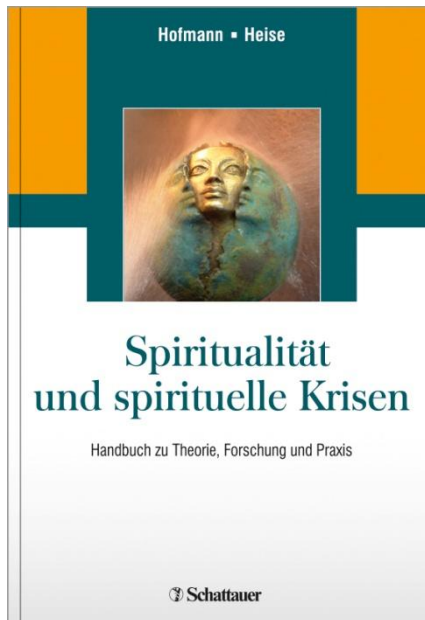


# The German Handbook „Spirituality and Spiritual Crises“: Backgrounds, Contents, Intentions



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# Definition: Spirituality and religiosity

Spirituality and religiosity can be understood as the reference to a higher reality that transcends the individual personality. This higher reality is conceived of and designated differently, depending on the respective religio-cultural contexts.

The term "**religiosity**" increasingly refers to the participation in the beliefs and practices of an organized church or religious institution, whereas "**spirituality**" is more and more associated with an individual and experiential approach to a transcendent dimension, that can also be independent from a specific religious membership.

# Backgrounds of the handbook

- Spiritual turn: Increasing spread of individual forms of personal, experiential and non-institutional spirituality in western societies;
- Prognosis of an increase in the incidence of spiritual crises by clinical practitioners.

# Backgrounds of the handbook

- Since about 1990s "Spiritual turn" in the health professions;
- Growing critique of academic psychology and psychiatry with regard to their dealing with the issues of spirituality and religiosity;
- Accusation of ignoring, marginalizing and pathologizing the spiritual and religious dimension in theory, research and practice;
- Leads to an increasing discussion of spirituality- and religiosity-related topics within the health professions, focus on salutogenic forms of the same.

# Details & structure of the handbook

- Editors: Liane Hofmann & Patrizia Heise
- 528 pages, 33 chapters, 7 sections
- 31 authors from different disciplines and fields of application
- Publishing company: Schattauer
- Financially supported by the IGPP

# Focus of the handbook

The focus is on possible problems and crises which may arise in the context of spiritual development, orientation and practice.

The DSM-IV V-Code "religious or spiritual problem" also receives special regard, for it constitutes a major interface of the topic to the psychiatric and psychological mainstream.

# Working definition „spiritual crises“:

Psychological problems and crises related to the spiritual-transpersonal and transcendent dimension of human being:

- The triggers of the crisis are spiritual exercises or practices.
- The contents of the crises are related to transcendence or an ultimate reality (relation to transcendence).
- The phenomena turn out to be „spiritually transformative“ in terms of a respective change of the previous self- and worldview.
- The phenomena of the crisis are an expression of an underlying process of spiritual development or the development of human consciousness towards „transpersonal“ levels of self-development.

# Contents

- I. Historical and contextual backgrounds
- II. Theoretical models
- III. Types of spiritual and religious problems
- IV. Research
- V. Diagnostics and treatment of spiritual and religious problems
- VI. Societal perspectives
- VII. Resources: (Appendix: Literature / online resources / networks / institutions / clinics)



# Target groups

- Practitioners from the fields of psycho-social care and the health professions, especially psychotherapists, clinical psychologists, psychiatrists, counselors and pastoral care providers;
- Persons with scientific interest in the topic, scientists investigating issues around spirituality, spiritual development, spiritual crises and exceptional experiences;
- Providers of holistically oriented psychotherapy, of psycho-spiritual methods or bio-energetic approaches (e.g. yoga teachers, meditation teachers, retreat-masters, body-workers).

# Target groups

- Relatives and laypersons supporting people in spiritual crises;
- Interested laypersons, persons with a spiritual orientation, persons concerned.

# Specifics and intentions of the volume

- Intended to heighten the sensitivity of mental health professionals with regard to spiritual and religious problems;
- Aims at a comprehensive treatment of the issue of spiritual development and its possible crises;
- Systematic treatment of the entire spectrum of relevant questions;
- Builds a bridge from theory building to scientific findings to practical approaches and societal perspectives;
- Overview on relevant theoretical models, empirical findings and treatment approaches;

# Specifics and intentions of the volume

- Covers and integrates a wide variety of perspectives: represented are different theoretical perspectives, scientific disciplines, as well as social groups, that usually tend to operate separately; thereby aims to do justice to the complexity of the topic and to foster synergetic effects;
- A broad spectrum of practice-tested and well-established approaches of counseling and treatment in this field are extensively described;

# Specifics and intentions of the volume

- First handbook and multiple-authors-work from the German-speaking countries;
- To take the local religio-cultural, societal and health policy framework conditions into account – as far as possible – primarily German-speaking experts are represented (furthermore also international authors);
- Up-to date, scientifically based and oriented;
- Proceeds from a position of paradigmatic openness and methodical pluralism.

# Possible benefits of the handbook

- Increasing the accuracy of diagnostic assessments;
- Reducing the occurrence of iatrogenic harm from misdiagnosis of religious and spiritual problems;
- Improving treatment of such problems by stimulating clinical research;
- Improving treatment of such problems by encouraging training centers to address religious and spiritual issues.

# Conclusion with regard to reception

- The volume is well received by representatives of a wide variety of professional and societal groups.
- Reviews and articles have been published in a broad spectrum of journals (Socialnet, Psychotherapeutenjournal, Analytische Psychologie, Evolve, Info3, Buddhismus Aktuell, Yoga-Journal, Wochenzeitschrift katholische Kirche Steiermark etc.).

# Internet-sources

- Website Liane Hofmann:  
[http://www.igpp.de/eks/liane\\_hofmann\\_EN.htm](http://www.igpp.de/eks/liane_hofmann_EN.htm)
- Podcast / Youtube:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7mGUC0WuAWM&feature=youtu.be>
- Interview Radio Evolve: <https://www.evolve-magazin.de/radio/spirituelle-krisen/>



**Many thanks for your kind attention!**