

The Effectiveness of Skills Training based on Dialectical Behavior Therapy on Fear of Negative Evaluation and Communication Skills among Adolescents with Social Anxiety Disorder

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Abstract

Background and Objective: One of the significant problems that has a deterrent effect on individuals' efficiency and dynamism and prevents the flourishing of their talents and intellectual and emotional powers is social anxiety and the inability of social communication. This study aimed to determine the effectiveness of skills training based on dialectical behavior therapy on the fear of negative evaluation and communication skills among adolescents with social anxiety disorder.

Materials and Methods: This study was of quasi-experimental design with pre-test, post-test, and a control group. Statistical population consisted of adolescents aged 12 to 18 years with a social anxiety disorder referred to counseling centers in District 6 of Tehran during 2019 years. Sixty subjects who met the study's criteria were selected by the convenience sampling method and were randomly divided into two groups of 30 experimental and control. The experimental group received dialectical behavior therapy-based skills training in twelve 120-minute sessions. The Fear of Negative Assessment Scale and the Communication Skills Scale were administered for both groups before and after the intervention. Data were analyzed using SPSS software version 22 through a covariance analysis.

Results: The mean (SD) fear of negative evaluation of the experimental group in the pre-test was 19.8 (5.2), which decreased to 16.9 (3.9) in the post-test ($P < 0.001$). However, the mean (SD) score of the control group in the pre-test was 20.7 (4.9), which reached 20.1 (4.7) in the post-test and was not statistically significant. The mean (SD) score of the communication skills of the experimental group in the pre-test was 88.1 (20.3), which increased to 115.1 (20.3) in the post-test ($P < 0.001$). However, the mean (SD) score of the control group in the pre-test was 93.1 (19.5), which reached 88.2 (20.5) in the post-test, but the difference was not statistically significant.

Conclusion: The study showed that dialectical behavior therapy-based skills training effectively reduced the fear of negative evaluation and increases adolescents' communication skills with a social anxiety disorder.

Keywords: Dialectical Behavior Therapy; Fear of Negative Evaluation; Communication Skills; Social Anxiety Disorder.

Introduction

Social anxiety is a common debilitating disorder with a significant impact on patients' quality of life (1). Various models have been developed to identify the effective factors in the occurrence and persistence of this disorder. Dialectical behavior therapy is a

practical treatment approach for people with severe emotion regulation problems (2). Despite considerable research on the effectiveness of dialectical behavior therapy, there is a relative lack of practical, principled information to assist therapists in case formulation and treatment from a dialectical

behavior therapy perspective (3). There is a positive relationship between the effects of social value and social isolation (4). There is evidence that group dialectical behavior therapy is effective on adolescent aggression (5). This study aimed to determine the effectiveness of skills training based on dialectical behavior therapy on the fear of negative evaluation and communication skills among adolescents with social anxiety disorder.

Materials and methods

This study was of quasi-experimental design with pre-test, post-test, and a control group. The statistical population consisted of adolescents aged 12 to 18 years with a social anxiety disorder referred to counseling centers in District 6 of Tehran in 2019. Sixty subjects who met the study's criteria were selected by the convenience sampling method and randomly divided into groups of 30 experimental and control. The experimental group received dialectical behavior therapy-based skills training in twelve 120-minute sessions. The Fear of Negative Assessment Scale (6), Communication Skills Scale (7), and the Social Phobia Inventory (8) were administered for both groups before and after the intervention. Data were analyzed using SPSS software version 22 through a covariance analysis.

Results

The mean (SD) fear of negative evaluation of the experimental group in the pre-test was 19.8 (5.2), which decreased to 16.9 (3.9) in the post-test ($P < 0.001$). However, the mean (SD) score of the control group in the pre-test was 20.7 (4.9), which reached 20.1 (4.7) in the post-test and was not statistically significant. The mean (SD) score of the communication skills of the experimental group in the pre-test was 88.1 (20.3), which increased to 115.1 (20.3) in the post-test ($P < 0.001$). However, the mean (SD) score of the control group in the pre-test was 93.1 (19.5), which reached 88.2 (20.5) in the post-

test, but the difference was not statistically significant.

Discussion

The study showed that dialectical behavior therapy was influential on the fear of negative evaluation and communication skills among adolescents with social anxiety disorder. Dialectical behavior therapy reduced the fear of negative evaluation, which was in line with another study (9). During dialectical behavior therapy, people with social anxiety disorder observe their mood and its physiological, mental, behavioral, and emotional consequences through behavioral and self-observation exercises (2). Skills training based on dialectical behavior therapy increased adolescents' communication skills with social anxiety disorder, which was consistent with another study (8). Observing anxiety-related thoughts without judgment may lead to the understanding that these are "thoughts only" and do not represent reality or truth, and should not necessarily lead to escape or avoidance behavior (3).

Conclusion

The study showed that dialectical behavior therapy-based skills training effectively reduced the fear of negative evaluation and increased adolescents' communication skills with a social anxiety disorder.

Acknowledgment

Authors would like to thank all participants of the study.

Conflict of Interest

None of the authors has any conflict of interest to disclose.

Ethical publication statement

We confirm that we have read the Journal's position on issues involved in ethical publication and affirm that this report is consistent with those guidelines.

Ethical code: IR.IAU.SARI.REC.1399.061.

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