

# **An introduction to the Integrated Spiritual Theoretical Model (ISTM) and guiding principles for an integrated approach to spiritual practice in social work**

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This paper introduces the Integrated Spiritual Theoretical Model (ISTM) developed by the author over a number of years through experience in spiritual and social work practice and education. The ISTM as presented here is the most recent evolution resulting from a comprehensive qualitative research program using the process of meta-triangulation.

The ISTM is a theoretical model based on the underlying assumptions and philosophies of the integrated spiritual paradigm. The ISTM presents theory from the integrated paradigm in a structural dynamic which allows the structures to be applied as an analytical tool. The ISTM has six layers, which are the triadic whole, dualities, operational sectors, areas of spiritual evolution and growth (ASEG's), modes of consciousness and the pendulum affect. These layers can be used in different combinations, depending on the intention of the analysis or application.

This paper first explores the different structural and theoretical components of the ISTM before exploring the 16 guiding principles and application approach. When the ISTM is applied as an analytical tool for 'analysis' and 'assessment', it is not rigid and concrete, but fluid and evolving.

This paper is strongly linked to the conference theme as the purpose of the ISTM is to allow for the many different truths and perspectives both physical and spiritual to be valued and accepted. Further to this the guiding principles directly address issues of justice in relation to spirituality in social work practice such as the principles of non-judgment/al justice, responsibility and inherent nature.