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Religion and psychology: Can they work together?

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According to the CIA World Fact Book, an overwhelming majority, 90 percent of Americans, claim a particular religious affiliation.

“Today, our society is more religiously diverse than ever before, which is why it is so important that mental health professionals understand where clients’ beliefs stem from,” says Dr. E. Thomas Dowd, Kent State professor of psychology.

Psychologists are much less religious than the general population, says Dowd. As co-editor of The Psychologies in Religion: Working with the Religious Client, he examines the psychological assumptions that lie behind different religions.

Specifically, Dowd discusses the wide diversity of religious beliefs, data indicating that religious people tend to be happier and healthier than non-religious people, the functions that religion serve for people, new methods of categorizing different types of religions and the growing importance of non-western religions in the United States.

“The goal is to provide psychotherapists with a greater understanding of their religious clients and help prepare psychologists to better work with religious individuals,” says Dowd.

Source: Kent State University

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