

## ABSTRACT

### IN HER WORDS: FIVE PUNJABI WOMEN DISCUSS EXPERIENCING DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS, COPING STRATEGIES, AND SEEKING HELP

A qualitative study was conducted with five Punjabi women from a community in Central California to explore their experiences with depressive symptoms, their coping strategies, and their views on seeking help. Data were gathered using an interview guide form that outlined depressive symptoms with follow-up questions to elicit in-depth information. The researcher found that the women experienced at least two of the depressive symptoms. Prayer, faith, and meditation were utilized by three of the women as coping strategies. All five women also discussed having a support system they could turn to for dealing with their symptoms. They gave insight into the reasons why women from the Punjabi community would not seek help for their symptoms, including stigmatization, roles as protectors of their culture in a new country, and lack of education about symptoms. The women suggested a strong support system to assist other women in coping with depressive symptoms. The researcher found the role of the Punjabi woman as an important factor in coping with depressive symptoms, in that these women viewed their roles as wives and mothers as necessary in coping with the stresses of living in a new country.

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