



# Does your faith heal you?: Spirituality and physical mental healing across various faith traditions

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## Objectives

This project is a literature review on the correlation between spirituality and physical/mental healing across communities of various faith traditions. Our findings evaluate trends demonstrated among various religious communities, including Buddhism, Islam, Catholicism, Protestant Christianity, Native American culture, impacted by physical and mental impairment.

## Method

Most of these studies partook in ethnographic study. Psychology, sociology, and anthropology scholars engaged in participant observation of various communities and faith traditions.

## Conclusion

Many factors are at play when it comes to illness, whether mental or physical, and the impact of religious practice or affiliation can have. The majority of our research determined that religious practice was positively associated with mental wellbeing, but rarely directly associated with physical wellbeing or healing.

## Illness Recovery

### 1. Impact of Faith (Glik, 1990)

By comparing data regarding the recovery of an illness to the amount of participation in faith, extreme reliance on faith was found to relate to negative mental health indicators.

### 2. Impact of Prayer (Sloan et. Al, 2006)

By analyzing prayer usage among the sick patients, no notable difference existed among recovery speeds of patients who do and who do not pray.

## Positive Effects on Mental Health

### 1. Native American Peyote Meetings (Calabrese, J.D., 2008)

The Peyote meeting is a communal treatment of mental illnesses such as addiction that defies the individualistic mindset of Euro-American healing. The healer-patient relationship is also redefined because it is more of the communal meeting than a therapist-patient method of healing. Religion helps this community to heal.

### 2. Muslim refugees in Somalia (Molsa, M., et. Al, 2017)

War, childhood trauma, acculturation, discrimination, and impact religious practice on mental health. Spirituality was found to help them cope with their displacement.

## Evolution of Practices

### 1. Surveillance of the "Soul" (Pridmore, 2018)

Christianity combined with technology allows for the believer to monitor their spiritual belief practices through their phone. This was shown to improve their spirituality.

### 2. Evolution of Christian Healing Rituals (Schouten, 2003)

Current Christian healing rituals are shifting away from ancient healing rituals in order to adopt a newer progressive way to worship such as the Toronto blessing.

### 3. Emphasis on developing the physical and mental part of the body (Wilder, 2020)

New practices of worship place more emphasis on improving the emotional and physical being. Earlier practices used to solely focus on developing the spirit therapeutically.

## Pilgrimage Sites

### 1. Pakistani Shrines (Charan, I.A., et. Al, 2020)

Religious manipulation: one must remain in the shrine until they are healed. Obedience emphasized over belief in the spiritual.

### 2. Lourdes, France (Goldingay, S. et al, 2014)

Religion impacting communities. The history of the site makes it more holy and a place of hope than whether miracles take place. Disability studies: the entire city works together to present the disabled for healing.

### 3. Agate, Ghana (Smith-Cavros, E., et al 2017)

Catholic and Muslim population. Poor access to healthcare leads the poor to seek out religious ritual healing and herbal healing. Religious affiliation directly increases mental and physical health of residents and pilgrims.