

2019 Research Week Abstract

Title - Perspectives of Indian Internationals on Mental Health and its Integration with Christian Mission

Program of Study – Biopsychology

Presentation Type – Oral Presentation

Subtype – Applied

Mentor(s) and Mentor Email – Dr. Elizabeth Sites (esites@liberty.edu)

Student name(s) and email(s) – Morgan Margerison (mmargerison@liberty.edu)

Abstract:

When psychology is integrated with Christianity as a form of missions, it is vital that the destination country's cultural perspectives be considered in how the practice of these fields is implemented. This is critical considering that most research in psychology conforms to a Western perspective. Additionally, Christian missions reflects Christ better and is most effective when it is embraces cultural humility in its approach. One country that needs to be considered in greater detail is India, as it is a diverse country and research on Indian perspectives on psychology, let alone its integration with Christian mission, is sparse. This study sought to obtain Indian cultural perceptions and experiences of mental health as well as their perspectives and experiences regarding the integration of psychology and Christianity. A semi-structured interview was conducted with three Indian internationals. Mental health was often framed in the context of relationship, addressed with faith practices and values, and was evaluated based on cognitive ability and lack of positive emotions. The participants expressed cultural concerns with victim mentality, stigma, and shifts in moral values. Regarding the integration of mental health services and Christian missions, the participants emphasized the importance of respect, a Biblical worldview, and love—especially love reflecting God. Further research should investigate the cultural perceptions of each of these topics in depth, especially in relation to their application to Christian psychological missions.