

TOWARDS A GUIDELINE: RELIGION / SPIRITUALITY IN MENTAL HEALTH CARE

Arjan Braam [1,2], Carlo Leget [1], Piet Verhagen [3],
Gerrit Glas & members CRWMH [4]

a.braam@altrecht.nl



In the CRWMH Brainstorm session 2013 we **assumed**:

- [1] University of Humanist Studies, Utrecht, The Netherlands
[2] Altrecht Mental Health Care, Utrecht, The Netherlands
[3] GGZ-Centraal, Harderwijk, The Netherlands, WPA Section Religion & Psychiatry
[4] Centre for Religion, World View and Mental Health (Dimence / KSGV)

Background - Mental health care focuses on treatment and support: *evidence based* and *practice based*.

Mental suffering, however, also confronts the patient with existential questions.

Religion and spirituality (R/S) aim to offer a perspective of hope, relief, coping, or meaning in life.

Objectives - Mental health care harbours a long tradition of Healthcare Chaplaincy and Spiritual Counselling (SC) .

Due to secularization and emphasis on individual meaning making, the profession of SC is subject to change.

A Multidisciplinary Guideline on R/S in Mental Health Care will address:

- (1) organizing R/S consultation in contemporary patient care
- (2) categorizing research findings
- (3) professionalism with respect to R/S in psychiatric practice and education.

'A Multidisciplinary Guideline R/S in Mental Health Care actualizes the agenda of the research we need'.



SC: Outlooks

- Legitimization of SC?
- A small-scaled profession
- Identity and transformation of SC
- SC resides in clinics: ambulanzation?
- SC visible in medical / nursing education?
- Financial pressure? Values should guide.
- Scientific activity & curiosity in SC ↑
- Transparency in SC ↑

Outline of a Guideline

1. Values on R/S and psychiatry

1. Moral: **abstinence, non-maleficence, countertransference**
2. Existential crises in mental disorder
3. Culture-sensitivity
4. Life-cycle issues

2. Care

1. Diagnostic phase: **delusion, alienation**
2. Treatment: **connection, compliance**
3. Rehabilitation and Recovery
4. Planning and timing
5. The professional
 - **'the professional as a person'**
 - **education**
 - **teamwork**

3. Counselling

1. 'Refuge function' of SC
2. Interventions
3. Consultation by care-professionals
4. Institution-wide: moral deliberation

4. Collaboration

1. **Internal**: Within mental health care circuitry
2. **External**: With other spiritual counselors / institutions

5. Relationship with other Guidelines

Guidelines Spiritual Care in Palliative care (2012)
RCPsych Recommendations on R/S (2013)