

EMILY GRIFFITH, Dept of Psychology, Bethany College, Bethany, WV, 26032. Spirituality and self-compassion among college students.

Relating spirituality to mental health is a difficult task because of the ambiguity of the term spirituality and the many aspects of mental health with which spirituality might interact. The Spiritual Experiences Index aims to measure spiritual maturity across religious and secular forms of spirituality, indicating one's spiritual openness and if one feels supported by their chosen faith. I used the Spiritual Experiences Index to measure spirituality alongside one strong indicator of good mental health, self-compassion. To measure self-compassion, I used the Self-Compassion Scale, which includes the six subscales Self-Kindness, Self-Judgment, Common Humanity, Isolation, Mindfulness, and Over-Identification. Undergraduate participants completed a survey including the Self-Compassion Scale, the Spiritual Experiences Index, and some demographic information. Spiritual Experience Index scores showed a significantly positive correlation with Self-Compassion Scale scores, and religiously-affiliated participants had significantly higher Spiritual Experiences Index scores than did religiously unaffiliated participants. Female participants scored significantly higher than male participants on the Self-Judgment and Over-Identification subscales of the Self-Compassion Scale, but significantly lower on the Mindfulness subscale. Results confirm the hypothesis about a positive correlation between spirituality scores and level of self-compassion, and further show that those with a religious affiliation scored significantly higher than religiously unaffiliated in spiritual experience. Limitations of this study included its exclusive use of college student participants from a small college in West Virginia. Replications and extensions of this study should include a wider range of participant ages and a more diverse sample.