with their colleagues, noting that they had varying levels of support that added to the complexity of their efforts.

Professional Influences

Study participants integrated topics of R/S into their training because they were attempting to meet the training requirements suggested through APA guidelines, like the *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* (hereinafter referred to as the *APA Code of Conduct*, APA, 2017a) and *Multicultural Guidelines: An Ecological Approach to Context, Identity, and Intersectionality* (hereinafter referred to as *APA Multicultural Guidelines*; APA, 2017b). Participants revealed that, based on these influences, they attempted to train students to be (a) aware of, and respectful towards, religion and spirituality as a factor of cultural diversity; (b) knowledgeable about systems of privilege and oppression around religious cultural diversity;

(c) cognizant of how religion and spirituality can intersect with other cultural variables; and (d) social justice advocates for themselves and for their future clients.

Beyond the general APA guidelines, several participants noted that their counseling psychologist value of being a social justice advocate and agent was a more influential factor. Vera and Speight (2003) wrote a seminal article calling for counseling psychology graduate trainees to receive training around multiculturalism and social justice advocacy, which has been supported by other researchers (Goodman et al., 2004; Motulsky et al., 2014; Pieterse et al., 2009; Toporek & Worthington, 2014). Indeed, participants of this study were enthusiastic about their role in training students to advocate for both themselves and others. Because of the values of counseling psychology, faculty members who are counseling psychologists may approach training around topics of R/S differently than faculty members in different disciplines of psychology or in other mental health professions. This difference seemed apparent in the way participants of this study, who are working in counseling psychology training programs, focused their attempts on integrating topics of R/S as dimensions of diversity that can intersect with other aspects of identity, and addressing that there is a system of privilege and oppression associated with R/S identities. It is possible that other disciplines of psychology that tend to focus on empirical science, like clinical psychology, may be more likely to address R/S in terms of assessment, diagnosis, and R/S integrated treatments. Because much of the previous literature on the ways that R/S are integrated into psychology graduate training combines samples from both clinical, counseling, and other psychology disciplines, more information would be needed to further understand if this hypothesis is true.

Participants of this study described several tensions within the field of psychology regarding the appropriateness of integrating topics of R/S into psychological research, training,

and clinical practice. Of note, these current tensions represent long-standing debates within the field of psychology that have influenced participants of this study in several ways. One long-standing tension has been a debate over whether religion is aversive to science and therefore difficult to fit within scientific research or evidence based practices of psychologists, which is a well-documented concern within the field of psychology (Shafranske & Cummings, 2013; Vieten et al., 2013). Participants of this study described how the tension they perceive from psychologists across the larger field of psychology has also played out within their own training programs and departments. For some participants at religiously affiliated institutions, this tension revealed itself when the training program was being reviewed by the APA-accreditation review board to ensure that it met APA-accreditation standards. As a result of feeling questioned, participants reported feeling like they had to prove themselves to the APA-accreditation board members, and to their colleagues, as psychologists who value science; this created stress for the participants, which added to the complexity participants experienced in their attempts.

Another source of tension was evident in stories told by participants, mostly from secular institutions, who described a historic anti-religious bias within the field of psychology (Allport & Ross, 1967, Hall et al., 2010; Hunsberger & Jackson, 2005; Nelson, 2009). Participants described that as a result of these negative attitudes towards religion, specifically Christian religions, they felt a sense that religion was not, and still is not, professionally valued in the ways that other areas of diversity are, which contributed to the previously mentioned hierarchy among cultural identities.

As a final commentary on professional influences, several participants of this study shared stories of how they felt the field of psychology, including counseling psychology, has grown over time regarding discussions around topics of religion and spirituality. They saw that

there has been more research on topics of R/S from psychological perspectives. Some participants expressed optimism that they were experiencing more conversations around topics of R/S with colleagues across several disciplines within psychology, including counseling psychology.

Institutional Influences

Participants of this study were evenly split between those who worked at religiously affiliated and secular (not religiously affiliation) institutions. There were some notable differences in the experiences of participants based on the type of institution for which they worked. Participants at secular institutions did not feel that their institution had influenced their attempts and instead described the ways that their colleagues within their department and training program represented a bigger influence on their attempts. Alternatively, participants at religiously affiliated institutions noted several institutional influences. One influence was that several participants who worked at religiously affiliated institutions tended to be individuals who were more likely to identify as both religious and spiritual and choose to work at a religiously affiliated institution in order to have the freedom to integrate topics of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training.

Participants' experiences with attempts made at religiously affiliated institutions were characterized by one participant as a "double-edged sword," and it is a good metaphor of those participants' general experiences. The double-edged sword metaphor referred to participants experiencing the influence of their institution as being both positive and negative. On the positive end of the continuum, participants talked about occasions when the institutional expectation that topics of R/S be integrated across training was helpful and encouraging to them.

In some cases, participants felt supported by attending institutionally sponsored faculty seminars on how to integrate topics of R/S across their curriculum.

On the other end of the continuum, participants reported some challenges related to their religiously affiliated institution's mission and/or expectations around religion and spirituality. At times, participants felt pressured in their attempts because they were being evaluated on their efforts and wondered if perhaps they were making attempts to meet the institutional needs rather than doing what was best for the class and students. The pressure to do a good job might have also stemmed from an awareness that students who attend religiously affiliated institutions often hold R/S identities and that topics of R/S might be important to the students.

One layer of complexity that participants faced during their attempts was when the needs of multiple constituents felt as though they were in conflict with one another. For example, participants described feeling censored in how they could address topics around social justice issues, like LGBTQIA concerns and women's reproductive rights, because doing so would be in direct conflict with their institutions' religious mission; however, their values as counseling psychologists encouraged them to discuss these social justice issues nevertheless. Participants were empathetic towards their institution's stance yet felt their values as counseling psychologists and the training mission superseded the institution's values. Participants did report that they modified their attempts to both fit within the institutions' standards and still speak to their social justice values, though doing so was difficult.

Participants at religiously affiliated institutions described ways that their institutions were both helpful and unhelpful in their attempts to integrate topics of R/S into doctoral training. There are some unique characteristics of working at religiously affiliated institutions that would be interesting to know more about, including what elements of faculty learning seminars are

helpful in their attempts and how the faculty members cope with conflicting values between the institutional mission and the values of counseling psychology.

Departmental and Training Program Influences

Most participants indicated that their department housed other mental health disciplines such as clinical psychology, school psychology, or educational psychology. Participants at religiously affiliated institutions reported that the expectation to integrate topics of R/S into curricula came from the larger institutional expectation, not something specific within the training program. Similarly, participants at secular institutions reported that there were no specific guidelines coming from their training program that established expectations for topics of R/S being specifically integrated into training curricula. However, some participants at secular institutions reported that they perceived their counseling psychology training program to be more invested in integrating topics of R/S into doctoral training than other psychology programs within the larger department. This could be because the APA Division 17, the Society of Counseling Psychology, has a set of Counseling Psychology Core Competencies (2013), which specifically call for counseling psychologists' "awareness, sensitivity, and skills" (p. 5) towards diverse cultural groups including those with "religious affiliations" (p. 5). However, as you may recall from the Chapter II literature review, this APA document does not provide specific guidelines for training future counseling psychologists on practicing awareness, sensitivity, and skills, thereby leaving training programs responsible for interpreting how to best incorporate the topics into curricula.

