



**DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH
POLICY/PROCEDURE**

SUBJECT INTEGRATION OF SPIRITUAL INTERESTS OF CLIENTS IN THE PROVISION OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AND SUPPORT	POLICY NO. 311.01	EFFECTIVE DATE 07/13/2012	PAGE 1 of 5
APPROVED BY:  Director	SUPERSEDES 202.42 07/13/2012	ORIGINAL ISSUE DATE 07/13/2012	DISTRIBUTION LEVEL(S) 1

PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide policy guidance to employees, interns, and volunteers of the Los Angeles County-Department of Mental Health (LAC-DMH) regarding the prohibitions and permissions related to providing services and support that integrate the spiritual interests of mental health clients.

DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 **Proselytize:** To induce or persuade someone to convert to one's faith or spiritual beliefs.
- 2.2 **Spirituality:** A person's deepest sense of belonging and connection to a higher power or transcendent life philosophy which may not necessarily be related to an organized religious institution. In a larger sense, it is the process of pursuing meaning and purpose in life.
- 2.3 **Religion:** A set of beliefs and practices designed to help an individual or group express and carry out their spirituality.
- 2.4 **Promote:** To verbally and/or materially publicize or advertise a product, cause, or institution to endorse a particular spiritual and/or religious belief or worldview over another.

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- 3.1 LAC-DMH employees, volunteers, and interns are to maintain a non-discriminatory, non-judgmental, neutral position regarding the content of spiritual and/or religious beliefs of others.
- 3.2 Consistent with their qualifications and training, LAC-DMH employees and supervisees shall assess the spiritual interests of clients and integrate such interests as appropriate into their wellness and recovery management plans following the guidelines provided in LAC-DMH Practice Parameter 4.15. (References 1 and 2)
 - 3.2.1 Training about spirituality and mental health shall comprise introductory, intermediate, and advanced courses as described in the attached Training Plan (Attachment 1). The training certificates issued by the provider of each of the three (3) courses shall together constitute the acknowledgment of staff competency for the purpose noted in paragraph 3.2 of this policy.
 - 3.2.2 LAC-DMH employees and supervisees whose scope of practice authorizes them to conduct clinical assessments may be required to take training deemed necessary to assess the spiritual interests of clients and integrate such interests as appropriate into clients' wellness and recovery management plans.
- 3.3 All approved LAC-DMH materials, brochures, resource guides, and training manuals that address spirituality and religious concepts must be inclusive and impartial regarding content, and must acknowledge the diversity of cultural, spiritual, and religious worldviews.
 - 3.3.1 All written communications that include spiritual and religious concepts made under the jurisdiction of LAC-DMH must be reviewed prior to being published by LAC-DMH Clergy Advisory Committee during one of its regular meetings. The review shall be duly recorded in the official minutes of the Committee's meeting.
- 3.4 Merely disclosing one's spiritual and/or religious beliefs to a client when they are relevant to a clinical concern shall not be considered as proselytizing.



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- 3.5 Specifically upon a client’s request, LAC-DMH employees and supervisees whose scope of practice authorizes them to conduct clinical assessments may assist clients and families with linkage to spiritual and religious resources of the client’s choice within the client’s community. LAC-DMH employees and supervisees whose scope of practice authorizes them to conduct clinical assessments are prohibited from advising clients to seek spiritual or religious services from a specific resource.
- 3.6 LAC-DMH employees, volunteers, and interns must adhere to existing non-discrimination laws, regulations, and policies in the provision of services and support (Authority 1).
- 3.7 LAC-DMH employees, interns, and volunteers are prohibited from proselytizing particular spiritual and/or religious beliefs to mental health clients, the general public, their fellow employees, volunteers, and interns during County work hours, on County property and/or using County resources.
- 3.8 This policy is not intended to abridge in any way an employee’s or volunteer’s or intern’s right to practice or maintain his or her own religious beliefs.
- 3.9 This policy may be augmented by Departmental policies relating to specific issues or operations.

PROCEDURE

- 4.1 LAC-DMH employees, volunteers, and interns are required to respect each person’s right to maintain their own set of spiritual beliefs and to refrain from attempting to convert them to another belief system.
- 4.2 LAC-DMH employees, volunteers, and interns shall emphasize the non-judgmental nature of the mental health assessment and treatment, especially as it relates to spirituality and/or religion.
- 4.3 Upon completing the introductory, intermediate, and advanced training courses described in attached Training Plan (Attachment 1) and deemed necessary by the relevant supervisor, LAC-DMH employees and supervisees whose scope of



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practice authorizes them to conduct clinical assessments may conduct an assessment of the spiritual interests of clients and integrate such interests into the clients' wellness and recovery management plans on an as-needed basis.

- 4.4 If a client or member of the public inquires about the belief system of an LAC-DMH employee, volunteer, or intern, a brief and respectful response is permitted if it is informational and not provided in a manner that creates the appearance of proselytizing.
- 4.5 When requested by clients, LAC-DMH employees, volunteers, and interns may assist clients and families to connect with the spiritual and religious resources of their choice in the community.
 - 4.5.1 Such assistance should be limited to helping them access publicly available information about resources.
 - 4.5.2 Such assistance should not include choosing a specific spiritual or religious resource for them.
 - 4.5.3 Once the client or family has clearly indicated their interest in a particular spiritual or religious resource, LAC-DMH employees, volunteers, and interns may facilitate a connection with that specific resource.

ATTACHMENT (Hyperlinked)

- 1. [Training Plan](#) (Training Plan for Mental Health Staff to Assess and Integrate Spiritual Interests of Clients in Their Wellness and Recovery)

REFERENCE (Hyperlinked)

- 1. [LAC-DMH Practice Parameter 4.15, Assessment and Integrations of Spiritual Interests of Clients in Their Wellness and Recovery](#)
- 2. [LAC-DMH Policy No. 302.01, Compliance with Department of Mental Health Practice Parameters](#)

AUTHORITY



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1. California Code of Regulations, Title 22 Section 98100
2. California Welfare and Institutions Code, Section 10000
3. LAC-DMH Code of Organizational Conduct, Ethics and Compliance

RESPONSIBLE PARTY

LAC-DMH Office of the Mental Health Director