

Overall: The manuscript is much improved. The comments below are to strengthen it further:

p. 3 This study explores the lived experiences of clients and licensed social workers (LSWs) who engage with humanity and spirituality **as part of their mental health journeys.**

The wording appears to imply the LSWs are also on a “mental health journey”, the same as clients. Did you mean to state something along the lines of “as part of their respective roles in client-counselor relationship...”? Perhaps revisit sentence structure for improved clarity.

p. 3 Through a qualitative, phenomenological approach, it seeks to illuminate how **these** dimensions function as guiding forces in practice and how they support resilience, belonging, ethical awareness, and holistic well-being.

It is unclear what “these dimensions” refers to; perhaps revisit sentence structure.

p. 4 Recent studies highlight that compassion-centered engagement strengthens trust, deepens therapeutic connections, and supports the well-being of both clients and practitioners (**Ramanathan et al., 2025; Hodge et al., 2025**).

Per APA guidelines, references are listed alphabetically

p. 7 Phenomenology was chosen because it centers lived experience, meaning-making, and the essence of human encounters—**elements central to understanding compassion, dignity, and spiritual connection in practice** (Creswell & Poth, 2024).

The structure of the sentence and citation implies that Creswell & Poth are being cited for stating something about “the elements central to compassion, dignity, and spiritual connection in practice”; however, it is only correct to cite them for the first part of the sentence, which is about general guidelines established by Creswell & Poth. On p. 8, [Purposive sampling was used to select individuals with direct experience of the phenomena under study (Creswell & Poth, 2024).], you correctly cite them, but citation on p. 7 is incorrect; kindly revisit sentence structure for improved clarity.

Finally, I have one conceptual suggestion: In general, licensed social workers are taught and know that their relational presence plays a large part in the helping process, and it appears overall in parts of the article you are not giving enough credit to practitioners for knowing this. Consider adding 1-2 citations that state, “we know that social work practice is fundamentally grounded in relational skills, as building safe, trusting, and empathetic relationships ; and this relational presence is a critical aspect of what LSWs bring to the clinical practice. However, this study highlights how one group of clients experience that relational presence, when provided in the context of spirituality, humanity,

You could cite an article (like the one below) that states the literature continues to explore how and why relational presence works, I haven’t read this article, so find a couple that work for you. I am just suggesting to bring in some recent research to clarify your study’s added value because the vast majority of social workers already know to “start where the client is”. OR, alternatively, under implications section, repeat and reinforce literature that provides evidence that LSWs want/seek/need more understanding about how humanity and spirituality, specifically, work in the relational process.

Cleece, K., Cheneler, B., Harrison, J., & Hill, J. E. (2025). Relational practice, a critical component for successful social work. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 11(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2025.2492402>