SPIRITUAL COMPETENCY TRAINING IN MENTAL HEALTH
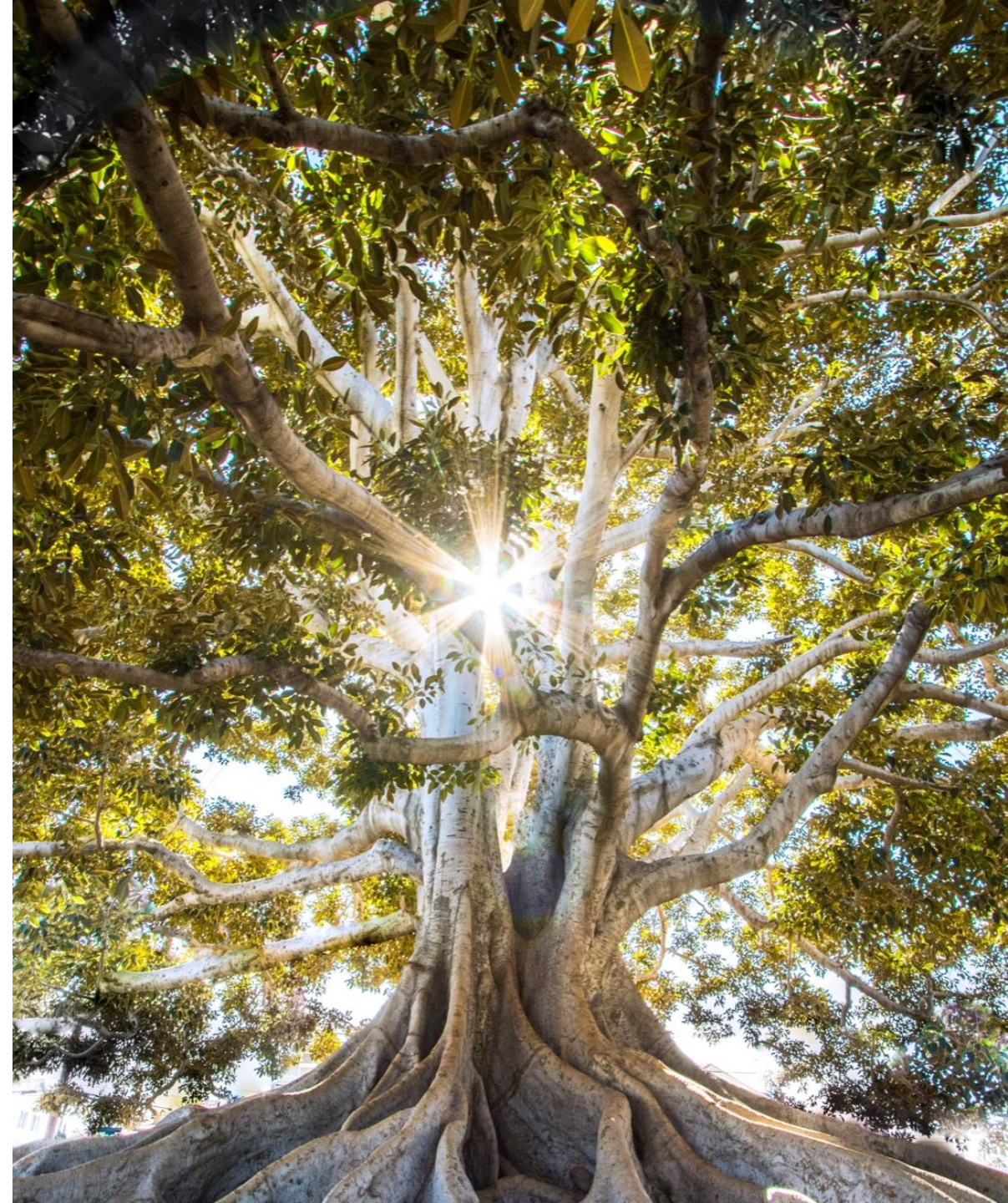
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OUTLINE

