

FAITH, RELIGION, SPIRITUALITY AND MENTAL HEALTH

Religion and spirituality have been linked together for a long time and examined in a psychiatric and social science research. While spirituality and religion can bring healing and support for many, for some it can also bring anxiety and neuroses. This resource's goal is to outline the benefits of faith, religion, and spirituality on the mental health of their practitioners.

Defining Our Terms

Religion

Religion is generally agreed on and involves beliefs, practices, and rituals related to the sacred

Spirituality

Spirituality is considered more personal, something people define for themselves that is largely free of the rules, regulations, and responsibilities associated with religion. There is a growing group of people categorized as spiritual-but-not-religious, who deny any connection at all with religion and understand spirituality entirely in individualistic, secular terms.

Mental Health

Mental Health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how one thinks, feels, and acts.

Mental Illness

Mental Illness is a condition that affects a person's thinking, feeling, behavior or mood. These conditions impact daily living and can affect the ability to relate to others.




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Understanding the Facts



More than **80%** of persons with persistent mental illness use religion to cope.

Despite spectacular advances in technology and science, **90%** of the world's population is involved today in some form of religious or spiritual practice.



Based on a study* completed by Dr. Harold Koenig at Duke University, religious involvement is related to:

- Less depression, faster recovery from depression in 272 of 444 studies pre 2010 (61%)
- Less suicide and more negative attitudes toward suicide in 106 of 141 pre-2010 (75%)
- Less alcohol use / abuse / dependence in 240 of 278 studies pre-2010 (86%)
- Greater well-being and happiness in 256 of 326 pre-2010 studies (79%)
- Greater social support in 61 of 74 studies (82%)



*Research on Religion, Spirituality, and Mental Health: A Review by Harold G Koenig, MD

Even if depressed, research* suggests that deeply religious people more often experience

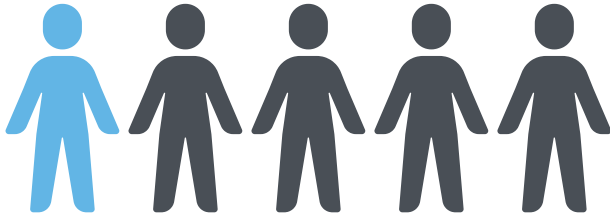
Greater purpose and meaning
Greater optimism and hope
More gratitude and thankfulness
More generosity



*Tepper et al. (2001). The prevalence of religious coping among persons with persistent mental illness. *Psychiatric Services*. 52(5):660-665

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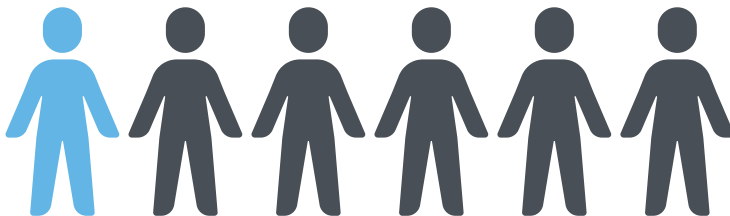
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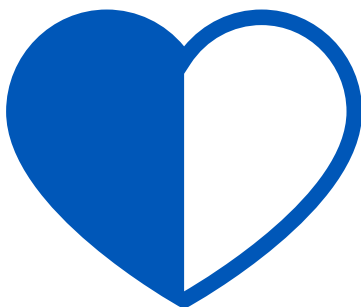
**1 IN 5 U.S. ADULTS
EXPERIENCE MENTAL
ILLNESS EACH YEAR**



**1 IN 25 U.S. ADULTS
EXPERIENCE SERIOUS
MENTAL ILLNESS
EACH YEAR**



**1 IN 6 U.S. YOUTH
AGED 6-17 EXPERIENCE
A MENTAL HEALTH
DISORDER EACH YEAR.**



**50% OF ALL LIFETIME
MENTAL ILLNESS
BEGIN BY AGE 14, AND
75% BY AGE 24.**

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Religion and Depression

The data collected on the subject of religion and mental health seems to suggest a major correlation between religious affiliation and having greater chances of managing depression.

A recent study looked at a group of 67 people at high genetic risk of depression, and found that those who described religion as important to them were 90% less likely to get depressed. This correlated to increased grey matter in their brains, and this effect was seen in those at risk for depression but not in a control group.

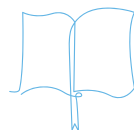
The conclusion to be drawn from this study is that religion can have, not only psychologically, but physically benefits on one's life.*

Religion and Mental Health Benefits

- MORE EFFECTIVELY
MANAGES DEPRESSION
- LESS SUBSTANCE ABUSE
- LOWER RATES OF SUICIDE
- HIGHER LEVELS OF
HAPPINESS
- GREATER LIFE
SATISFACTION
- INCREASED POSITIVE
PERSONALITY TRAITS

Prayer and Mental Health Benefits

- GREATER LIFE SATISFACTION
- DECREASED ANGER
- INCREASED GRATITUDE
- BETTER COGNITIVE FUNCTION
UNDER STRESS
- GREATER SENSE OF WELL BEING
- INCREASED FORGIVENESS
- DECREASED TENSION AND
CONFLICT IN RELATIONSHIPS
- INCREASED RELATIONSHIP
SATISFACTION



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Sources

- Research on Religion, Spirituality, and Mental Health: A Review by Harold G Koenig, MD
- Tepper et al. (2001). The prevalence of religious coping among persons with persistent mental illness. *Psychiatric Services*. 52(5):660-665
- Koenig HG, Berk LS, Daher N, Pearce MJ, Belinger D, Robins CJ, Nelson B, Shaw SF, Cohen HJ, King MB (2014).
- Religious involvement, depressive symptoms, and positive emotions in the setting of chronic medical illness and major depression.
- The Blue Dove Foundation Jewish Mental Wellness Toolkit
- Psychiatrist Dr. Dan morehead