Participants perceived there was a range of attitudes about R/S from their colleagues within their departments and/or training programs. On one end of the continuum, participants felt supported in their attempts when their colleagues within their department or training program

recognized that topics of R/S were important to integrate and encouraged the participant to do so. This sentiment was particularly true for some participants at religiously affiliated institutions who reported support for faculty research about R/S and for faculty members to seek additional training experiences around topics of R/S.

The other end of the continuum was anchored with participants' perceptions that their colleagues had negative views of topics of R/S being integrated into counseling psychology doctoral training. Perceived tension within departments because of differing viewpoints was difficult for the participants to navigate. For example, they felt uncomfortable addressing topics of R/S with their colleagues due to attitudes about religion and spirituality expressed by some faculty members. In other instances, participants felt like they needed to work with their colleagues to "bring them along," in recognizing the importance of addressing topics of R/S as cultural variables and believing that students should be trained on how to address them. Some participants of this study also described times when they learned that students felt other faculty members within their department were not as open to having conversations about religion and spirituality. Specifically, participants described a need to protect students from feeling like their training program is not an appropriate place to discuss topics of R/S or to provide safe spaces for students to have these conversations. Given that previous research has shown that faculty collaboration is considered an important component of effective training around social justice topics (Motulsky et al., 2014), the tension that participants experienced is noteworthy.

In the middle of the continuum, some participants felt that their colleagues, in either their department or training program, were "neutral" in their attitudes towards whether or not topics of R/S should be integrated. Neutral attitudes existed when participants did not feel either encouraged or discouraged in their own efforts to integrate topics of R/S. Neutral and negative

attitudes from others negatively affected participants who felt pressured to do a good job in their efforts, because they knew that students were not gaining that training in other coursework. In fact, several participants shared that students had noted that the participant's attempts to integrate topics of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training were some of the students' first exposure to R/S in their graduate training.

Without a departmental or training program expectation that topics of R/S be integrated into counseling psychology doctoral training, the choice to integrate these topics seems to be an individual decision made by each faculty member, as was noted above as a challenge. A common theme found across literature examining the integration of topics of religion and spirituality within psychology training programs is that there is a need for clarity and guidelines to inform faculty members of best practices (Vieten et al., 2013; Vieten et al., 2016). The results of the current study seem consistent with that message. Specifically, a set of professional competencies around providing psychological services (e.g., research, training, consultation and clinical practice) with individuals who are religious and/or spiritual would help guide faculty members about what topics of R/S need to be integrated. Additionally, R/S competencies could lead to benchmarks to evaluate students' competency to complete these aforementioned professional tasks effectively and competently around topics of R/S. Furthermore, competency guidelines at the professional organization level might aid departments and training programs in identifying appropriate ways to integrate topics of R/S into the curriculum, whether that is through a stand-alone course or across a variety of coursework.

Vieten et al. (2013) had established a set of proposed Spiritual and Religious Competencies for Psychologists and were conducting research around the language used and the appropriateness of benchmarks. The establishment of such competencies is likely to support

counseling psychology training programs, and the faculty members, in future efforts to integrate topics of R/S into doctoral training. Counselor education training programs use their Competencies for Addressing Spiritual and Religious Issues in Counseling (ASERVIC, 2009), a part of the CACREP accreditation standards, to guide their training and are researching best practices to integrate topics of R/S into graduate training with the purpose of increasing multicultural competence in this area. Studies have shown that students in CACREP Accredited programs tend to score higher than psychology students on R/S competences (Hage et al., 2006; Oxhandler & Pargament 2018; Park, 2018) suggesting that having specific competences around topics of R/S is beneficial for students' learning.

Considerations about Students

Another element that influenced participants' efforts to integrate religion and spirituality into doctoral training is the students. Participants reported that they perceived their students' religious and spiritual identities to be a factor that has influenced students' reactions to their attempts to integrate R/S into training. Participants noted that they experienced a Christian and atheist divide in which students who identified as atheist felt that topics of R/S were discussed too much, and the students who were Christian wanted more discussion. In response to the perceived Christian and atheist divide, some participants found that they needed to soften their conversations around topics of R/S through the use of disclaimers (e.g., we are at a religiously affiliated institution and discussion of R/S are expected). Other participants addressed the divide by setting clear expectations about behavior, such as at the beginning of a class (e.g., we will have these discussions and respectful dialogue is expected).

Additionally, participants observed that some students with R/S identities felt unsafe disclosing their religious identity because of fear about the assumptions some people (e.g., their

peers or other professors in the department with negative views of religion) might make about the students' political affiliations because of that identity. Other research has found that students with religious identities perceived that their religious beliefs would not be valued in their graduate training program, which led students to feel they could not be open about their identity (Giordano et al., 2018). Consistent with this finding, some participants in this current research perceived students to be hesitant to engage in discussions around R/S. However, other participants thought that some of their students were able to engage in difficult dialogues around concerns regarding their religious identity, which created a more open learning space. Participants of this study saw a strength in having cohorts of doctoral students with diverse religious and spiritual beliefs, practices, and identities, noting that students often gained insight into another's point of view about R/S. Participants encouraged their training programs to seek recruitment of students who identify with diverse religious and spiritual identities.

In answering the research sub-question one participants reported that there were both positive and challenging influences. Participants also noted that there were external considerations for their attempts including meeting the needs of the profession, institution, and students with little guidance from their colleagues across their departments or training programs. Participants reported that their own personal and professional factors also influenced their attempts. These will be discussed in the next section.

Sub-question Two: Participants' Personal and Professional Values and Attributes

When topics of religion and spirituality (R/S) are integrated into counseling psychology doctoral training, it is typically done based on the individual faculty members' discretion. Thus, it is important to understand more about the participants by answering the question, "How do the personal and professional attributes and values of faculty members at APA-accredited counseling

psychology training programs influence their attempts to integrate topics of religion and spirituality into counseling psychology doctoral training?” The results showed that study participants had several personal motivations for making attempts. Participants were passionate about teaching their students about topics of R/S, and they strongly valued religion and spirituality as cultural identities that can be important for others, like their students’ future clients. Therefore, participants wanted their students to understand how R/S can be important to others, even if it is not personally relevant to the students’ themselves. Participants had varying levels of skills and comfort in making attempts, which was often associated with their own religious and spiritual beliefs, identities, and/or experiences. Even though many participants had minimal training around topics of R/S themselves, they showed an investment in learning about topics of R/S in order to provide their students with the information they would need to be culturally-sensitive clinicians around topics of R/S.

R/S Beliefs, Identities, and/or Experiences

The religious and spiritual beliefs, identities, and/or experiences of participants also influenced their attempts. For example, participants who identified as having a strong religious identity noted that they could not separate that part of themselves from their professional identity. This was evident at times when participants attempted to model an integrated sense of religious and spiritual self and when participants trained students to consider holistic counseling approaches, which could include spirituality. When compared to participants without a strong religious or spiritual identity, those with a stronger identity tended to express more comfort with engaging in discussions of religion and spirituality in their classes. Another example of how important R/S identities were to some participants was in their choice to work for religiously affiliated institutions because they wanted the freedom to be able to integrate topics of R/S into

counseling psychology doctoral training. Participants' salient religious and spiritual identities were not only evident in what they did, but also through the way in which they spoke about their efforts and about topics of R/S with more passion and enthusiasm. Additionally, their examples of attempts tended to draw more from their own personal experiences than external factors, which was different than participants who held other religious and spiritual identities (i.e., spiritual but not religious; agnostic; atheist).

