

Thesis

**Depression, Coping Mechanisms, Help-Seeking Behaviors, and the Perceptions  
of Purpose in Life of Older Adults**

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Emphasis: Adult Development and Aging

**Abstract**

Depression in older adults and their methods of coping were examined using a mixed methods approach. The data were from the Quality of Life Study (QLS), an ancillary study of the NIH-funded Cache County Study on Memory Health and Aging (CCSMHA). Forty-two individuals completed a qualitative interview, the Center for Epidemiological Studies -- Depression scale (CES-D), Revised Ways of Coping measure, and Diagnostic Interview Schedule (DIS).

The sample faced many life challenges and sought help from spouses first, then other family members, and then friends, clergy, and physicians. Blames Others and Wishful Thinking were significantly associated with depression and Religious Coping was significantly associated with no depression. The majority of participants who referenced reframing and religion as coping strategies in their interviews did not have depression as measured by the CESD and DIS. Belief in a purpose to life appeared to be important for no depression.