

Public Abstract

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Religious Involvement, Attitude Toward Seeking Professional Psychological Help, and Preferences for Alternative Mental Health Settings

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Religion is an important diversity variable; however, it is an understudied area in psychology. The purpose of this study was to explore ways that religious factors interact with help-seeking attitudes as well as preferences for different help sources. Participants were 236 church members from 4 Christian groups. They completed religious measures, a help-seeking measure, and responses to mock brochures for traditional, nontraditional, and Christian mental health facilities. Both demographic and religious variables were found to predict help-seeking attitudes, although the relationships between help-seeking and religious predictors were less clear. Denominational differences were found in many of the religious variables. Several religious variables were related to the brochure responses, and the four denominations showed different patterns of preference for the brochures. These findings support the idea that in Christian populations, religious involvement has an influence on help-seeking attitudes and preferences, and that therapists can better serve clients by expressing openness and respect for religious issues and world views.