In other cases, participants had historically held religious beliefs and engaged in related practices, but at the time of the study identified as agnostic or atheist. Each of these participants worked at a secular institution and expressed a strong value in multiculturalism and social justice advocacy in general. For these participants, their history of religion and spirituality allowed them to recognize how important R/S can be for someone, including students or clients, which provided a desire to help their students understand R/S as a cultural identity. On the other hand, they also had knowledge of, and experiences with, religion as being harmful to either themselves or others. Participants who were currently agnostic or atheist gave more examples of the ways religion can be harmful to people (e.g., oppressive to individuals within the LGBT community) than did their religious or spiritual counterparts, and thus may be more sensitive to these negative issues of religion because of their own experiences. For study participants who were currently agnostic or atheist, a key component of their attempts was a desire for their students to understand that there are both beneficial and harmful aspects to some religious and spiritual perspectives.

Other participants of this study indicated that religion or spirituality were not historically important to them, but as adults they have shifted into holding spiritual beliefs and identities. For these participants, part of their investment to train students around issues of R/S came from the

impact of their own clinical experiences in graduate training and in other professional roles where they felt unprepared to address issues that clients brought up in session. Wanting their students to feel prepared, these participants had a desire to help students gain awareness of their own R/S identities, or lack thereof, and to have some knowledge of R/S as cultural identities that are important to others, even if not for themselves. These participants expressed a level of uncertainty about their attempts because of both their own lack of training as graduate students and limited personal experiences with religion and spirituality. As they gained more professional experience with topics of R/S and began their own spiritual identity development, they reported a perceived increase in competence and comfort with addressing topics of R/S in their training of counseling psychology doctoral students.

Racial and Ethnic Identity of Participants

This researcher noted that there were differences in the experiences of individuals in this study who identified as members of underrepresented racial and ethnic groups than those with dominant racial and ethnic identities. For example, a few of the participants of this study noted that their racial and ethnic identities were more salient than their religious identity, and they recognized that this might have influenced their attempts. They reported feeling less knowledgeable about and comfortable in integrating religion and spirituality in training because they had less experience addressing R/S professionally and personally. These individuals with racial and ethnic minority identities often integrated topics of R/S through conversations on intersecting identities, which was a topic area that they expressed having more experience with and comfort to address.

Alternatively, the participants who identified as being members of both underrepresented racial and ethnic groups and “religious and spiritual” ones expressed more comfort and

knowledge in addressing topics of R/S in counseling psychology doctoral training. Given that participants of this study had varying experiences based on their salient racial and ethnic identities and intersecting religious and spiritual identities there would be a benefit to further understand the experiences of faculty members in counseling psychology training programs who belong to underrepresented racial and ethnic groups in order to understand how their attempts might differ.

Social Justice Orientation

Another attribute of study participants that seemed related to their integration of R/S in training was that they valued the social justice perspectives of counseling psychologists on both personal and professional levels. Participants of this study exhibited qualities of a social justice orientation, which according to Mena and Rogers (2017) is identified as an important personal characteristic of faculty educators who engage in multicultural training. Social justice orientation was described by Mena and Rogers (2017) as “faculty understanding of social inequality, sensitivity to differences in access to resources and to power, and commitment to taking action to address injustice” (p. 66). Faculty members with high levels of social justice orientation are more likely to be informed about inequalities, and the cultural context, and to be more culturally-sensitive toward their students (Mena & Rogers, 2017). This social justice orientation was demonstrated in the current study through the participants’ (a) need to stand up for both clients and students who hold religious and spiritual identities, (b) recognition of the power differential in classroom settings that might contribute to students’ hesitancy to discuss topics of R/S, (c) engagement in discussions around how to address R/S inequalities within their doctoral training program, and (d) modeling of behaviors for how to be an ally to individuals from religiously diverse cultural groups who experience prejudice or discrimination on the basis of religion or

spirituality. Participants' valuing of R/S cultural identities and social justice orientation appeared to be a motivating influence in their attempts to integrate topics of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training.

Valuing Others

Another personal attribute of study participants was a valuing of others. Participants described valuing others in terms of showing respect and care towards others, seeking to understand the experiences of others, and creating relationships with others. Study participants with religious identities indicated that valuing others came from their religious beliefs. Beyond religious influence, valuing others seemed to be a core part of who participants are as people. They showed respect for their students' religious and spiritual beliefs and identities when they made modifications in their syllabi to accommodate diverse religious practice. They also were thoughtful in asking students about their religious belief, practices, and experiences, not solely to help students increase their own awareness, but to really understand what was significant for the student about those experiences. Similarly, participants attempted to help students value others, including those with religious and spiritual identities. This was true when participants gave examples of wanting their students to respectfully listen to one another and when they attempted to train students in skills to show care, curiosity, and compassion for their future client's with religious and spiritual identities.

Cultural Humility

Participants expressed an ability to practice humility, meaning they were self-reflective with an intent to learn about themselves and to grow in their awareness. The ability to practice cultural humility is a desirable trait for counseling psychologists, according to Scheel et al. (2018). Cultural humility involves a lifelong commitment to practicing self-reflection and

critique, egolessness, and an openness to new ideas in order to create supportive interactions and reduce power imbalances (Foronda et al., 2016). There were several ways these traits were apparent in participants' descriptions of their attempts. Some participants experienced personal reactions when students were defensive in response to their attempts to integrate religion and spirituality. In these cases of experiencing personal reactions, participants practiced humility when they engaged in self-reflection and critique about the role they may have played in the scenario and in their attempts to re-approach the situation differently through supportive interactions. They also displayed humility by attempting to repair a situation when they recognized a time they had imposed their own values and biases on their students. Participants perceived that these attempts to repair challenging interactions with students were positively received by the students. Other ways they showed humility was in their ability to set aside their own feelings towards a subject that they found personally offensive in order to better understand the students' thoughts, feelings, and needs in the moment. Participants' willingness to engage in the practice of self-awareness and humility is a valuable attribute that helped them to overcome some challenging results of their attempts.

Wanting Something Better for the Students

A final attribute about participants that influenced their attempts was a motivation to provide the future generations of psychologists with better training than the participants had received. This attribute was evident in their desire to impart knowledge about topics of R/S, which they experienced as generally lacking within their own training. They showed passion for creating a quality learning experience for their students, which was apparent in participants' desire to have meaningful conversations around R/S and to really think about the ways R/S can be relevant for clients. Additionally, participants put thought into how to continue to improve on

their attempts in the future and to give their students tools they need to be successful counseling psychologists.

The attribute of wanting something better for their trainees was also prevalent in a reoccurring sentiment that students needed a safe learning environment for discussions of religion and spirituality. As students themselves, some study participants had experiences with feeling unsafe to discuss their own R/S identities and thus were motivated, as faculty members, to provide a better learning environment for their students; one conducive to discussions around topics of religion and spirituality. Participants of this study seemed to be aware of the importance for respectful and open discussions around a variety of thoughts and belief systems relating to religion and spirituality and sought to create a safe and supportive learning environment for student to explore these topics. They addressed the sense of safety from multiple directions, including by attempting to get all faculty members within their department to show respect for religion and spirituality as cultural variables, addressing religious diversity in their syllabus (e.g., observance of religious holidays) and outlining expectations for how to have respectful classroom discussions around difficult R/S topics.

