

Depression in College: How Does Religiosity Help?

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College students are known to represent a significant number of those who suffer from depression each year, placing them at risk for suicide and future depression. While both pharmacological and psychotherapeutic treatments for depression continue to be improved, they do not provide consistent symptom remission for the majority of those who suffer from depression. Innovative research approaches are needed to understand how protective factors may interact with theoretical models of depression at the mechanism level. One such protective factor is religiosity. The purpose of this paper is to present the *preliminary findings* of an ongoing prospective study designed to test the protective effects of religiosity on a cognitive vulnerability model of depression in college students. We hypothesize that religiosity will reduce the impact of cognitive style on the stress-depression relationship. This longitudinal study is using web-based technology to survey college students monthly for six months. Variables assessed include depression, stress, cognitive style, and religiosity. Religiosity is conceptualized as a multidimensional construct including measures of religious behavior, religious motivation, religious coping, and religious meaning. Participants were drawn from one public university (n = 86) and one private religious university (n = 128). In each setting, students were recruited from classroom settings and counseling centers. The results of this study will help to identify the mechanism explaining the protective effect of religiosity on the stress-depression relationship. This information can be used in future studies to further develop interventions which will individualize and maximize the effectiveness of depression treatments for college students.