

The Role of Spirituality in Assessment and Therapeutic Approach

Ioanna Alperti*

IASIS NGO, Kato Patissia, Athens, Greece

***Corresponding Author:** Ioanna Alperti, IASIS NGO, Kato Patissia, Athens, Greece.

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Everyone is searching for a meaning in their lives. Nonetheless, the constant hunt for meaning and goal in our lives may cause distress and negative feelings which people try to explain and find solutions through potential helpful approaches such as religion, spirituality or psychotherapy. Human's spiritual and social nature are interconnected and they affect each other. The science of Psychology needs to take into consideration the spiritual perceptions of a person and the therapist needs to be objective in order to deeply understand the meaning and role of religion and spirituality in a person's life. Psychology is interested in improving humans' quality of life and well-being, providing assistance in problem solving and not imposing on them the contextually therapist's personal beliefs and values. Religion and spirituality is a quite complex phenomenon which need further research. The word religion means the relationship of humans with the sacred. Latin word "Re-ligare" which means "connecting" as well as and the Greek meaning of the word religion which is being translated as rise", designate the two way communication and dialectic nature of humans and God relationship. Religion and spirituality is playing a key role in societies. Religion and spirituality is an internalized cultural factor, which projects values, norms and behavioral rule to humans. Spirituality may often has both positive and negative impact on a person's life. The kind of spirituality which promotes mental health is the one which supports that God is caring towards people and in that way, God can motivate people to act to other people with love and solidarity. Through that perspective, interpersonal relationships are being positively reinforced and the interest of humans is being turned to other people beside themselves, developing in that way the skills of empathy. People who make good use of empathy, can successfully manage their own emotional pressure, since the focus is not anymore on their personal problems. They therefore can have the proper distance and be more efficient in problem solving processes. On the other hand, a stiff and inflexible relationship with spirituality can be fuel with fear and guilt and God is a representation of punishment. That image which allows hatred and aggressiveness is harmful for a person's well-being and may act as an obstacle against personal development. Taking into consideration the mentioned above facts, It is important to highlight that the quality of spirituality, the representations it may carry, as well as the motives (inner existential motives vs external social motives) can affect a person's life in multiple ways. During the differential diagnosis, the expert needs to make a distinction between psychopathological and religious behaviors and perceptions. For instance, we might think that a person is experiencing depression while he is in a process of remorse and discipline. A very important factor to take into consideration in the case above is the emotion of hope, which it is missing in case of a depressive episode, whereas it is really strong in the scenario of a person who is working on remorse and forgiveness.

Professionals need to take time to reflect on their observations, in order to clearly understand the situation and belief system of the beneficiary. Professionals need not only to have the necessary knowledge, but also to understand the broadness of human nature. Best results will only be achieved when professionals have a deep understanding of beneficiaries' values, respect their spirituality and understand when those don't serve the beneficiary and don't lead them to live a satisfying life [1-3].

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