

A Home-based Spirituality Education Programme: Qualitative Exploration of Participants' Experiences

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Background: A growing body of research reports that spiritual well-being plays a significant role in mental wellness. Findings from a completed randomized controlled trial (RCT) indicate that a home-based, 8-week spirituality education program lowers mood disturbance and increases mental health related quality of life. In this qualitative exploration we set out to understand how participants perceived the program's impact. **Methods:** This descriptive, qualitative study employed face-to-face, in-depth interviews with thirteen individuals from Calgary, Canada. Participants were sampled from the study population of the previously conducted RCT with self-referred clients suffering from emotional distress. Interviews consisted of open-ended questions that focused on how the spirituality education programme may have affected mood. **Results:** Clients described how their mood and life changed throughout and following the spirituality education programme. The following six thematic categories emerged: 1. Expansion of Spiritual Beliefs; 2. Changed Life Perspectives; 3. Calmness/Mental Clarity; 4. Improved Mental Health; 5. Improved Relationships; 6. Renewed Physical Energy. Interviewees perceived expanded spiritual beliefs, a changed life perspective and calmness as the core changes that lead to improved interpersonal relationships, improved mental health and renewed physical energy. **Conclusion:** Our findings suggest that the spirituality education programme impacts mood by shifting perspectives of life situations, oneself and others and by expanding spiritual beliefs. Spiritual teachings and practices could be an innovative and valuable adjunct intervention to improve mood. **Acknowledgement:** We are grateful to the Alberta Medical Association, Alberta Health and Wellness and the George Family Foundation for their generous support.