This section, *Sub-question Two: Participants' Personal and Professional Values and Attributes*, revealed that there were a variety of contributing factors that influenced participants' attempts to integrate topics of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training. Participants' personal values and attributes of valuing others, social justice orientation, investment in learning, and desire to give their students positive training experiences were all influences that motivated their attempts, even when those attempts were challenging. Additionally, participants' salient identities and the ways in which those identities intersecting with one another played a role in their comfort and competence to address topics of R/S. Given that there are so many qualities

about faculty members that influenced their attempts, it would be helpful to continue to seek understanding from individuals with diverse identities in order to further understand how personal factors influence attempts.

Researcher Subjectivity

An important aspect of the IPA approach to phenomenological research method is that the researcher is making an interpretation of their participants' interpretation of their experiences, which is referred to as hermeneutics (Finley 2011; Miller et al., 2018; Smith et al., 1999). Recognizing how the results of qualitative studies are influenced by the researcher's subjective experiences, it is recommended that qualitative researchers acknowledge their influence (Creswell, 2013; Heppner et al., 2016; Miller et al., 2018; Ponterotto, 2005). One way that the researcher can acknowledge their influence is through a process of reflexivity, which is a practice of acknowledging one's thoughts and feelings throughout the research process (Miller et al., 2018; Heppner et al., 2016; Wertz, 2005). Given that this section is describing the student researcher's personal reflections on various aspects of the research process, this section will be written using first person language.

One of the reactions that I had was about engaging in the qualitative research process itself. Across several of the field notes, particularly early in the data collection process, I recorded feeling intimidated by interviewing faculty members in counseling psychology training programs, who are professionals in the field the researcher is preparing to enter. I was aware that many of these professionals might have experience conducting qualitative research themselves and as a novice researcher, I experienced worry about whether I was "doing the right thing." Initially, I wondered if I was summarizing too much or asking follow-up questions that were too pointed in a direction that was led by my knowledge on the subject rather than the participant's

story. To address these concerns, I processed these feelings with my research advisor. The researcher advisor also reviewed the initial participant's transcript to provide feedback on the skill of qualitative interviewing. With advice from the researcher advisor and practice in conducting qualitative interviews, I felt more comfortable with the data collection process.

Similarly, when conducting data analysis, I used memos to reflect on anxiety I experienced about wanting to analyze the data in appropriate and meaningful ways. Specifically, I worried about whether I was doing an adequate job picking out meaningful statements, or codes, and then later felt pressure to make a meaningful story about the data. Upon processing these concerns and feelings, I found that reminding myself that my job is to tell the participants' stories was helpful in reducing anxiety and focusing on the participants rather than the potential outcome. I believe this process also helped to reduce confirmatory bias.

I recognized that my subjective influence played an important part in the data analysis process, particularly when I began looking across all ten participants' codes and themes to identify overarching themes. When I initially began putting similar codes and themes together, I found myself separating comments into piles that confirmed my own thoughts, feelings, and knowledge around the ways topics of R/S were integrated into doctoral training. For example, I found that I was leaning towards a theme of "topics of R/S being integrated minimally at best," which was consistent with my own perceived experiences in graduate training and within relevant psychological research (Brawer et al., 2002, Hage et al., 2006, Saunders et al., 2014; Schafer et al., 2011; Schulte et al., 2002; Vogel et al., 2013). When re-reading participant transcripts, I found that I was cueing in to particular phrases participants said that might have confirmed what I knew from my own experiences and what the literature said rather than capturing the full extent of participants' narratives. Coming to this realization allowed me to

focus attention back to the participants' stories rather than confirming my own thoughts and experiences. Overall, I found that the process of acknowledging my thoughts and feelings around the research process was a vulnerable exercise that took courage to complete. Discussing these thoughts and feelings was helpful in moving the research process along in a way that helped me to engage with the data rather than my feelings about the research process.

As mentioned, one area that I was aware of while conducting this research was the influence that my thoughts and feelings around the integration of topics of religion and spirituality had on how I was interpreting and writing about the data. As previously discussed, I was interested in studying this phenomenon because of my own experiences throughout graduate training. I felt that even though being religious was a salient identity for me, I felt that the doctoral training program was not an appropriate or comfortable place to discuss that part of my identity. Participants of this study shared that several students with religious identities reported that their training program felt like an unsafe or inappropriate place to speak about their religious beliefs and identities. This was particularly true for students at secular training programs or when students took classes in other disciplines within their department.

There were several reasons why I felt uncomfortable discussing my own R/S identity while in training. First, there were few times when it seemed as though topics of R/S were intentionally integrated within my doctoral training, particularly early on. As a program focused on evidence-based classes and a research-practitioner model, it was unclear to me if, or how, religion and spirituality could fit into what I was learning about clinical practice. Likewise, several participants of this study perceived that their students responded with during attempts because the students were unsure how topics of R/S fit within a scientific framework.

This leads to the second reason for my feelings of discomfort discussing my religious identity. In general, my experience was that when discussions around topics of R/S were brought into graduate training by the professor, the conversation among the students was often very quiet or surface level. My experiences of my peers' silence in the conversation around topics of R/S felt as though topics of R/S were taboo topics of discussion within the classroom and I felt uncomfortable sharing my thoughts on R/S within that setting. Similarly, many participants of this study also perceived that their students had some hesitancy to bring up topics of R/S in training.

A third reason for my discomfort was a sense that when discussions around topics of R/S did occur they were centered around a negative bias that religious affiliations have been oppressive towards some groups of people. Because of this negative bias from some faculty and peers, I felt that assumptions would be made about my personal values and ability to be a social justice advocate towards all individuals because of my religious beliefs and affiliations. Results from this research study revealed that participants' students felt their peers might make assumptions about them based on religious affiliation which added to a lack of safety to discuss R/S topics. My experiences as a graduate student were like the stories told by several participants who engaged in this current research.

Using both field notes and memos, I reflected on feelings of validation, sadness, and frustration I felt when participants shared stories about their own experiences of training being similar to mine. I found that my feelings of validation, sadness, or frustration increased my motivation to complete this study because of the potential add value to the training of future psychology graduate trainees in ways that were better than my own experiences. Additionally, I noticed that when participants shared stories of times when they engaged in cultural immersion

exercises or told success stories about their attempts, I sometimes thought something like, “wow, that is really cool.” Those reflections often came with a feeling of jealousy because I did not get to have those experiences as a trainee. As a result, I worried that my feelings about cultural immersion exercises might have resulted in sharing a lot of those examples in my write-up of the analysis, thereby creating a bias in the way the results are presented. By processing the results with my researcher advisor, it is my hope that my reactions to the data were addressed and that the results are driven by the content of the participants’ stories rather than my feelings towards the content.

When conducting data analysis, I often wished there was an additional coder to help in the process of checking my biases and in interpreting the data. This was particularly true as I desired to have discussions about what codes fit together to then create themes and to process the interpretation of those themes. The process of creating an interpretative analysis of the experiences of educators when I have only limited experiences as an educator was a challenge. I found that I could easily identify patterns in themes but struggled to be able to think through the meaning of the patterns when my knowledge on the subject (e.g., attempts made to train students) were from the vantage point of a student. I also acknowledge that this difficulty with interpreting participants’ narratives is also in part due to my limited experiences with qualitative research in general. Discussion with the Principal Investigator of this study helped me to have a better language for the experiences of faculty members. It is important to note that I also tend to feel more confident when working with teams than independently, and I would choose to work with multiple coders on data analysis for any future qualitative research studies.

