



CONTEMPORARY SPIRITUALITY AS A TOOL FOR SELF REGULATION AMONG EMERGING ADULTS.

Psychology Capstone

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BACKGROUND & RESEARCH GAP

“Spiritual but not Religious (SBNR)”

“Self Regulation”

“Emerging Adults”

What’s missing:

- **Research is mostly quantitative**
- **Limited insight into everyday self-regulation**
- **Spirituality is often treated as a fixed variable**



RESEARCH QUESTION

“How do spiritual but not religious emerging adults use personal spiritual beliefs and practices to support emotional self-regulation?”





METHODS

- **Design:** Qualitative, reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) (Braun & Clarke, 2006)
- **Sample:** 10 emerging adults (18–29), SBNR
- **Sampling:** Purposeful (information-rich cases)
- **Data collection:** Semi-structured interviews (~60 min)
- **Key interview topics:**
 - Definition of spirituality
 - Role in coping
 - Personal experiences of difficulty





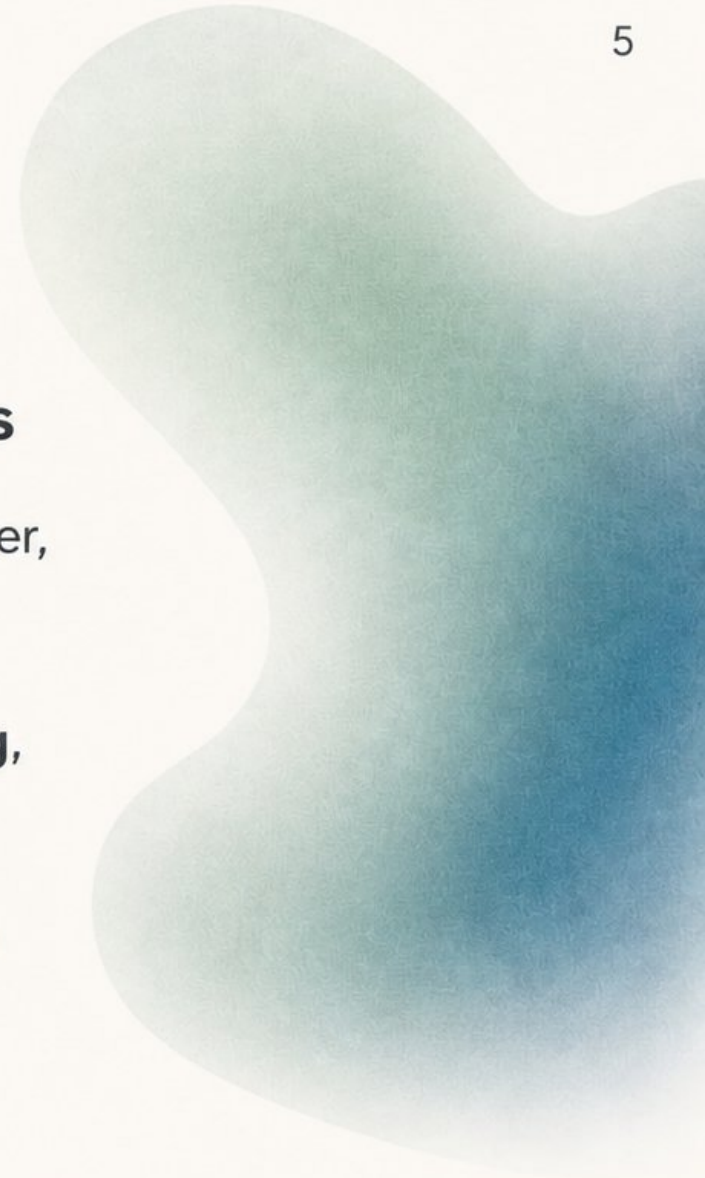
KEY FINDINGS (1 & 2)

1. Personal & Fluid Spirituality

- Highly **individualized**, evolving belief systems
- Mix of **traditions** (e.g., Buddhism, astrology, ancestral practices)
- Emphasis on **autonomy and personal meaning**

2. Rituals & Daily Practices

- Meditation, **breathwork**, prayer, yoga, offerings
- Provide **structure, grounding, and stability**
- Embodied, daily engagement with spirituality



KEY FINDINGS (3-5)

3. Coping & Emotional Regulation

- Practices used to manage:
 - Anxiety
 - Grief
 - Trauma
- Spirituality = **toolkit for emotional regulation**

4. Interconnectedness

- Connection to:
 - Nature
 - Energy
 - Ancestors
- Supports meaning-making and belonging