1 WHAT IS SPIRITUAL COMPETENCY AND WHY DO WE NEED IT?

2 THE SPIRITUAL COMPETENCY TRAINING PROGRAM FOR MENTAL HEALTH (SCT-MH): DESCRIPTION AND KEY FINDINGS

3 10 TIPS FOR INTEGRATING SPIRITUALITY INTO PSYCHOTHERAPY

4 SPIRITUAL COMPETENCY RESOURCES

WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOUR CLIENT SAID…?
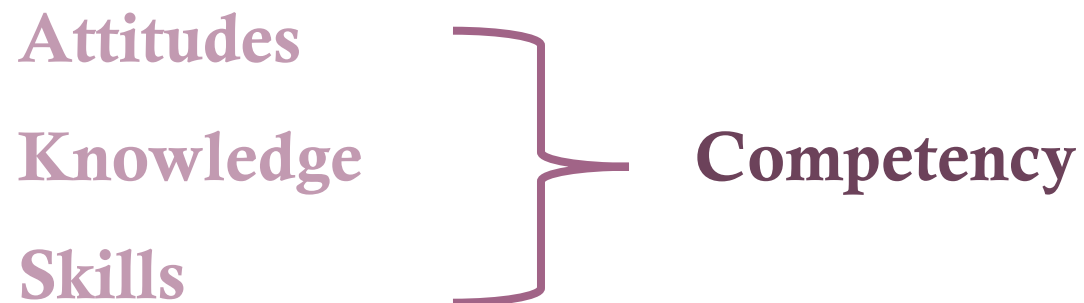
WHAT IS SPIRITUAL COMPETENCY AND WHY DO WE NEED IT?

WHAT IS SPIRITUAL COMPETENCY?

"A form of cultural competence that deals with spirituality and religion, specifically clients' individually constructed spiritual worldviews."
(Hodge, 2016, p. 2)

Attitudes

Knowledge

Skills

Competency

SRCP

16 SPIRITUAL COMPETENCIES (VIETEN ET AL., 2013)

Attitudes

- Psychologists demonstrate empathy, respect, and appreciation for clients from diverse spiritual, religious, or secular backgrounds and affiliations.

Knowledge

- 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.

Skills

- Psychologists are able to conduct empathic and effective psychotherapy with clients from diverse spiritual and/or religious backgrounds, affiliations, and levels of involvement.

WHY SPIRITUALLY INTEGRATED MENTAL HEALTH CARE IS SO NECESSARY

- Spirituality is a resource to many people

- Many clients want their spirituality to be integrated

- Integrating spirituality can improve clinical outcomes

- Some forms of spirituality can exacerbate mental health problems

- Ethical/professional mandates for multicultural competence, including spirituality

(APA, 2002; Koenig, VanderWeele, & Peteet, 2023; NASW, 2017; Oxhandler et al., 2019; Pargament, 2007; Worthington et al., 2011)

LACK OF GRADUATE TRAINING

Student or Trainee → ~~EDUCATION AND TRAINING~~ → **?**

Graduate and post-graduate training programs across counseling, marriage and family therapy, psychology, and social work generally do not formally address religion and/or spirituality in coursework or clinical training

(Carlson et al., 2002; Crook et al., 2012; Hage et al., 2006; Moffatt & Oxhandler, 2018; Oxhandler et al., 2015, 2018; Russell & Yarhouse, 2004; Saunders et al., 2014; Schafer et al., 2011; Schulte et al., 2002; Vogel, 2013).

SRCP

BRIDGING THE TRAINING GAP

- Lack of Graduate and Professional Training

- Current Competency Levels and Engagement

- Practice Realities

- Ethical Mandates

THE SPIRITUAL COMPETENCY TRAINING PROGRAM FOR MENTAL HEALTH
(SCT-MH)

ONLINE SCT-MH COURSE:
MENTAL HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

- Multidisciplinary
- Basic competency
- Empirically-based content
- Adult-learning instructional methods
- Online format using edX platform
- 8 modules (8-10 hours)

- Evaluated changes in attitudes, knowledge, and skills before and after the SCT-MH program with 169 MH providers (Pearce et al., 2019; 2020)