In this section, I have shared examples of how I practiced reflexivity throughout the processes of data collection and analysis. I used the practice of reflexivity, field notes, and

creating memos to recognize and understand the influence of my subjective bias in this research process. What I learned about the reality of qualitative research is that data analysis is a process of continual self-reflection in order to focus on the participants' narratives rather than the researcher's own thoughts, feelings, and understanding of the phenomenon of interest. I found the process of grounding the results in the participants' stories to be the most helpful way to reduce the influence I might have. However, I acknowledge that the researcher's influence is an important part of the IPA analysis and hope that the context provided here will offer the reader an understanding of the ways the researcher may have influenced the interpretation of results of this study.

Challenges and Limitations

This section includes challenges experienced during the completion of this study, as well as the possible limitations of this study. One of the challenges that this researcher faced was during the recruitment process. Initially, the researcher attempted to send emails to directors of the counseling psychology training programs and request that they forward the email with the invitation to participate on to the faculty members within their counseling psychology training program. After recruiting in this way for five months and only obtaining four participants, the researcher reflected on some factors that might be influencing the recruitment process. One factor was that the researcher did not feel she had a lot of control in the recruitment process, specifically, she had no way of tracking if training directors were receiving the recruitment emails and if the emails were being forwarded. A second factor could have been that initial recruitment attempts occurred over the summer months when many faculty members may have been off duty and therefore less likely to respond to research invitations. After recognizing these potential limitations to the recruitment process, the researcher decided to contact potential

participants directly and to wait until the fall semester started, which proved to be more successful in obtaining participants.

A second challenge the researcher faced was technological difficulties. First, the researcher would like to note that the use of Skype to conduct interviews was helpful in that it allowed the researcher to recruit from a national population. However, a limitation of this tool was that the internet connection on several of the interviews did cause some disruption to the audio recordings. The researcher took care during interviews to ask participants anything she felt she missed due to a dropped internet connection, which might have disrupted the flow of conversation. Unfortunately, this technological difficulty might have led to some frustrations on either the part of the participant or the researcher; however, participants seemed to be flexible and understanding of the technological concerns despite a few frustrating moments. When transcribing, the researcher did her best to fill in audio disruptions based on context clues of the participants' story. In addition, participants who completed the member check interview had an opportunity to remark on any areas where the researcher made interpretations due to audio disruption in the initial interview transcript. Therefore, it is not likely that this challenge caused significant concerns that would decrease trustworthiness of the data presented. In the future, in-person interviews, or the use of other video and audio calling software, might be beneficial to reduce the effects of technological concerns.

Upon reflecting on the interpretation of results, this researcher realized that a challenge of this study was that the interview questions covered a broad range of topics, which affected the depth of discussion around each topic. While the researcher gathered rich information about participants' attempts, it would have been helpful to reflect on whether participants saw their attempts as helpful or not, to better understand what methods of integration worked better than

others, and to hear more about what participants learned from their attempts. Future research around the integration of topics of religion and spirituality into doctoral training might want to focus on the best practices for attempts, such as understanding what methods are effective to increase students' competency around topics of R/S.

One limitation of this research was that participants who choose to take part in this research may have previous opinions on, or investment in, the research topic. Given that participants perceived their colleagues to have varying attitudes towards the phenomenon of this study, it is likely that study participants' efforts may not represent the experiences of all faculty members in counseling psychology training programs. Future research might seek to understand the thoughts about the integration of R/S in training from faculty members in counseling psychology training programs who have not made attempts with the phenomenon to understand alternative perspectives to the integration aspect (e.g., do they want to make attempts and experience challenges or barriers or is there a lack of interest in making attempts?).

An additional limitation of this study was the broad range of inclusion criteria that the researcher used regarding faculty members' educational background and teaching experience. Specifically, not all participants held degrees within the field of counseling psychology and this researcher wonders if there are differences in the experiences of faculty members given their educational background or specific field of psychology. One of the hallmarks of IPA research is the use of a small, homogeneous, sample in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of few (Finlay, 2011; Miller et al., 2018). Regarding years of experience teaching, participants' ranged from their first semester teaching to over 20 years of teaching experience and it is likely that participants comfort and skills as faculty members would change over time, which may affect their experiences with the phenomena of this study. Future research on this

topic may benefit from selecting more defined inclusion criteria in order to provide a more narrow focus of experience and better meet the spirit of IPA research.

As you may recall, this researcher was seeking a cohort of participants with varying cultural identities. Though this sample does consist of many participants who hold dominant U.S. group membership (e.g., Caucasian American, Christian, heterosexual), there was some diversity among participants. Participants self-identified as “White/Caucasian American” (n = 6) with two of those participants identifying as culturally Jewish, though not practicing Judaism. One participant identified as Asian American, and three identified as mixed race including combinations of European American, African American, and Asian American racial identities. Five participants identified as both religious and spiritual; two identified as spiritual, but not religious; and three identified as agnostic, atheist, and/or not currently practicing. All five participants who identified as currently religious reported affiliation with varying Christian religious groups. Two participants reported other non-dominant U.S. religious affiliations with Hindu and Universalist Unitarian religions and both of these participants also held intersecting identities with a non-dominant racial or ethnic group. Though demographic information specific to educators in counseling psychology was not readily available, the members of the APA Division 17: Society for Counseling Psychology (SCP) still hold a predominately White/European American membership (Lichtenberg et al., 2014). Therefore, the number of diverse racial and ethnic identities of participants of this current research, while beneficial to the richness of the current study, may over-represent their membership among counseling psychologists within the SCP.

In the sample of participants for the current study, there was a lack of representation of individuals from Hispanic American, Latinx American, and Native North American ethnicity,

which tend to be cultural groups with strongly religious or spiritual affiliations (King & Trimble, 2013; Koss-Chioino, 2013; Park et al., 2020; Sue & Sue, 2019). There is a benefit to further understanding the experiences of faculty members in counseling psychology training programs with racially and ethnically diverse identities, and other religious and spiritual identities, in order to understand how attempts to integrate R/S in training might differ based on the background of faculty members not represented in the current study.

Future Directions

In this section, the writer will identify future directions for training, research, and practice around topics of R/S. Themes identified in this study suggest intervening at the (a) professional, (b) institutional (c) departmental and training program, and (d) individual levels.

Professional

An important finding of this research was that these faculty members in APA-accredited counseling psychology training programs felt they could be better supported in their attempts if (a) they had more training to increase their own competency around topics of R/S, (b) there were clear expectations about what R/S topics to integrate into training and in what ways, and (c) additional resources were available to support training around topics of R/S. Given that several participants of this study desired supplemental materials about topics of R/S as related to clinical application, perhaps the APA could develop and present seminars or training videos that could be used in classroom settings to support attempts made to integrate topics of R/S into counseling psychology graduate training.

Data from this study suggest that participants perceived there to be tension within the field of psychology regarding whether topics of religion and spirituality have a place. Based on this information, there is value in continued emphasis by the APA to set clear expectations

around the appropriateness to address topics of R/S in psychological practice (e.g., clinical practice, research, and education). Therefore, this researcher supports the call of members of Division 36, and other researchers, who advocate for the American Psychological Association to endorse cultural competencies with regard to religion and spirituality that can be implemented into APA-accreditation standards for training programs. Similarly, members of the Council of Counseling Psychology Training Programs (CCPTP), and those responsible for implementing the Counseling Psychology Model Training Programs, may consider taking a more explicit stance on the training that counseling psychology doctoral students should receive around topics of R/S and set expectations for how to accomplish those training goals. In addition to competencies, educators could also benefit from guidelines about best practices for integrating religion and spirituality into training.

