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## The Effectiveness of Adlerian Group Counseling on Marital Disturbance and Interpersonal Conflict of Couples

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of Adler's group counseling on marital disturbance and interpersonal conflicts in couples. This research was carried out as a semi-experimental design with pre-test, post-test and follow-up with the control group. Twenty four couples (n = 24) with interpersonal conflicts and marital disturbances referred to counseling centers of Sanandaj Welfare Organization were selected and randomly divided into two groups of experimental group (6 couples) and control group (6 couples). Treatment intervention with Adlerian group counseling method was conducted in 12 sessions on the experimental group. Instruments used to measure variables were Revised Marital Conflict questionnaire (R-MCQ), and Marital Satisfaction Inventory Revised (MSI-R). Data were analyzed using repeated measure ANOVA. The results showed that Adlerian group counseling in the post-test and follow-up stage reduced marital disturbance and interpersonal conflicts among in couples. On this basis, it can be argued that this treatment is effective for researchers and family counselors to solve communication problems of couples.

**Keywords:** Adlerian group counseling, marital disturbance, marital conflicts

### Extended Abstract

The human is a social being and wants to survive, which leads to his tendency to exchange and interact with other people, in particular the opposite sex, the tendency which causes the formation and continuation of emotional-sexual relationship between the two sexes (James 2015; Shafiabadi 2015). Since the formation of social life and the tendency of

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people to form societies up to the present day, people in a variety of forms and methods have interconnected and interacted, which is the most basic, and most commonly accepted of these forms is marriage (Margelisch, Schneewind, Violette, & Perrig-Chiello, 2015). Marital stability is influenced by various factors such as personality characteristics, attitude similarity, cultural similarity, ethnic-religious similarity, personality health and, most importantly, the ability to apply principles of Couple relationship and reasonable and constructive encounter with marital conflicts and Disturbances (George, Lou, Web Pugh, Martinez, & Foukston, 2015). Conflict is a kind of disagreement, incompatibility, and unrest in the form of couples' relationships, and ignoring It among couples' leads to increase and continuity of this problems in marital life (Sadati, Mehrabizadeh Honarmand, & Soodani, 2015). Marital disturbance is one of the factors leading to the gradual disappearance of marital relationships and the divorce of married couples, a kind of anomalies and disruption between couples and their rights and duties. Despite Overlapping and mutual relation between Marital disturbance marital conflicts, Marital disturbance is defined as interruption marital communication patterns and their communication structure, which is influenced by the accumulation of types of suppressed feelings from opposite sides (Kargar, kimiaee, & Mashhadi, 2014). Based on studies and clinical experiences, in various societies, especially in the Iranian society, marital conflicts and disturbances have led to increasing in divorce rate and rising ascendancy of this crisis and spread of communicative abnormalities (Fallahchai, Fallahi, & Ritchie, 2016; KeshavarzAfshar, Etemadi, Ahmadinavade, Saaipour, 2013). Institutions and systems responsible for family and marital affairs, with each other, have always tried to identify ways and means to reduce the risk of family system failure and to strengthen this extremely sensitive and important institution in Community, and have developed a variety of auxiliary methods, one of which is helping to improve couple relationships and reducing the contingency of divorce through group therapy approaches. Adler Group Advice have been designed by Adler and Dreikurs to improve and solve the problems of various clients, through the strengthening of social interest and increasing dare to act in them, which emphasizes the creation of a relationship with Equality and interpersonal respect in the form of different cognitive behavioral and emotional techniques in the path of facilitating the relations between the members of the group and group participation, to solve their problem (ShafiAbadi, 2014)

In general, the previous literature reveals the spread of conflicts and marital disturbances as one of the main causes of divorce and the dissolution of family marital relations, and also the effectiveness of Adlerian group counseling in improving intimacy and quality of couples relations, Therefore, the present study aimed to assess the effectiveness of Adlerian group counseling on improving marital disturbances and conflicts. In the present study, the following hypotheses were considered: 1. Adlerian group

counseling reduces marital disturbance of couples. 2. Adlerian group counseling reduces interpersonal conflicts between couples.

### **Method**

The research method is a semi-experimental, design pre-test-posttest-follow-up with control group. The population of this study included all couples with conflict and marital disturbance referring to Sanandaj Welfare Organization's counseling and health centers in 1395. In order to select a sample, a recall involving group counseling for couples with marital disturbance and paired conflicts, 24 couples (42 people) were selected by voluntary sampling method, and then 12 couples (24 persons) were randomly selected and placed in two experimental (6 couples) and control group (6 couples) based on the criteria of entering and Exit of the research by using preliminary interviews.

### **Instruments**

**Revised Marital Conflict Questionnaire (R-MCQ).** This questionnaire is a 54-item tool for measuring marital conflicts made by Sanaii, Barati, and BoostaniPour (2008). The dimensions of the questionnaire consist of eight subscales; reduction in the level of cooperation, reduction of sex, increase in emotional reactions, seeking support from children, increasing personal relationship with relatives, reducing family relationships with spouses' relatives and friends, separating finances from one another, and reducing effective interaction (Sadati, MehrabiHonarmand, & Soudani, 2015). Cronbach's alpha for the whole questionnaire was studied in Sanaii et al., (2008) on a 270-person group of 0.96.