SCT-MH MODULES

1. Introduction and Orientation

2. Understanding Spirituality

3. Guiding Principles

4. Helpful and Harmful Types of Spirituality

5. Assessing Spirituality

6. Mobilizing Spiritual Resources

7. Assessing and Addressing Spiritual Problems

8. Putting It All Together and Future Directions

USMx SC100
edX **Spiritual Competency Training in Mental Health**

Course   Progress   Dates   Discussion   Contact Information   Syllabus

Spiritual Competency Training in Mental Health

✓ **Congratulations! Your certificate is ready.**   [View my certificate]

THE PARTICIPANTS

- N = 169

- 83% Female; mean 44 years old

- Race:
  - 69% Caucasian
  - 8% Asian
  - 6% African American
  - 4% Hispanic
  - 3% Other

- Discipline:
  - 36% Psychologists
  - 34% Social Workers
  - 12% Professional Counselors
  - 4% Psychiatrists
  - 3% Chemical Dependency
  - 1% Marriage and Family Therapists

- Average years clinical (SD=10 yrs)

- Religion:
  - 43% Christian
  - 12% None
  - 11% Catholic
  - 8% Other
  - 7% Buddhist
  - 2% Jewish
  - 1% Muslim
  - 1% Native American

- Rating: 15% = "Very religious" vs. 43% = "Very spiritual"

- Training: 89% no prior RS training

(Pearce et al., 2020)

RESULTS

	t	p	Pre	Post
Attitude	3.07	.003	6.25	6.41
Knowledge	14.06	<.001	4.81	5.80
Skills	11.28	<.001	4.01	5.00

✓ Spiritual competencies significantly increased from pre- to post-training on all measures of attitudes, knowledge, and skills.

QUANTITATIVE FEEDBACK

- How **helpful** was this training in preparing you to engage in spiritually integrative psychotherapy?
  - Extremely 37%, Very 53%, Somewhat 10%, Not very 1%
- How **relevant** was this training to your clinical work?
  - Extremely 32%, Very 50%, Somewhat 16%, Not Very 2%

- How **satisfied** were you with this training program?
  - Extremely 39%, Very 50%, Somewhat 10%, Not very 1%
- Would you **recommend** this program to your colleagues?
  - Yes 95% Maybe 5%
- Did you find the online learning format **easy to use**?
  - Yes 97% No 3%

QUALITATIVE FEEDBACK

"This was very informative. It helped me see that spirituality and religion could be integrated without it being seen as 'conversion' or trying to put your viewpoints on others. But rather, using where they are already coming from as a source of healing and understanding."