Institutional

Data from this study suggest that there were differences in the experiences of participants based on the type of institution for which they worked. More research is needed to further understand how the institution type may affect attempts made to integrate topics of R/S into psychology training. Given participants' description of working at a religiously affiliated institution as a doubled-edge sword, there is benefit in better understanding specific factors that support and challenge various attempts. For example, participants reported that attending an institutional training for first-year faculty was supportive toward training but noted that each institution focused on different areas of content. Qualitative research approaches could be used to seek understanding about faculty members' participation in institutionally mandated training seminars designed to help faculty members feel supported in their efforts to integrate topics of R/S into training. It would also be helpful to know what content was presented in these trainings

and the extent to which the training was helpful. Another characteristic of many religiously affiliated institutions is a requirement that faculty and/or students sign a statement of faith that they will adhere to the religious mission of the institution. Because participants of this study noted that there were times when their institution's statement of faith seemed to be in direct conflict with the values of counseling psychologists, future research could continue to seek understanding about the ways in which faith statements effect counseling psychology doctoral training at those institutions. Specific considerations might further explore how faculty members address times when there are conflicts between the institutional values and the values of counseling psychologists. Are there times when faith statements are beneficial to training?

Departmental

One aspect that appeared to negatively influence attempts was that participants often felt unsupported and alone in their efforts to integrate topics of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training. Participants experienced a range of attitudes from their colleagues within their department or program regarding whether topics of R/S should be integrated. This suggests that there is need for department-wide interventions to create one understanding about the importance of being respectful of and sensitive towards topics of R/S. In departments where there are varying attitudes around integrating R/S, a program review might be warranted to identify and address any concerns resulting from faculty members holding unsupportive attitudes towards the integration of such topics into psychology graduate training. Departments can also provide additional support for attempts by encouraging faculty members to seek training, or even provide the training, around topics of R/S, which might increase faculty members' competence to address, and comfort level in addressing, R/S topics. This departmental support could include financial support, like paying for training or continuing education or providing release time for

training. Future research might develop a training for faculty members and gather outcome information relating to participants' competence and comfort in addressing topics of R/S pre- and post-intervention.

Training Program

Study participants described feeling alone in their efforts to incorporate topics of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training. Even though they made attempts across a variety of training experiences, participants felt that their ability to integrate topics of R/S were only a small portion of what they wanted to do. A significant lesson learned from the current study was the importance of integrating topics of R/S across multiple courses taught by multiple faculty members within the training program, which may resolve participants' challenges by reducing pressure to integrate topics of R/S in an in-depth manner in just one course.

While the current study adds to the existing literature on attempts made to integrate topics of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training, future research may seek to identify additional methods that faculty members are using in their attempts and the outcomes of those methods. Future research could expand upon the findings by measuring students' competence before and after attempts in order to determine the extent to which various training methods are helpful in increasing students' competence.

Participants of this study suggested that in future attempts they hoped to introduce more emotion-focused learning activities and provide additional historical background to describe contexts around various topics of R/S, in order to increase the success of their attempts. Future research might consider exploring how these types of teaching tools might be beneficial through outcomes studies focused on measuring students' competence around integrating topics of R/S in clinical practice.

Individual: Students

Data revealed that there were also factors about students, specifically the students' salient identities that influenced faculty members' attempts. Participants observed that their students had varying ideas about whether topics of R/S were appropriate to discuss in training and varying levels of comfort discussing their own religious beliefs and identities. Results of this study suggest the importance of explicit attempts to integrate topics of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training in order to increase cultural competence to appropriately and effectively address topics of R/S in trainees' clinical work. Because of some students' negative reactions, there is also evidence that students need exposure to this topics in graduate training prior to clinical work to attend to their own awareness, knowledge, and skills around topics of R/S before meeting with a client where these topics are relevant. Additionally, because this data provides the perspective of faculty members, there is benefit in future qualitative research that explores students' experiences with faculty members' attempts to integrate topics of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training.

Research is warranted to better understand factors that could reduce students' anxieties, concerns, and hesitations to discuss topics of R/S in psychology graduate training. Given that participants of this study thought their students would like more skill-based training, faculty members may want to consider integrating training opportunities around assessment, culturally-sensitive religious and spiritual clinical interventions, and role-play practice into their future attempts. Future research could assess the impact of these trainings by measuring students' competence pre- and post-training intervention.

Individual: Faculty Members in Counseling Psychology Training Programs

This research uniquely contributed to the field of counseling psychology by providing insight on the experiences of faculty members at APA-accredited counseling psychology training programs who have attempted to integrate topics of religion and spirituality into counseling psychology doctoral training. Understanding the unique perspective of these faculty members is important because they play an essential role in the development of future psychologists, therefore, their insight is valuable in understanding the process. Data revealed that there are several personal and professional factors about faculty members in counseling psychology training programs that supported their attempts. Given that participants of this study all had a personal investment in topics of R/S at some point in their lives, and that their comfort level and perceived competence were related to their salient identities, it is important that counseling psychology training programs seek diverse faculty who can speak to a variety of experiences around religion and spirituality. One implication of this research is the benefit to incorporating hiring practices that support the inclusion of faculty members with diverse backgrounds, including religious and spiritual identities and affiliations.

Also future research is warranted to further explore any personal and professional qualities of counseling psychology educators that contribute to attempt made to integrate topics of R/S into doctoral training. Research could focus attention on recruiting participants across a wide range of aspects, including racial/ethnic, religious/spiritual, sexual orientation, gender, disability status, years of teaching experience, and age to develop a more well-rounded understanding of these qualities. Specifically, there is a potential benefit to hearing the voices of counseling psychologists who hold underrepresented religious and spiritual identities and affiliations, including atheist or agnostic identities, to learn more about how that background

influences attempts made to integrate of topics of R/S into doctoral training. Data from this study suggest that there is a need for additional training for faculty members to increase competence in their attempts to integrate topics of R/S into counseling psychology doctoral training. There is a need at professional, institutional, and departmental levels for resources and support (e.g., funding) to aid faculty members in increasing their own competence around these topics.

Summary and Concluding Comments

In this chapter, the researcher answered the research questions of this study by reflecting on themes that described the essence of the experiences of faculty members at APA-accredited counseling psychology training programs regarding their attempts to integrate topics of religion and spirituality into counseling psychology doctoral training. The researcher made connections to previous literature on this topic, reflected on the process of conducting the study, described the implications of this research, and suggested future directions for research and training.

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Appendix A

Example Email Invitation for Participation

Subject: Seeking participants for study on counseling psychology doctoral training.

My name is Theresa M. Nutten and I am a doctoral student in the Counseling Psychology program at Western Michigan University. I am writing to ask for your participation in an HSIRB approved qualitative research study that I am conducting for partial completion of my dissertation requirements.

I am seeking faculty members at APA-accredited counseling psychology training programs who are willing to describe their attempts to integrate religious and spiritual topics in the training of counseling psychology doctoral students. I am looking for 8-12 participants to complete a demographic survey and engage in two interviews, totaling about 90-120 minutes, conducted via Skype.

You would be a good candidate for participation if you...

1. are currently a faculty member in an APA-accredited counseling psychology doctoral training program, and
2. have attempted to integrate religious and spiritual topics in the training of counseling psychology doctoral students, and
3. do **not** consider “religion and spirituality topics in graduate training” to be a specialization area of interest (i.e., you may be familiar with concepts surrounding the integration of these topics but would not consider yourself to be an expert in this concentration area).

