



The Impact of Negative Life Events (NLEs) on Spirituality: A Qualitative Study on the Perspectives of Nigerian Catholic Women Religious in the United States

Angela U. Ekwonye

St. Catherine University, USA

Abstract:

Most research work on stress and spirituality has pointed to the importance of spirituality in coping with stressful, adverse, and even life-threatening circumstances, especially among individuals of immigrant backgrounds. Limited studies exist about how negative life events (NLEs) influence spirituality, particularly that of the Nigerian Catholic sisters living in the United States. In 2018, interviews were conducted in New York with Nigerian Catholic Sisters to explore how NLEs influence their spirituality. Twenty sisters who have lived in the United States for 2-25 years were interviewed. A coding scheme was developed using the grounded theory. Key themes were identified and examined by participants' year of profession, length of stay in the USA, employment type, and educational level. Content analysis of twenty transcripts generated four significant themes. The themes followed a specific pattern of dealing with a difficult life situation, beginning with 1) the basic instant internal reactions to the stressor such as crying, feeling shocked, and alone. 2) Movement from self-absorption toward an expanded view of life through reframing the NLE using spiritual approaches. 3) Outcomes of the process which include, a



deeper relationship with God, a positive outlook on life, and a strong sense of meaning in life. While the impact of spirituality on stress is known, we discovered that the state of one's mental health as affected by an NLE also influences one's spirituality. This research highlights the need for spirituality to be integrated into clinical practice to improve the mental and emotional health of individuals.

Biography:

Angela U. Ekwonye is working at Department of Public Health, St. Catherine University, St. Paul, Minnesota, USA

12th Worldwide Forum on Mental Health & Psychiatry; Rome, Italy; August 19-20, 2020

Citation: Angela U. Ekwonye; The Impact of Negative Life Events (NLEs) on Spirituality: A Qualitative Study on the Perspectives of Nigerian Catholic Women Religious in the United States; Mental Health Congress 2020; Rome, Italy; August 19-20, 2020