

DBSA Consumer & Family Survey

Spirituality and Religion in Wellness and Recovery: Experiences of People Living with Mood Disorders

Summary Report: June 2015

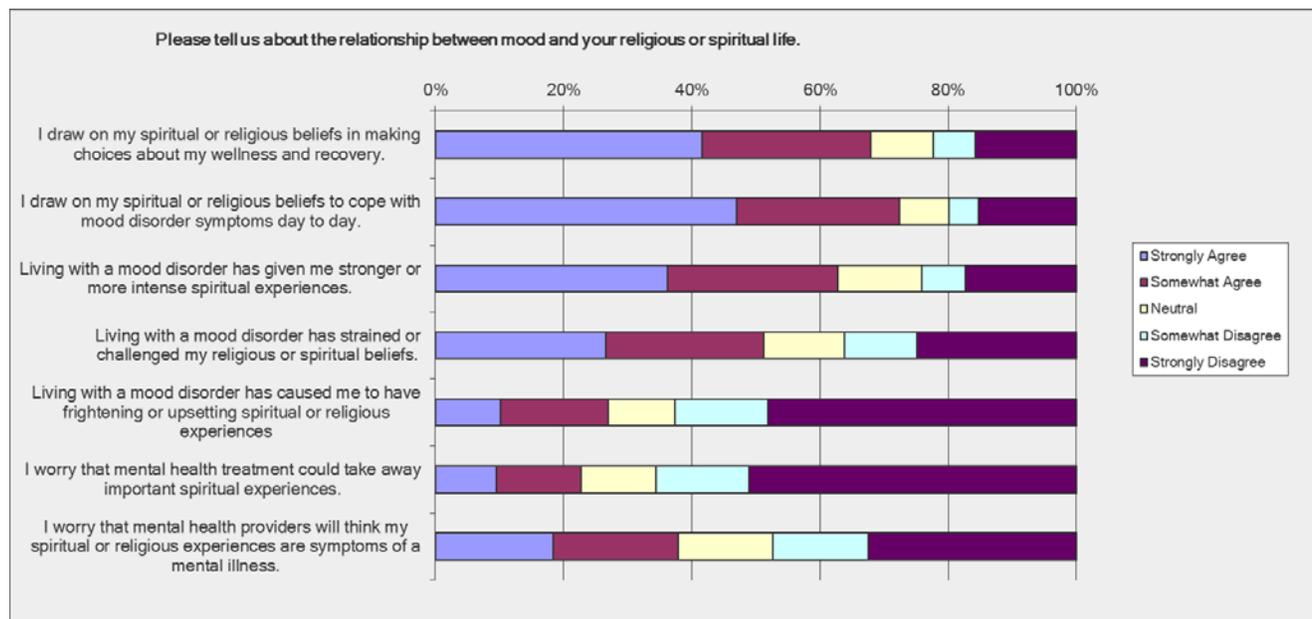
BACKGROUND

Between March and May of 2015, DBSA conducted a survey of our constituents regarding the role of spiritual and religious beliefs and practices in wellness and recovery. Topics included personal religious practices, beliefs about the role of spirituality and religion in recovery, and experiences with mental health providers. The survey was publicized on the home page of our website and via our newsletters distributed to individual constituents and local chapters. All responses were anonymous. 371 of our constituents responded.