5. Critical Engagement

- Skepticism toward:
 - Organized religion
 - Commercialized spirituality
- Emphasis on **authenticity and personal truth**



THEMES OVERVIEW

Theme	Codes	Interpretation
Personal & fluid spirituality	Blended traditions; autonomy; self-defined belief	Individualized, flexible spiritual identities
Rituals & daily practices	Meditation; breathwork; prayer; rituals	Practices provide structure and grounding
Coping & emotional regulation	Managing anxiety/grief; rituals; tools (e.g., tarot)	Spirituality supports emotion regulation and coping
Interconnectedness	Nature; energy; ancestors; dreams	Sense of belonging to a larger system
Critical engagement	Questioning religion; scepticism; evidence balance	Reflexive, authenticity-driven spirituality



DISCUSSION

- Spirituality is **active and self-directed**, not fixed belief

Functions as:

- **Embodied emotion-regulation toolkit**
Physical practices give spirituality its practical power.
- **Meaning-making framework**
Helps make sense of difficulty, identity, and growth.





IMPLICATIONS & FUTURE RESEARCH

Implications

- **Clinical practice:**
Therapists could integrate clients' personal spiritual practices into coping strategies

Future Research

- **When does spirituality stop helping?**
Exploring links with rumination, avoidance, or magical thinking
- **Identity development over time:**
Longitudinal research on how SBNR spirituality evolves from emerging adulthood into later life stages

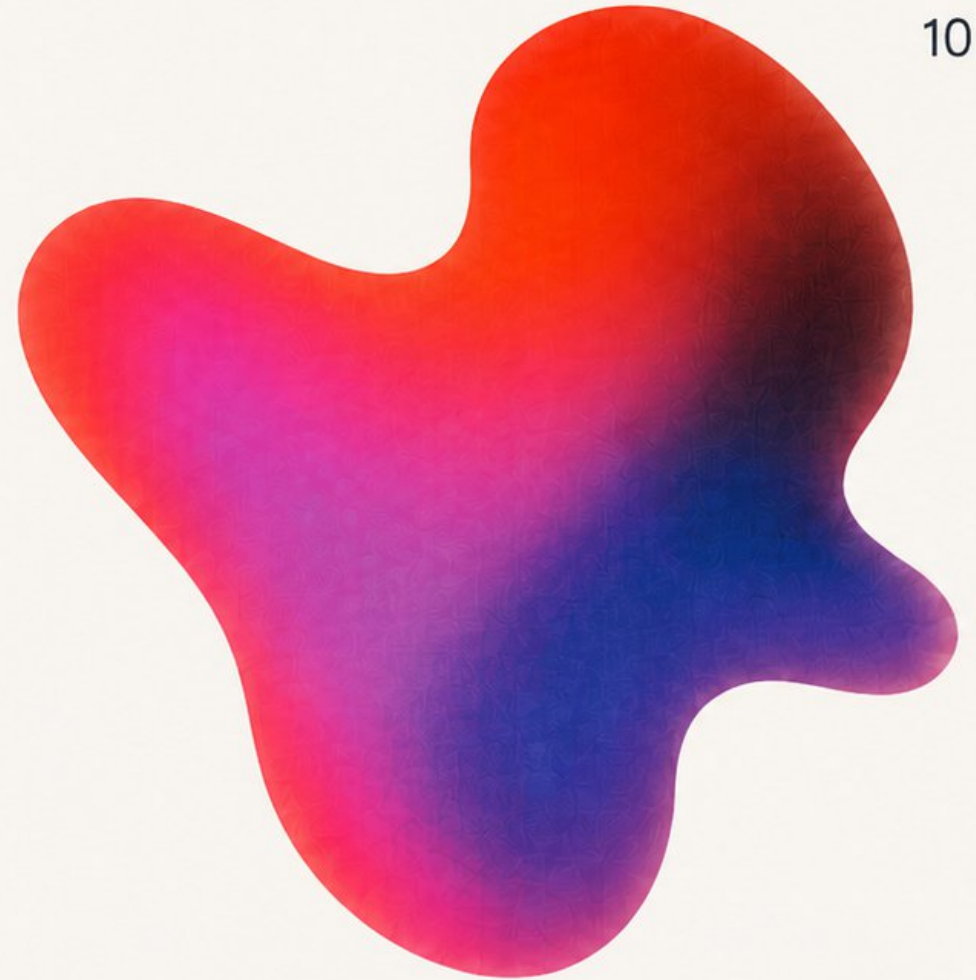


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THANK YOU.