"This training has definitely increased my comfort level in integrating spirituality and religion more often with the clients that I see. In addition, it has increased my therapeutic confidence in knowing where to go when this presents as a piece of a client's identity and/or a piece of the presenting concern."
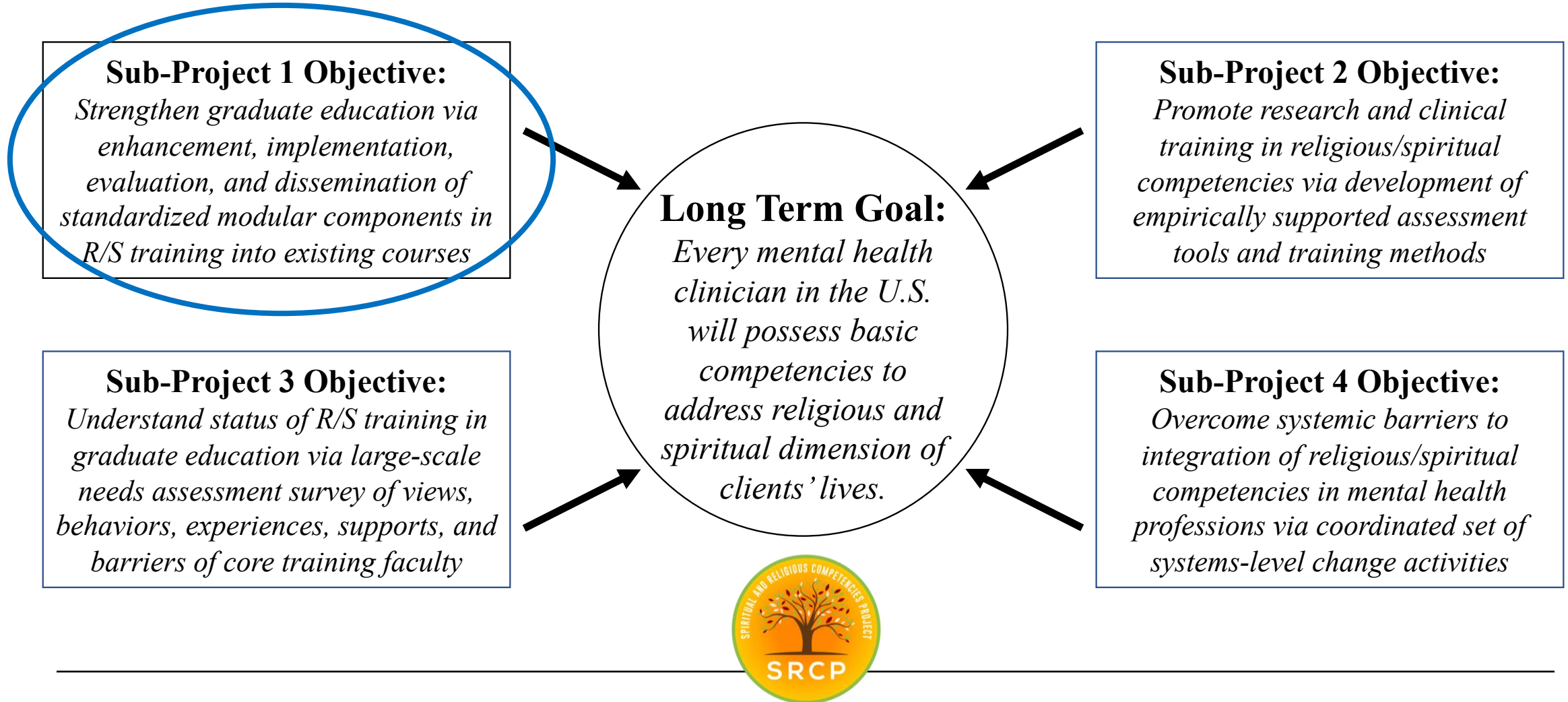
SRCP

WHY WAIT?

SPIRITUAL COMPETENCY TRAINING IN MENTAL HEALTH (SCT-MH) WITH GRADUATE STUDENTS

OUR CHALLENGE:

To significantly improve graduate students' basic awareness, knowledge, and skills for attending to peoples' spirituality or faith

HOW?

By enhancing and integrating the standardized SCT-MH curriculum into one of their required clinical courses

HYBRID SCT-MH CURRICULUM

1. **Online SCT-MH course**
    *   Added video case critiques and clinical practice applications

2. **In-class activities**
    *   6 Class discussions (30 minutes each)
    *   2 Role plays (90 minutes each)
    *   All materials provided in Instructor Guidebook, with detailed weekly outline

METHODOLOGY

Recruitment and Training:
- Recruited faculty from 20 accredited programs from psychology, social work, and counseling
- Train in teaching SCT-MH
- Replaced 15% of content of a required clinical course with the hybrid SCT-MH curriculum (e.g., Practicum, Diversity)

Implementation:
- Taught enhanced SCT-MH (case critiques, application) Spring 2023
- Faculty were facilitators and not experts
- Flipped classroom approach
- Instructor guidebook with with weekly outline and classroom exercises (e.g., role-plays, guided discussions)

Evaluation:
- Waitlist control-design: No R/S material in Weeks 1-6; SCT-MH curriculum in Weeks 7-12
- Assessments at Baseline, Pre/Week 6, and Post/Week 12
- N = 309 student participants; 88% response rate, 87% retention rate

HYPOTHESES

- *Hypothesis 1:* Scores on validated measures of <u>attitudes, knowledge, and skills (i.e., competencies) related to R/S will increase</u> from pre- to post-training; no reliable changes will be observed during the 6-week waitlist control period.