SURVEY RESULTS

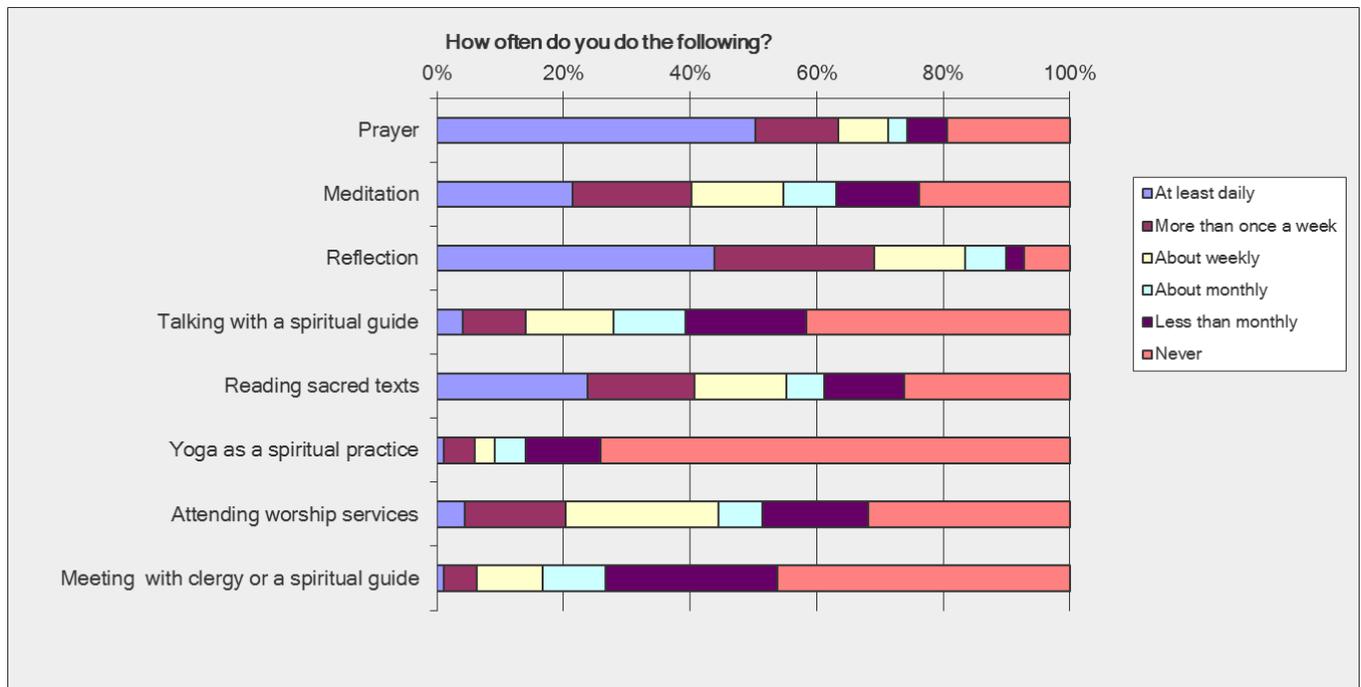
Personal Spiritual Practices

Individual spiritual practices were much more prevalent than interpersonal or group activities.



Respondents reported frequent practice of prayer and reflection, with approximately 70% reporting use of these practices at least weekly and approximately 50% reporting daily use. Approximately half reported meditating or reading sacred texts at least weekly. Half reported weekly attendance at worship services, and 30% reported never attending worship services.

Views regarding the importance of spiritual or religious practices were quite diverse.



Approximately 70% of respondents reported that prayer and meditation were very important or somewhat important to personal wellness and recovery, but approximately 25% reported that these practices were not at all important. Over half reported that attending worship services and reading sacred texts were very important or somewhat important, but 30% or more reported that these were not at all important. For most spiritual or religious practices examined, the two extreme categories (“very important” or “not at all important”) were the most commonly selected.

Individual comments reflected this divergence of views:

Spirituality, in many of its various forms, has been one of the biggest contributors to my recovery and wellness.

I believe religion is dangerous to the mentally ill.

My prayer life is a constant, so that is what keeps me going.

I think relying on an outside entity to keep one well is foolhardy.

Experience with Mental Health Providers

Respondents reported significant discordance between their wishes and their experiences with mental health providers regarding discussion of spiritual or religious beliefs in mental health treatment.

Over 60% strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that mental health providers should ask about spiritual or religious beliefs, but only 32% reported that providers asked about those beliefs very often or somewhat often. Over 60% strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that mental health providers should encourage personal spiritual or religious practices, but only 39% reported that providers encouraged those practices very often or somewhat often. Over 50% strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that mental health providers should encourage participation in a spiritual or religious community, but only 28% reported that providers encouraged such participation very often or somewhat often.