

RETHINKING RELIGION: HELPING CLIENTS THROUGH RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL CHANGE



Description

Religion and spirituality often meet deep existential needs. As increasingly more people are rethinking or leaving religion, existential concerns play a central role in therapy. Clinical work in this domain is a cultural competency, and encourage the cultivation of cultural humility around religious and spiritual issues. We will provide tools on how to identify, discuss, and address the changing spiritual needs of your clients who are experiencing religious transitions or recovering from religious trauma.

Instructor Profiles

Sara A. Showalter Van Tongeren, LCSW is the founder of a Telehealth based mental health group practice, The Flourishing Collective and provides biweekly case consultation to TheFloCo team. She has co-authored a book titled, *The Courage to Suffer*, as well as a peer reviewed theory paper on the Existential Positive Psychology Model of Suffering and a chapter on a model of existential hope in *The Handbook of Existential Psychology*. She is currently working on an upcoming book to be published in 2026 by APA on helping therapists support their clients through religious change. Additionally, her blog has over 125,000 readers.

Sara is a board-certified therapist that is licensed in New York, Michigan, and Virginia who specializes in trauma, attachment focused therapy, mindfulness, existential psychotherapy, narrative therapy, liberation psychology, Brainspotting, and relational psychoanalysis. She primarily works with female identifying adults who are wanting to rediscover their identity and increase their own sense of empowerment. Often, Sara's clients are at a crossroad brought on by suffering. Sara specializes in working with therapists and pastors.

Sara works from an existential-positive psychology framework that is trauma- and attachment-focused, and utilizes somatic based healing through Brainspotting. Sara won the 2020 Social Justice Award given by the City of Holland for her work in helping to pass the city's first Non-Discrimination Ordinance.

Dr. Daryl R. Van Tongeren, PhD is a professor of psychology at Hope College and the director of the Frost Center for Social Science Research. A social psychologist, he has published more than 200 scholarly articles and chapters, and four books, on topics such as religion, meaning in life, and virtues. Most recently, his work has focused on the psychological and social processes of leaving religion and undergoing religious change, culminating in his newest book, *Done: How to Flourish After Leaving Religion*. His research has been covered by numerous media outlets, including the *New York Times*, *BBC*, *Hidden Brain*, *Washington Post*, *The Atlantic*, NPR-affiliated radio stations, *Scientific American*, and *Men's Health*. His work has been supported by numerous grants from the John Templeton Foundation, and he has won national and international awards for his research. He is also an associate editor for *The Journal of Positive Psychology*. He enjoys running, biking, and hiking near where he lives with his wife, Sara, in Holland, MI. You can find out more about Daryl's work at darylvantongeren.com and follow him on Instagram @darylvantongeren or X @drvantongeren.

Objectives

- 1) Communicate the difference between religion and spirituality.
- 2) Identify the existential functions of religion and spirituality.
- 3) Be able to effectively assess spiritual history and needs in a clinical setting.



FRIDAY, APRIL 18, 2025
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

GVSU - BICYCLE FACTORY
201 FRONT AVE SW
GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49504

COST: \$59

CE CREDITS: 3.0

COURSE LEVEL: BEGINNER