- *Hypothesis 2:* The SCT-MH integrated curriculum approach will be a <u>feasible, helpful, and relevant</u> way to deliver training on spiritual/religious competencies in mental health graduate coursework

MEASURES

Religious/Spiritually Integrated Practice Assessment Scale (Oxhandler et al., 2016)
- Attitudes
- Skills (self-efficacy and current behaviors)

Spiritual Competency Questionnaire (Pearce et al., 2020)
- Attitudes (3 items)
- Skills (7 items)
- Subjective knowledge (6 items)

Religious and Spiritual Knowledge Questionnaire
- Objective knowledge—3 parallel forms (23 items)

Final Case Study Grade
- 15% of final course grade; rubrics for standardized grading

Process Assessment Data
- Satisfaction, helpfulness, relevance, intention to use, etc.

(Pearce et al., in preparation)

STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

- N = 309
- 85% Female; mean 30 years old (SD = 8)
- Race:
  - 60% Caucasian
  - 18% Hispanic
  - 10% African American
  - 6% Asian
  - 6% Other
- Discipline:
  - 43% Counseling
  - 31% Social Work
  - 26% Psychology

- Religion:
  - 33% Christian (Christian, Nondenominational, & Orthodox)
  - 28% None
  - 13% Catholic
  - 10% Other
  - 3% Buddhist
  - 6% Jewish
  - 1% Muslim
- Rating: 8% = "Very religious" vs. 26% = "Very spiritual"
- Training: 46% no prior R/S competence training

(Pearce et al., 2020)

Statistical Results
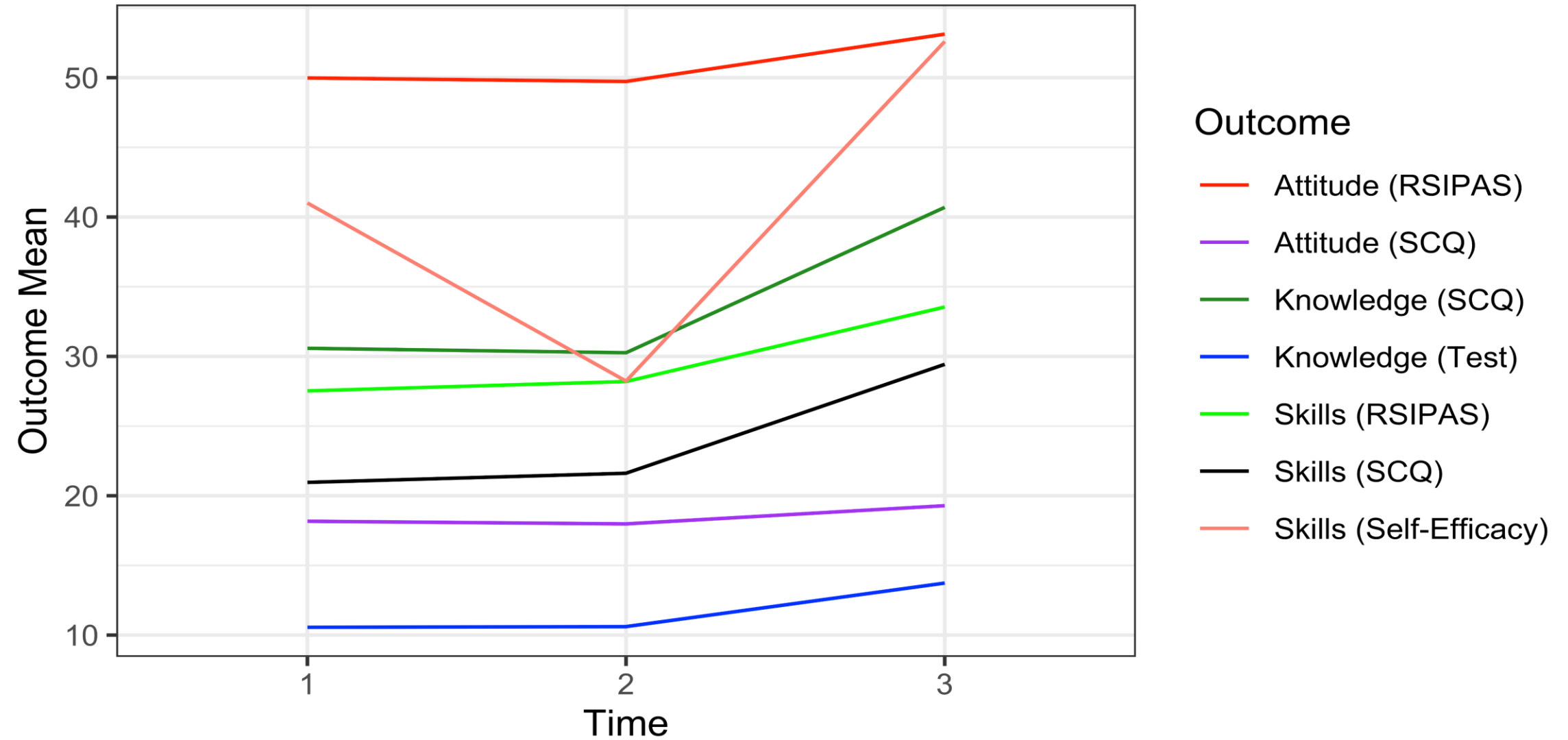
HYPOTHESIS 1: CHANGES IN R/S COMPETENCE