Though participation in this study will not be constricted based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, or religious and spiritual identities of the faculty member, the Student Investigator will be purposeful to recruit a diverse sample of participants. If you are interested in learning more about participating, please click on the link below to give your informed consent, and complete the demographic survey.

[Click Here to Take Survey](#)

If you would like more information, or have any questions about this study, please contact me directly at Theresa.m.nutten@wmich.edu or [REDACTED].

This study is being conducted under the advisement of faculty member and Principal Investigator, Dr. Kelly McDonnell. Questions or concerns about this study may also be directed to Dr. McDonnell via email, kelly.mcdonnell@wmich.edu, or phone, 269-387-5107.

With regards and thanks,

Theresa M. Nutten, MA
Doctoral Student, Counseling Psychology
Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology
Western Michigan University

Appendix B
Informed Consent Document

Informed Consent
Western Michigan University
Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology

Principal Investigator: Kelly McDonnell, Ph.D.

Student Investigator: Theresa M. Nutten, M.A.

Title of Study: A Phenomenological Study of Faculty Members' Experiences with Attempting to Integrate Religion and Spirituality into Counseling Psychology Doctoral Training

You have been invited to participate in a research project titled, "A Phenomenological Study of Faculty Members' Experiences With Attempting to Integrate Religion and Spirituality into Counseling Psychology Doctoral Training." This project will serve as Theresa Nutten's dissertation for partial completion of her doctoral degree requirements. The consent document will explain the purpose of this research and will go over the time commitments, the procedures of the study, and the risk and benefits of participation. Please read the consent document carefully and completely. Please do not hesitate to ask me any questions if you need clarification.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to gain understanding of the experiences of faculty members at APA-accredited counseling psychology training programs who have attempted to integrate religion and spirituality in the training of counseling psychology doctoral students.

Who can participate in this study?

In order to participate in this study, you must be a counseling psychology faculty member and affiliated with an APA-accredited counseling psychology doctoral training program. Participants must have experience in attempting to integrate religion and spirituality into their training of counseling psychology doctoral students. Furthermore, you must **not** consider "religion and spirituality topics in graduate training" to be a specialization area of interest (i.e., you may be familiar with concepts surrounding the integration of these topics but would not consider yourself to be an expert in this concentration area). Though, participation in this study will not be constricted based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, or religious and spiritual identities of the faculty member, the student investigator will be purposeful to recruit a diverse sample of participants.

What are the time commitments for this study?

Total time for full participation is approximately 90 to 120 minutes, which will include a brief demographic survey and two separate interviews. Your second interview will likely occur within six weeks of your initial interview.

What will you be asked to do if you choose to participate in this study?

If you choose to participate, you will be asked to complete an online demographic survey and two Skype interviews with the Student Investigator of this research. In the initial interview, you will be asked to talk about your experiences with the phenomenon of attempting to integrate religious and spiritual topics in the training of counseling psychology doctoral students. After your interview has been transcribed, the Student Investigator will email you to schedule a second member check interview. The Student Investigator will also email you a copy of your transcript

for your reference prior to engaging in the second interview. In the 30 to 60 minutes member check interview, you will have an opportunity to respond to the information presented in the initial interview. Both interviews will be recorded using a digital audio recorder and transcribed for data analysis purposes.

Where will this study take place?

The interviews will be conducted using Skype, therefore, you can complete the interview in a location of your choice. I highly recommend choosing a location that is well-fit for an interview, someplace secure and safe where you can talk freely and without interruptions.

What information is being measured during the study?

This study is exploratory in nature, that is, the researchers are seeking to gain an understanding of the meaning you make of your experiences with the phenomenon. It is our hope that the information gathered will be of value to understanding and implementing culturally competent training of counseling psychology doctoral students.

What are the risks of participating in this study and how will these risks be minimized?

There are no known physical risks associated with this study. The content of this study, religion and spirituality, can sometimes evoke memories or uncomfortable feelings. These feelings may arise during participation or be delayed. You will be encouraged to only share details that you are comfortable speaking about. If at any time you feel uncomfortable, you can choose to end the interview. Should uncomfortable feelings arise after our interview, you are encouraged to contact a mental health professional. A list of resources can be provided to you upon your request.

What are the benefits of participating in this study?

There are no assumed direct benefits to participation but you may find that expressing your thoughts and feelings is helpful in gaining a new understanding of yourself and your experiences. Sharing your story may benefit the field of psychology by informing future research on religion and spirituality as factors of cultural competence as well as best practices in the training future counseling psychologists.

Are there any costs associated with participation?

The only foreseeable cost to participation in this study is the time commitment.

Are there any incentives for participating in this study?

Participants who complete both interviews will be entered into a drawing to receive a set of textbooks on topics related to religion, spirituality, and mental health. The email address you will provide during the demographic survey will be used for the chance to win the textbooks. Participants will be notified by email only if they have won the drawing and arrangements will be made to have the textbooks shipped.

Who will have access to the information collected during this study?

Only the Student Investigator, Theresa Nutten, will have access to any identifying information about the participants. During the interviews, you will be asked to choose a pseudonym to be used to protect your anonymity. Your name will be replaced with the pseudonym on all transcripts and written reports supporting this study. The student investigator will protect your right to privacy in the completed transcript by editing identifiable information using square

brackets [], such as names of students/colleagues, university, city, and other personal identifiable information into general categories. For example, if the participant said, “at Western Michigan University,” the student investigator would edit that statement to “at [University].”

Where will data be stored?

Data collected from the online demographic survey will be stored on the online WMU Secure Survey system. The Student Investigator will download copies of the demographic surveys and the digital-audio recordings to an encrypted folder on the Student Investigator’s password protected personal computer. Once the demographic surveys are downloaded, the surveys will be deleted from the WMU Secure Survey system. Transcription will be completed using MAXQDA, a software program downloaded to an encrypted folder on the Student Investigator’s password protected personal computer or through a transcription service, *TranscribeMe!*® Inc. Data analysis will be completed by the Student Investigator using a combination of MAXQDA and Microsoft Excel. The Student Investigator’s field notes, audit logs, transcripts, and data analysis documents will be emailed from the Student Investigator to the Principal Investigator using the WMU email server. All data that are shared with the Principal Investigator will be de-identified (e.g., transcripts with the pseudonym). The Principal Investigator will save all data she receives on a password protected computer in her locked office and will read the documents via the MAXQDA Reader software.

After the Student Investigator is finished reporting the data gathered, she will retain printed copies of the demographic surveys and keep them in a locked filing cabinet in her office until all reporting of the data is completed (for at least a minimum of three years). The digital-audio files will be deleted after the study is completed. The Principal Investigator will retain all data until dissemination of data is completed (for at least a minimum of three years) and then it will be destroyed.

What if I want to stop participating in the study?

You have the right to refuse to participate, stop participating, or refuse to answer a question without prejudice or penalty at any point, for any reason. There will be no penalty for ending your participation at any time but the incentive to be entered into the drawing to win textbooks is only offered after completion of both interviews.

Should you have any questions about the study, you can contact the Principal Investigator, Dr. Kelly McDonnell, at (269) 387-5107 or kelly.McDonnell@wmich.edu. You can contact the student investigator at [REDACTED] or Theresa.M.Nutten@wmich.edu. You may also contact the Chair, Human Subject Institutional Review Board at (269) 387-8293, or the Vice President for Research at (269) 387-8298 if questions or problems arise during the course of the study.

