

Providing Therapy to Those with Religious Trauma

An Evidence-based Approach



What is Evidence-Based Practice?

Evidence-based practice (EBP) is a framework designed to help social workers be effective by implementing sound research and contributing to the body of research themselves. It also considers the limitations of clinical resources and the influence of client preference ¹

Facts to Consider

82% of social workers who work with youth say they regularly encounter religious abuse ²

20% of women who have experienced domestic violence, have also experienced religious abuse ³

EBP Priorities

Evidence- Because prescriptive therapeutic approaches can imitate the powerlessness of the abuse itself, there is evidence that motivational interviewing can help clients to assess their own situation and come to their own conclusions with less risk of iatrogenic harm. ⁶

Resources- Therapists should have the resources to treat depression, anxiety, PTSD, CPTSD, in addition to “risky sexual behavior, disordered eating, self-conforming behaviors, or self-injurious behaviors” related to religious trauma. ⁵

Client Preferences- Even if a client is in a high-cost religion that is harming them, it is important that we respect their right to stay and understand how harmful and traumatic the experience of leaving can be. Disaffiliates from high-cost religions are 2.7 times more likely to report fair/poor health than those that remain. ⁴

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