Attitudes	**Knowledge**	**Skills**
✓RSIPAS subscale (attitudes) +3.43, p <.001 ✓SCQ subscale (attitudes) +1.22, p < .001	✓Knowledge Questionnaire +3.22, p < .001 ✓SCQ subscale (knowledge) +10.51, p < .001	✓RSIPAS subscale (self-efficacy) +12.07, p <.001 ✓RSIPAS subscale (skills) +6.44, p <.001 ✓SCQ subscale (skills) +9.00, p <.001

HYPOTHESIS 2: PARTICIPANTS' PREFERENCES AND FEEDBACK

- Feedback: Largely very positive for content and hybrid format
  - 93% "extremely" to "somewhat" **helpful**
  - 92% "extremely" to "somewhat" **relevant**
  - 96% "extremely" to "somewhat" **satisfied with training materials**
  - 97% "very often" to "some of the time" **envision using spiritually integrated therapy techniques with my clients**

(Pearce et al., in preparation)

QUALITATIVE FEEDBACK

- "I was surprised that this opened my mind, because I really hate religion more than most things in life. But honestly, everyone has a right to their beliefs and to be an ethical social worker, I need to be okay talking with my clients about their religion."

- "Before taking this training I would never explore the topic around spirituality or religion with clients. After taking this training, although there is a lot more training and practice and learning I need to do, I can say that I feel comfortable enough being able to bring up this topic to clients and learn to integrate it as effectively as I can to help their treatment plan goals have a higher success outcome."

REFERENCE

Pearce, M. J., Pargament, K. I., Wong, S., Hinkel, H., Salcone, S., Morgan, G., Kemp, D., Brock, B., Kim, E., Oxhandler, H. K., Vieten, C., Fox, J., Polson, C., & Currier, J. M. (2024). Enhancing training in spiritual and religious competencies in mental health graduate education: Evaluation of an integrated curricular approach. *PLOS ONE*.

10 TIPS FOR INTEGRATING SPIRITUALITY INTO PSYCHOTHERAPY

(Thank you to Dr. Kenneth Pargament)

TEN TIPS FOR INTEGRATING SPIRITUALITY INTO PSYCHOTHERAPY

- **Tip 1:** Take a deep breath.

TEN TIPS FOR INTEGRATING SPIRITUALITY INTO PSYCHOTHERAPY

- **Tip 2:** Be self-aware.

TEN TIPS FOR INTEGRATING SPIRITUALITY INTO PSYCHOTHERAPY

- **Tip 3:** Give yourself permission to raise R/S issues in psychotherapy.

TEN TIPS FOR INTEGRATING SPIRITUALITY INTO PSYCHOTHERAPY

- **Tip 4:** Remember that R/S issues should be integrated into rather than set apart from psychotherapy.

TEN TIPS FOR INTEGRATING SPIRITUALITY INTO PSYCHOTHERAPY

- **Tip 5:** Remember you are discussing sacred matters with your clients.

TEN TIPS FOR INTEGRATING SPIRITUALITY INTO PSYCHOTHERAPY

• **Tip 6:**   Tailor R/S resources to clients' specific needs, preferences, and problems.

