The Relationship Between Spirituality and Mental Health

Spirituality can have many different meanings to many different people. Some people associate spirituality with a connection to their religion. Others may not associate their feelings of spirituality with any religion at all. Either way, spirituality has been shown to have a wide range of impacts on a person’s mental health and wellbeing. The definitions of spirituality are highly individualized depending on a person’s culture, religion, community, and many other factors.

# **What is Spirituality?**

While spirituality can have many different definitions for many different people, it generally describes a person’s belief systems that place meaning and purpose within their lives.

# **The Mental Health Benefits of Spirituality**

Spirituality can have many positive impacts on a person’s mental health, including:

## **Granting a Greater Sense of Purpose and Meaning to Life**

When we feel as though we are wandering aimlessly through life, it can be difficult to find the motivation to live our happiest and healthiest. Spirituality offers a sense of meaning and purpose that can leave one feeling more motivated, confident, and satisfied with their life.

## **Offers a Sense of Community**

Having a healthy support network to turn to in times of need can be crucial to getting through life’s toughest, most stressful moments. Spirituality, regardless of the type of spirituality one chooses to partake in, tends to be deeply rooted in a sense of community. Joining these communities can allow you to meet like-minded individuals who will aid you in personal growth and support you through life’s most difficult moments. These communities may provide you with a greater sense [of happiness and motivation](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31268832/), improving your overall quality of life.

## **Improved Self-Esteem**

Research suggests that a greater sense of spirituality is related to [improved self-esteem](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/j.2161-007X.2007.tb00087.x). Spirituality encourages you to connect with yourself and, in many practices, with a greater being. This can allow you to build a deeper connection and sense of belonging to yourself and the environment surrounding you.

## **May Improve Your Relationships**

As we stated before, spirituality encourages a person to connect with themselves on a deeper level. While you may be wondering what this has to do with your interpersonal relationships, the two are deeply related! Having a close connection with yourself allows you to become more self-aware and emotionally intelligent in your social relationships, allowing them to grow and thrive.

# **The Relationship Between Spiritual Health and Mental Health**

A person’s spirituality impacts many aspects of their life, including their behaviors, interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships, decisions, and coping mechanisms. The impact on behaviors, decisions, and thinking patterns that spirituality has on a person’s overall health and quality of life are significant, with many studies suggesting a positive correlation between [spirituality and psychological wellbeing](https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01997/full).

# **Ways to Nourish Your Spirituality for Mental Health**

Putting in the effort to nourish your spirituality can prove to be incredibly beneficial to your overall health, happiness, and wellbeing. You do not have to be religious to nourish your spirituality. It is also important to note that there is no right or wrong method to nourishing your spiritual health. All you need to take care of is your connection to yourself and to your personal belief system. If you are still unsure of where to start, a few ways you can begin to boost your spirituality include:

## **Connecting with Your Spiritual Community**

Many different communities embrace many different sets of beliefs. You may be able to find a community of people with similar beliefs as you within your own neighborhood, granting you a chance to connect with and learn from like-minded people working to care for their spiritual health and wellbeing just like you. If your community does not appear to have a community you connect with, there are tons of great virtual communities online that you can join!

## **Volunteering**

A few significant pieces of spiritual health are that it embraces a sense of personal growth, compassion, purpose, and gratitude. Find a cause that feels significant to you and use your many talents and passions to give back. You may find yourself feeling connected to yourself and your beliefs.

## **Meditation or Prayer**

Meditation and prayer allow you to take a moment to pause and be present with your thoughts, beliefs, and the universe. There are many ways one may choose to meditate or pray, and every single way can have its benefits for your spiritual health. A few ways you may choose to meditate or pray include:

* Focusing on your breath
* Observing your thoughts
* Journaling
* Walking
* Being mindful
* Practicing gratitude
* Speaking to the greater power you believe in

## **Connecting with Nature**

Few things can help you feel more connected to the universe than spending time in nature. As you observe the many sights, smells, and sounds surrounding you, your sense will become abuzz and grant you a chance to feel grateful and present at the moment you are currently enjoying.

## **Stretching & Exercise**

Exercise is not just a great workout for your body but can be for your mind, as well. Exercising to worship music or spiritual teaching allows you to connect to yourself and your spiritual beliefs on a deeper level as you nourish your body, mind, and soul.

## **Make Time for Spiritual Connection Everyday**

Just like your mental and physical health needs daily nourishment, so does your spiritual health. Schedule a piece of your day every day to focus on building a deeper connection to yourself and your belief system. You can use this time to learn more about your beliefs, meditate, pray, or journal. The possibilities are endless.

## **Journaling**

Writing your thoughts down is a great way to connect with yourself, your thoughts, and the belief system you live by. There are many ways you can journal, whether you focus on gratitude, intentions, and goals or just write your thoughts freely as they appear.

## **Connecting with Yourself Through Your Passions and Loves**

Making time to do the things you love can help you feel gratitude, peace, and a sense of purpose that is so valuable to your spiritual health and wellbeing. If you don’t know what your passions are, give some different hobbies a try. You don’t have to be good at them. The important thing is that you truly enjoy participating in them. As you explore new hobbies, you may learn new things about yourself that leave you feeling more connected to your soul than ever before.

## **Find Someone You Can Learn From**

Finding a mentor to help you connect with your beliefs on a deeper level will prove to be incredibly valuable to your spiritual health and wellbeing. They may be able to share their past experiences with you and ways they were able to build a deeper connection with their own spirituality to help guide your journey to improving your spiritual health.

# **We Are Here for You**

As with many other practices that offer a multitude of mental health benefits, spirituality can be a great tool for encouraging a healthy and happy mind. However, spirituality alone cannot heal every mental health ailment or struggle. If you have found your mental health is struggling, it is important to know that you do not have to struggle alone. Our experienced and compassionate counselors are here for you. [Contact](http://michiganpsychologicalcare.com/contact.php) us today, and one of our therapists will work to help you find the treatment you need to begin living a better quality of life as soon as possible.

References:

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31268832/>

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/j.2161-007X.2007.tb00087.x>

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01997/full>

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