



INTERFAITH
CENTER OF NEW YORK



Social Work and Religious Diversity: Religion and Spirituality as Sources of Strength in Times of Crisis

A continuing education conference for social workers and their colleagues, developed by the Interfaith Center of New York, in partnership with the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services, and the Psychotherapy and Spirituality Institute.

April 7, 2016 • 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY

The Interfaith Center of New York SW CPE is recognized by the New York State Education Department's State Board for Social Work as an approved provider of continuing education for licensed social workers – provider # 0163. This conference offers 7 contact hours of continuing education for New York State LMSWs and LCSWs.

8:30 - 9:00 Welcome and Registration

Please plan to arrive by 8:45, as the opening session of the conference will start promptly at 9:00. Coffee, tea, and snacks will be available for conference participants.

9:00 - 11:00 Plenary Panel: Religious and Spiritual Sources of Strength for Diverse New Yorkers

In moments of personal hardship or communal crisis, many New Yorkers find strength in their faith or spirituality. As scholars like Kenneth Pargament (1997) have shown, our diverse faith communities offer their members a wide range of life-affirming – and at times life-saving – coping resources. This introductory panel will examine the religious and spiritual coping resources found in New York City's Jewish, Christian, Muslim, and Buddhist communities. After an introduction to the conference, the panelists will explore how members of their faith communities draw on religious or spiritual resources (such as personal faith, sacred narrative, ritual practice, meditation, and pastoral counseling) as sources of strength in times of crisis. The speakers will be:

- **Dr. Henry Goldschmidt**, Director of Education Programs, Interfaith Center of New York
- **Rabbi Dr. Tsvi Blanchard**, Scholar in Residence, Institute on Law, Religion, and Lawyer's Work at Fordham University; and Meyer Struckmann Professor of Jewish Law, Humboldt University Faculty of Law

- **Bhante (Venerable) Heenbunne Kondañña**, MSW, Resident Monk and Abbot, Staten Island Buddhist Vihara
- **Rev. Dr. Kelly Murphy Mason, LCSW**, Managing Director, Psychotherapy and Spirituality Institute
- **Rev. Dr. Khadijah Matin**, Vice President, Association of Muslim Chaplains; and Adjunct Dean, One Spirit Learning Alliance Interspiritual Counseling Program

11:00 - 11:10 Coffee and Snack Break

11:10 - 12:00 Comparative Reflection on Religious, Secular, and Spiritual Sources of Strength

With guidance from a worksheet, participants will reflect on their own religious, secular, or spiritual coping resources – the beliefs and practices that give them strength in times of crisis. They will compare these to the coping resources identified by speakers in the introductory panel, highlighting both similarities and differences in the lives of religious, secular, and spiritual New Yorkers. Participants will then discuss their comparative self-reflection in small groups at each table.

12:00 - 1:00 Lunch – No Formal Program, Just Quality Time with Colleagues

A catered lunch will be available for all conference participants, including vegetarian, kosher, and other options.

1:00 - 2:20 Religious and Spiritual Sources of Strength in Mourning and Bereavement

The first of two afternoon panels will explore the important role of religious and spiritual coping resources for many people mourning the death of a loved one – a moment of crisis grounded in the universal fact of mortality, and the enduring ties of family and friendship. The speakers will draw on their personal and professional experience in Jewish, Hindu, and Sikh communities, while highlighting a range of religious and spiritual coping resources that may or may not be limited to members of these specific faith traditions. The speakers will be:

- **Dr. Muninder K. Ahluwalia** and **Raman K. Randhawa, LMHC, NCC**, Associate Professor and Doctoral Candidate (respectively), Department of Counseling and Educational Leadership, Montclair State University
- **Anindita Chatterjee Bhaumik, LICSW**, Direct Care Coordinator for High Risk (of DV) Assessment and Response Team, The Guidance Center; and Clinician, Boston Evening Therapy Associates
- **Rabbi Simkha Y. Weintraub, LCSW**, Rabbinic Director, Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services

2:20 - 2:30

Coffee/Snack Break

2:30 - 3:50

Religious and Spiritual Sources of Strength for Survivors of Domestic Violence

The final panel of the day will explore the important role of religious and spiritual coping resources for many victims and survivors of domestic violence – a moment of crisis grounded in specific forms of hierarchy, power, and oppression. The speakers will draw on their personal and professional experience in Christian, Muslim, and Yoruba/Ifa communities, while highlighting a range of religious and spiritual coping resources that may or may not be limited to members of these specific faith traditions. The speakers will be:

- **DeShannon Barnes-Bowens, MS** (Iyalorisa Omi Femi Fasina), Founder and Director, ILERA Counseling and Education Services
- **Rev. Dr. Sally MacNichol**, Co-Executive Director, CONNECT and CONNECT Faith
- **Robina Niaz, MS, MSW**, Founder and Executive Director, Turning Point for Women and Families

3:50 - 4:00

Coffee/Snack Break

4:00 - 5:00

Closing Discussion, Reflection, and Evaluations

Following a brief presentation by a leading social work educator, participants will reflect on the key points of the conference in small group conversations and a facilitated town-hall discussion. What, we will ask, have we learned from today's speakers, and from each other? What can we take back to our practice? How can social workers engage effectively with the religious and spiritual coping resources of diverse New Yorkers? The conversation will be framed and facilitated by:

- **Dr. Mary Ragan, LCSW**, Director of the Psychotherapy and Spirituality Institute's Trinity Counseling Center, and Adjunct Professor at the Columbia University School of Social Work

Some Practical Details to Keep in Mind

Bathrooms are in the basement – down the escalator behind the reception desk in the lobby, then to your left.

If you've ordered a **strictly kosher lunch**, please see ICNY staff at the registration desk during the lunch break.

Wifi is available. The network is *guest@interchurch*, the account name is *guest*, and the password is *guest475*.

Please take a moment to fill out your **conference evaluation form** after each session. You'll need to submit this form to receive a certificate of completion at the end of the day.

Credit-bearing certificates of completion will be available to pick up at the conclusion of the conference, at 5 pm, and not before (as per New York State Education Department regulations).

A **photographer** will be documenting the conference. These photos may be used in Interfaith Center program materials, including social media platforms. Please let the photographer know if you would rather not have your picture taken.

If you tweet any of your own photos or reflections on the conference, please tweet at **@ICNY**.