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### **Review of *Spirituality in Social Work Practice*. Ronald K. Bullis. Reviewed by Lolita Perkins, Louisiana State University.**

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center, forcing the profession to critically examine the direction and purpose of child welfare services.

*The Politics of Child Abuse in America* is an important book for child welfare professionals and policy makers on the eve of the 21st century. Recent evidence that shows the confusion prominent in the field can be found in California where legislation was introduced in 1996 to remind child welfare workers about their fundamental mission to protect children from harm and to secure their safety (SB 1516, Solis). When, after almost a century of providing public child welfare services, the mission of the field must be codified in law, books that open debate about the future direction of child welfare must be given serious consideration.

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Ronald K. Bullis, *Spirituality in Social Work Practice*. Washington, D.C. Taylor and Francis, 1996 \$24.95 papercover

The role of spirituality in social work practice has been extensively explored. This is evident by the large body of literature on the subject. Yet, *Spirituality in Social Work Practice*, written by Ronald K. Bullis, transcends the traditional approach to subject, and offers a unique synthesis of spiritual values and social work practice methods. This synthesis, according to Bullis, is best achieved through the implementation of a cross-cultural approach to the healing process, which includes the knowledge and application of various spiritual values in providing services for clients. Throughout his book, Bullis builds on empirical research to demonstrate ways in which social work practitioners are currently incorporating spiritual techniques in developing assessments and intervention strategies for their clients. He also

examines the ethical implications raised in implementing spiritual concepts and techniques.

The book is divided into four sections. Chapter one provides an analysis of spirituality in social work practice. It also provides a discussion on the resurgence of spirituality in the United States. Bullis also differentiates between the concepts of religion and spirituality. Provisions for the use of clinical spirituality in practice settings are also discussed.

Chapters two and three provide specific advice on the use of spirituality in social work assessments and intervention. A historical perspective of spirituality themes related to cultural mental health and wholeness are examined. Bullis goes on to develop a system for integrating spirituality in clinical social work practice through the development of a spiritual cosmology, which he defines as one's world view in relation to spiritual matters. He also constructs a spiritual anthropology, which is characterized as the role of spirituality in human functioning.

Bullis describes specific spiritual interventions that determine how to clarify client's spiritual orientations and values as well as ways to record a client's participation in spiritual groups to explore spiritual outlets such as forgiveness, prayer and meditation. This section concludes with an account of the ethical ramifications of utilizing spiritual techniques in fact gathering and the development of intervention strategies for clients. Here, Bullis strongly emphasizes the point that, although many social work practitioners tend to avoid the use of spirituality in the helping process, spirituality needs to be recognized especially when a client's needs endorse these techniques.

Chapter four outlines the impact of spirituality in public policy issues. Here, the author defines the origins of religious charity that began with the development of social welfare systems from ancient Mesopotamia and Egyptian cultures to religious ideology in American welfare policy today. This chapter also analyzes the implications of two Supreme Court decisions—*Employment Division, Department of Human Resources of Oregon v. Smith* (1990) and *Church of the Lukumi Babalu Aye, Inc. v. City of Hialeah* (1993)—in spiritual jurisprudence and social work practice.

Chapter five provides examples of the diversity of spiritual traditions, which Bullis defines as, "spiritual democratization",

a process in which different cultural spiritual traditions are integrated to create a new, commonly accepted, tradition by members of society. Chapter six discusses the possibility of professional collaboration between social work and spiritual professionals. It discusses the contributions spiritual leaders can make to the social work profession as well as the role of informal and formal networks in establishing the collaborative effort.

Although Bullis attempts to provide a non-threatening multicultural approach to spirituality, he tends to emphasize non-Western religious ideas, which may not, at first, appear to be relevant to the spiritual values of most Americans. Nevertheless, Bullis makes a laudable attempt to provide a readable book, designed specifically for practitioners who, in order to be competitive with other mental health professionals, must begin to systematically incorporate the theory and practice of spirituality in social work settings.

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Marian Fatout, *Children in Groups: A Social Work Perspective*. Westport, Ct: Auburn House, 1996. \$49.95 hardcover.

We have now come full circle. Most of the early writings on social work with groups focused on groups for children and youth because in the early settings such as settlement houses and neighborhood centers the bulk of the work was with this population. When group workers began to offer group services in psychiatric, health, and family agencies, among others, a shift took place and the group work writings reflected this by primarily describing work with adults. This led to a dearth of good, up-to-date literature on group work with children. In this respect, Marian Fatout's book is a welcome addition to the group work literature.

Fatout's book follows a logical and predictable format. The first chapters present her view of "theoretical underpinnings". In this part, which consists of two chapters, she reviews the literature on group work with children as well as on child and adolescent development. The group work review includes a description of