



The Society for Spirituality and Social Work

New Beginnings
Society for Spirituality & Social Work Virtual Conference
June 16-17, 2021

Title: A Virtue-Care Approach for Spiritually Sensitive Social Work

Format: On-demand session

Learning Objectives:

1. Define spiritually sensitive social work
2. Identify how professional ethics address spirituality in social work practice
3. Apply a virtue-care approach for spiritually sensitive social work

Abstract (limit 1500 characters/300 words):

Sensitivity to the importance of spirituality in social work practice has grown over the past thirty years (Kvarfordt, Sheridan, and Taylor, 2017; Oxhandler & Pargament, 2014). Research suggests that social workers often consider spirituality as an expression of cultural diversity, if not inherent to being human (Barker, 2007; Kvarfordt et al., 2017; Lun & Wai, 2015). Depending on how spirituality is defined or experienced, spirituality can be a source of strength or exacerbate suffering, particularly when a client is in crisis (Callahan, 2017). Social workers must be prepared to engage in spiritually sensitive social work (Cunningham & de Saussure, 2019; Callahan, 2017; Dudley, 2016). Professional ethics provide an essential foundation (Hodge, 2005, 2006, 2016; Rice & McAuliffe, 2009; Sherr, Singletary, & Rogers, 2009; Sheridan, 2010). The National Association of Social Workers ([NASW], 2017) Code of Ethics outlines professional values, principles, and standards. Additional NASW (2015) guidelines inform cultural competence. While professional duties and anticipated consequences can inform spiritually sensitive social work (Osma & Landau, 2006; Congress, 2000; Abramson, 1996), virtue ethics and ethics of care lend important insights as well (Banks & Gallagher, 2009; Chamiec-Case, 2007, 2013). This workshop will review ethical guidelines that clarify how participants may address spirituality in social work practice. A virtue-care approach will be the primary focus with opportunities for participants to practice application through case scenarios.

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Biography (50 words):

Dr. Ann Callahan is an Associate Professor at Eastern Kentucky University. She has a doctorate from the University of Tennessee and license in clinical social work. Dr. Callahan has over 20 years of experience that has focused on spiritually sensitive social work as part of hospice, palliative, and long-term care. This includes the book *Spirituality and Hospice Social Work*, published by Columbia University Press.