This consent has been approved by the Western Michigan University Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) on [April 18, 2019]. Do not participate after [April 17, 2021].

Participating in this survey online indicates your consent for use of the answers you supply. If you do not agree to participate in this study, you may close out of this screen. If after

beginning you decide that you do not wish to continue, you may stop at any time. You may choose not to answer any questions for any reason.

Appendix C
Online Demographic Survey

[italicized items are for clarity purposes and were not visible to participant]

Instructions:

Thank you for your interest in my dissertation research on the experience of faculty members' attempts to integrate religious and spiritual (R/S) topics in the training of counseling psychology doctoral students.

It is assumed that you have chosen to participate in this research because you meet the inclusion criteria:

1. you are currently a faculty member in an APA-accredited counseling psychology doctoral training program, and
2. you have attempted to integrate religious and spiritual topics in the training of counseling psychology doctoral students, and
3. you do **not** consider "religion and spirituality topics in graduate training" to be a specialization area of interest (i.e., you may be familiar with concepts surrounding the integration of these topics but would not consider yourself to be an expert in this concentration area).

I am seeking 8-12 individuals to participate in individual interviews regarding their experiences with attempting to integrate religion or spirituality topics into the training of counseling psychology doctoral students. If you would like to participate in this research study, please click on the Next button to review the informed consent document.

[Informed consent document (Appendix B) will appear. Participant instructed to click on next button to complete the demographic survey]

Please complete the following survey. This demographic survey should only take about 1-2 minutes to complete. You have the option to not respond to any questions that you choose. If you do not wish to answer a specific question, please type N/A in the comment box.

Please click "Done" to submit your demographic survey. Note that as the program is registering your responses, there may be a brief delay before you see the Survey Completed screen. If you have any technical difficulties with this process, please contact Theresa Nutten at Theresa.m.nutten@wmich.edu or [REDACTED].

1. How do you characterize your race/ethnicity? *[Fill in the blank]*
2. How do you characterize your gender identity? *[Fill in the blank]*
3. How do you characterize your sexual orientation? *[Fill in the blank]*
4. What type of terminal degree did you obtain (e.g., Ph.D., Psy.D., M.A., M.S.) *[Fill in the blank]*
5. What year did you complete your terminal degree? *[Fill in the blank]*

6. Do you consider yourself to be (please choose one) *[Drop down menu]*
 - Religious, but not spiritual
 - Spiritual, but not religious
 - Both religious and spiritual
 - Atheist
 - Agnostic
 - Other: _____
7. If you consider yourself to be religious and/or spiritual, what is your religious and/or spiritual affiliation? *[Fill in the blank]*
8. Please provide your name and email address, to be used for the purposes of coordinating future participation in this study (e.g., scheduling interviews) *[Fill in the blank]*

[After the survey has been submitted, the following pop-up message will appear]

“Thank you for participating in this demographic survey. The researcher will contact you via the email address you provided to inform you of the status of your participation.”

Appendix D
Initial Interview Schedule

Time of Interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Position of the interviewee:

“May I record our conversation today using a digital audio device?”

[Start recording]

“Hello! It is nice to meet you. The purpose of our meeting today is for you to have a chance to tell me about your experiences with the phenomenon of attempting to integrate religion and spirituality into the training of counseling psychology doctoral students. This interview is expected to last about 60 minutes. I encourage you to only share details as you are comfortable. If at any time you feel uncomfortable, you can choose to end the interview without penalty. If you experience any emotional discomfort and distress, please let me know and I will provide you with resources. Your name will be replaced with the pseudonym on all transcripts and written reports supporting this study.”

“What pseudonym would you like me to use?” _____

“Great, I have brought with me a few questions to prompt our conversation. Are you ready to begin?”

Some key questions to guide the interview:

- Describe for me your experiences with attempting to integrate religion and spirituality topics into your training of counseling psychology doctoral students.
- Tell me about a time you experienced success in integrating religion and spirituality topics into the training of counseling psychology doctoral students?
- Describe a time that you did not feel successful in your attempts to integrate religion and spirituality topics into counseling psychology doctoral training?
- How would you describe the reactions of students after you attempted to integrate religion and spirituality topics in the training of counseling psychology doctoral students?
- Tell me about any factors that influenced your attempt to integrate religion and spirituality topics into the training of counseling psychology doctoral students?
- How would you describe your program’s/department’s views on the integration of religion and spirituality topics into the training of counseling psychology doctoral students?
- Tell me about any personal values and attributes that have influenced your attempts to integrate religion and spirituality topics into your training of counseling psychology doctoral students.
- Tell me about the role you believe religion and spirituality play as cultural factors.

- Tell me about any professional factors that have influenced your attempts to integrate religion and spirituality topics into your training of counseling psychology doctoral students.
- How has your own professional training influenced your attempts to integrate religion and spirituality topics into the training of counseling psychology doctoral students?

“Thank you for participating in this interview. Please remember that if you experience any uncomfortable feelings or emotional distress after participating in this interview, you can contact me for information about resources. Moving forward, I will transcribe this interview. After I have finished transcribing the interview, I will email you to schedule the member check interview. Do I have your permission to email you a copy of your transcript that you may use as a reference for our member check interview?”

“Do you have any questions or concerns?”

Are there any other faculty members in Counseling Psychology doctoral training programs at APA-accredited institutions that you believe may be a good fit for this research? If so, are you able to provide the name, institution, and contact information for that individual?

“Great, best wishes. Goodbye.”

Appendix E

Member Check Interview Script

“I wanted to begin by thanking you for meeting with me today. The purpose of our meeting is to clarify the information presented in the initial interview. Are you ready to begin?”

- I. Tell me about any areas of the transcript that you would like to clarify.
- II. *[The student investigator will prompt questions for further exploration as related to the initial interview]*

Appendix F
Field Notes Form

Interviewer
Interviewee:

Date:
Time:

Observations about the participant during the interview:

Thoughts/ Reactions to the interview method.

How did the interview go?

Where there any deviations from the protocol? Explain:

Is there any part of the interview procedure that was not successful and needs to be modified?

Student investigator reflexivity:

Appendix G
Audit Trail Form

Date	Part of Research Design	What was the step?	Why was it taken?	What were the alternatives?	Why were alternatives rejected?	What will the results likely be from this step?

Appendix H

Human Subjects Institutional Review Board Letter of Approval

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY



Institutional Review Board
FWA00007042
IRB00000254

Date: April 18, 2018

To: Kelly McDonnell, Principal Investigator
Theresa Nutten, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Amy Naugle, Ph.D., Chair

Re: HSIRB Project Number 18-04-15

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project titled “A Phenomenological Study of Counseling Psychology Faculty Experiences with Attempting to Integrate Religion and Spirituality into Counseling Psychology Doctoral Training” has been **approved** under the **expedited** category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note: This research may **only** be conducted exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project (e.g., ***you must request a post approval change to enroll subjects beyond the number stated in your application under “Number of subjects you want to complete the study.”*** Failure to obtain approval for changes will result in a protocol deviation. In addition, if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

Reapproval of the project is required if it extends beyond the termination date stated below.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination:

April 17, 2019

Office of the Vice President for Research
Research Compliance Office
1903 W. Michigan Ave., Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5456
PHONE: (269) 387-8293 FAX: (269) 387-8276
WEBSITE: wmich.edu/research/compliance/hsirb

CAMPUS SITE: 251 W. Walwood Hall