**Marital Satisfaction Inventory Revised (MSI-R).** This inventory made by Snaydr (1997) is a self-report tool that has 150 questions that are used to identify the nature and degree of confusion in marital relationships (Minz, Snaydr, & Ngi, 2003). It has two subscales of the inconsistency reliability and stability of the subject in response (INC) and contractual (CNV); a general disturbance subscale (GDS); and ten subscale disturbance measurements in different Marital relationship dimensions include: (emotional relationship, problem-solving communication, aggression, time of togetherness, financial issues, sexual issues, history of family problems, satisfaction of children, conflict in parenting and role orientation. Snaydr (1997) described two types of validity, including internal stability and retest, for the marital disturbance questionnaire, that results of the internal stability validity of Cronbach's alpha indicate high credibility (mean, 0.82) for this test, and the range of alpha results for different scales is from 0.93 to 0.70.

### **Data analysis**

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (analysis by repeated measurement) by SPSS software version 23.

**Findings**

Based on the results of, the mean and standard deviation scores of marital disturbance and marital conflicts of participants in post-test and follow-up were reduced compare to pre-test.

The range of intra-group affects of the total score of marital disturbance was significant at the level of  $P < 0.001$  and the effect rate was 0.733. Therefore, the first hypothesis regarding the effectiveness of Adlerian group counseling on marital disturbance is confirmed ( $F = 60.44$ ,  $M = 499/01$ )

Based on the results of Table 3, the range of inter-group effects of the total marital disturbance score was significant at the level of 0.05 ( $P = 0.04$ ), so there was a significant difference between the scores of the subjects at the pre test, the post-test and the follow up in the experimental group ( $F = 4.35$ ).

There is a significant difference at the level of 0.05 between the total score of marital disturbance in the pre-test with post-test and follow-up. This means that marital disturbance in post-test and follow-up is lower than pre-test, but there is no significant difference between post-test and follow-up scores.

The range of intra-group effects of the total score of marital conflict at the level of 0.05 was significant ( $P < 0.01$ ) and the effect was 0.943. Therefore, the second hypothesis regarding the effectiveness of Adlerian group counseling on the marital conflict is confirmed ( $F = 363/89$ ,  $M = 11230/18$ ).

The range of inter-group effects of the total score of marital conflict was significant at the level  $P < 0.04$ , Therefore, there was a significant difference between the scores of the subjects, the post-test and the follow up in the experimental group ( $F = 642$ ).

There is a significant difference at the level of 0.05 between the total score of marital conflict at the pre-test with post-test and follow-up. This means that marital conflict in the post-test and follow-up is lower than the pre-test, but there is no significant difference between post-test and follow-up scores.

**Discussion**

The present study was conducted to investigate the effectiveness of Adlerian group counseling on marital disturbance and marital conflict. In examining the first hypothesis, the results of ANOVA test indicated that Adlerian group counseling had a significant effect on reducing marital disturbance.

In explaining this finding, it can be said that the person in the course of his life and in the early years of his life, lays the main basis and content of his lifestyle as the guiding element of the personal and the marital life. (Coery, 2013). The individual lifestyle is a combination of the true self, ideal self, moral beliefs, and individual's mental paradigms regard to environment and his own existential obligations, and so any intrusion of the wrong attitudes and misunderstandings into it, leads to failure in individual and marital tasks and emergence of intrapersonal and interpersonal disturbances (Amani et al., 2013; Ansbacher, 1979). Adlerian treatment emphasizing the accurate identification of Couples life-style, focusing on identifying and eliminating the fundamental mistakes disrupting interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships, tend to encourage them to foster social interest and empowerment in order to accomplish their interpersonal and

intrapersonal tasks, and thus, by reconciling the lifestyle of the couples, they eliminate the couple's disturbances and unpleasant feelings, and reduce the tendency of couples to dissolve the family system and break in marriage (Wats, 2003).

In analyzing the second hypothesis, the results of ANOVA test indicated that Adlerian group counseling had a significant effect on reducing marital conflict.

The conflicts and differences between couples on the one hand are due to irrational or exacerbations of marital conflicts thoughts that the Adlerian therapists call them "major mistakes" and, on the other hand, affected by interruptions in perform of Couples interpersonal tasks and their neglect regard to spouse's rights (Richard, 1989). When couples' lifestyle is not aligned and be with irrational and maladaptive errors, the context of conflict and its aggravation, and ultimately the marital conflicts of the married couple prepared, hence Adlerian therapists, after creating an environment full of deep acceptance and empathy in individual and group therapy sessions and by investigating dynamics of Individual life (personal lifestyle, basic tasks, basic mistakes and initial memories) provide a sufficient basis for reconciling the individual's lifestyle with couples, breaking down maladaptive mistakes, and rebuilding the original memories that are consistent with the current life process, By focusing on developing a sense of social interest, reducing maladaptive feelings, especially humiliation, and committing couples to fulfilling basic tasks of life, thus guaranteeing the stability of marriage and its continuity to some extent (carelsan & Dinkmayer, 2007; Bigdeli et al., 2012).

Limiting sample selection to couples referring to counseling centers of the Sanandaj welfare Office has limited external validity and generalization of the results of the research to the accessible and desired community. It is suggested that in future studies, the sample size be increased and by collecting More data results can be made more countable. In recent years, due to the increasing divorce rates in the country, the establishment of group counseling workshops in various cultural centers, community centers, counseling centers and even family support courts, with emphasis on the effective communication between couples and families together with the aim of improving the quality of relationships and avoiding conflicts and disturbance, it can help the stability of the family institution.

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