Benefits of Religion and Spirituality

Adapted from:


- Several reviews have demonstrated the psychological and physical benefits of religion and spirituality. (Koenig, McCullough, & Larson, 2001; Pargament, 1997; Plante and Sharma, 2001; Plante and Thoreson, 2007; Richards and Bergin, 2005).

- Those who are engaged and active with religious and spiritual matters tend to be healthier, happier, have better habits, and more social supports than those who are not.

- The vast majority of research supports the view that religion and spirituality are good for mental and physical health.

- Religious and spiritual involvement is positively correlated with positive health behaviors such as reduced smoking, alcohol consumption, unsafe sex, more exercise, and healthy eating.

- Religious and spiritual engagement helps people cope better with life’s stressors.

- Spiritual involvement is associated with better mental health functioning as evidenced by more optimism, compassion for self and others, forgiveness, and less anxiety and depression.

- Religious people are more likely to stay married than nonreligious people.

- NIH said that “persuasive” evidence exists that religious and spiritual engagement is associated with lower mortality, suggesting a 25 to 30% reduction in risk of death.

- On average, spiritual and religious people can expect to live about 7 years longer than nonreligious and non-spiritual people – for African American population these figures approach 14 years (Miller & Thoresen, 2003).
• Many clients want health care professionals to respect, acknowledge, and integrate spirituality and religious principles into professional work (Frick et al., 2006; McNichols & Feldman, 2007; Shafranske, 2001)

• Over 60% of Americans prefer to collaborate with a mental health professional who maintains religious and spiritual beliefs and values when seeking services about serious problems (Lehman, 1993)

• The majority of psychotherapy clients want to discuss spiritual and religious matters in therapy (Rose et al., 2001)

• Only a small number of psychotherapy clients feel comfortable discussing religious and spiritual concerns in therapy (Lindgren & Coursey, 1995).

References:


addressing the sacred. New York: Guilford.