FINDING A GOOD FIT

TEN TIPS FOR INTEGRATING SPIRITUALITY INTO PSYCHOTHERAPY

- **Tip 7:** Remind clients that it takes time to reap the benefits from R/S resources.

TEN TIPS FOR INTEGRATING SPIRITUALITY INTO PSYCHOTHERAPY

- **Tip 8:** Be ready to address barriers to integrating R/S resources in psychotherapy.

TEN TIPS FOR INTEGRATING SPIRITUALITY INTO PSYCHOTHERAPY

- **Tip 9:** Work within your own professional and personal boundaries.
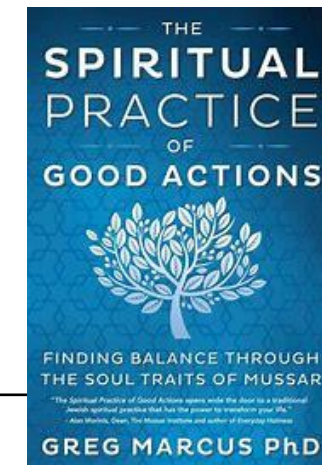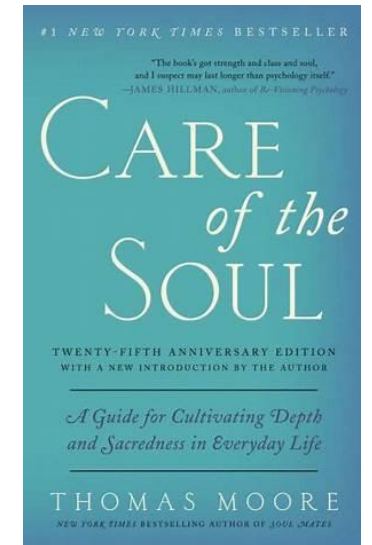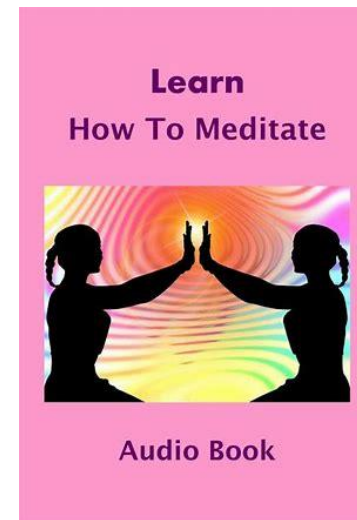

Professional Boundaries

TEN TIPS FOR INTEGRATING SPIRITUALITY INTO PSYCHOTHERAPY

- **Tip 10:** Have additional R/S resources on-hand for clients interested in learning more.

SPIRITUAL COMPETENCY RESOURCES

For Providers: Online EdX Training Program in Spiritual Competency

- https://www.edx.org/course/spiritual-competency-training-in-mental-health
- 6 CE credits ($89)

For Educators and Graduate Students

- All curriculum materials are freely available on website:
  - https://www.spiritualandreligiouscompetenciesproject.com/resources/sct-mh

  - (Online edX SCT-MH course, instructor guidebook, sample syllabus, role play worksheets, discussion questions)

SPIRITUAL COMPETENCY RESOURCES

Study Publications:

- Pearce, MJ, Pargament, KI, Oxhandler, H., Vieten, C., & Wong, S. (2019). A novel training program for mental health providers in spiritual competencies. *Spirituality in Clinical Practice.* Online first DOI: 10.1037/scp0000195

- Pearce, MJ, Pargament, KI, Oxhandler, H., Vieten, C., Wong, S., & Hahn, J. (2020) Online Training Program Improves Providers' Spiritual Competencies in Mental Health Care. *Spirituality in Clinical Practice, 7*(3), 145–161. https://doi.org/10.1037/scp0000208.

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- Salcone, S., Currier, J., Hinkel, H.M., Pearce, M., Wong, S., & Pargament, K., (2023). Evaluation of spiritual competency training in mental health (SCT-MH) a replication study with mental health professionals. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice.*

THANK YOU!

University *of* MARYLAND
GRADUATE SCHOOL

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project.com