





Comparing the Effectiveness of Emotion-Focused Therapy with Positive Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy on Self-understanding and Wife's Understanding View among Married Women Referred to Counseling Centers: A Pilot Study

Masoumeh Emami¹, Mohammad-Ali Rahmani^{2*}, Shohreh Ghorban-Shiroudi³, Morteza Tarkhan⁴

1. PhD Student of Counseling, Department of Psychology and counseling, Tonekabon Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tonekabon, Iran.
2. Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Tonekabon Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tonekabon, Iran.
3. Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Tonekabon Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tonekabon, Iran.
4. Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Payame Noor University, Tehran, Iran.

***Corresponding Author:** Mohammad-Ali Rahmani, Department of Psychology, Tonekabon Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tonekabon, Iran.

Email: m_rahmani@toniau.ac.ir

Received: 8 June 2021

Accepted: 10 July 2021

Published: 24 April 2022

How to cite this article:

Emami M, Rahmani M.A, Ghorban-Shiroudi Sh, Tarkhan M. The Relationship between Comparing the Effectiveness of Emotion-Focused Therapy with Positive Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy on Self-understanding and Wife's Understanding View among Married Women Referred to Counseling Centers: A Pilot Study. *Salāmat-i ijtimāi (Community Health)*. 2022; 9(2): 49-62. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.22037/ch.v9i2.31443>.

Abstract

Background and Objective: A perceptual perspective is one of the factors related to the normal functioning of family members, especially couples. The aim of this study was to compare the effectiveness of emotion-oriented and positive cognitive-behavioral therapies on self-perception and spouse-perception among married women referring to counseling centers in Tehran.

Materials and Methods: This experimental study was of a pre-test-post-test design with a control and follow-up group. Participants included 45 married women who had been referred to the counseling centers of the Cultural-Artistic Organization of Tehran Municipality in 2017-2018 in order to solve their marital problems, who were selected by random sampling method and randomly divided into three groups, including two experimental groups and one control group. Data were collected via the self-perception scale and spouse-scale perception scale. The experimental groups underwent nine sessions of emotion-focused therapy, and eight sessions of positive cognitive-behavioral therapy, while no intervention was done for the control group. The pre-test was performed before the sessions began. At the end of the sessions, the post-test was performed, and after three months after the post-test period, a follow-up was performed. Data analysis was performed using analysis of variance and analysis of covariance using SPSS software version 25.

Results: In the emotion-oriented treatment group, the mean (SD) score of comprehension perspective increased from 14.2 (1.4) in the pre-test to 22.1 (1.1) in the post-test, and 24.1 (1.2) in the follow-up period, $P < 0.001$. In the positive cognitive-behavioral therapy group, the mean (SD) score of comprehension perspective increased from 15.2 (0.1) in the pre-test to 25.5 (0.2) in the post-test, and 27.4 (1.9) in the follow-up, $P < 0.001$. In the emotion-focused treatment group, the mean (SD) of the spouse's comprehension perspective increased from 13.9 (1.1) in the pre-test to 21.8 (0.1) in the post-test, and 24.1 (1.2) in the follow-up, $P < 0.001$. In the positive cognitive-behavioral therapy group, the mean (SD) score of the spouse's comprehension perspective increased from 14.4 (0.7) in the pre-test to 25.2 (2.1) in the post-test, and 27.4 (1.1) in the follow-up, $P < 0.001$. In the control group, the scores of both variables in the pre-test, post-test and follow-up were not different. Positive cognitive-behavioral therapy was more effective than emotion-focused therapy in improving self-understanding (cognition and strategy) and spouse's understanding of vision (cognition and strategy) in post-test and this effectiveness lasted until follow-up.

Conclusion: Emotion-oriented therapy and positive cognitive-behavioral therapy led to increased empathy and understanding among married women. Positive cognitive-behavioral therapy was more effective than emotion-focused therapy in improving self-understanding, and spouse's understanding of vision in post-test and this effectiveness lasted until follow-up.

Keywords: Emotion-focused therapy, Positive cognitive-behavioral therapy, Understanding's view.

Introduction

Perceptual perspective is one of the factors related to the normal functioning of family

members (1). The concept of perceptual perspective refers to an active cognitive process in which individuals overcome their

usual self-centered perspective and imagine the world as it appears to others (2). It consists of two parts: self-understanding perspective and spouse understanding perspective, first proposed by Lang. From a cognitive point of view, the individual provides a report that reveals the extent to which his or her perceptions fit into his or her partner's perspective in the context of cognitive orientation (1). Emotional therapy seems to be one of the effective interventions on their cognitive perspective in which the therapist tries to establish empathetic responses between the couple by creating security in their relationship with the couple (3). This therapeutic approach has been practical on the quality of marital relationships and increasing marital satisfaction (4). Another treatment is positive cognitive-behavioral therapy, which combines the principles of cognitive-behavioral therapy with positive psychology and solution-oriented therapy (5). Positive cognitive-behavioral therapy teaches patients to be more optimistic (6). Studies have shown that cognitive-behavioral group therapy has improved patients' positive emotional empathy (7). The aim of this study was to compare the effectiveness of emotion-oriented and positive cognitive-behavioral therapies on self-perception and spouse-perception among married women referring to counseling centers in Tehran.

Materials and methods

This experimental study was of a pre-test-post-test design with a control and follow-up group. Participants included 45 married women referred to the counseling centers of the Cultural-Artistic Organization of Tehran Municipality in 2017-2018 to solve their marital problems, who were selected by random sampling method and randomly divided into three groups, including two experimental groups and one control group. Data were collected via the self-perception scale (8) and spouse-scale perception scale (9). The experimental groups underwent nine sessions of emotion-focused therapy, and eight sessions of positive cognitive-behavioral therapy, while no intervention was done for the control group. The pre-test was performed before the sessions began. At the end of the

sessions, the post-test was performed, and after three months after the post-test period, a follow-up was performed. Data analysis was performed using analysis of variance and analysis of covariance using SPSS software version 25.

Results

In the emotion-oriented treatment group, the mean (SD) score of comprehension perspective increased from 14.2 (1.4) in the pre-test to 22.1 (1.1) in the post-test, and 24.1 (1.2) in the follow-up period, $P < 0.001$. In the positive cognitive-behavioral therapy group, the mean (SD) score of comprehension perspective increased from 15.2 (0.1) in the pre-test to 25.5 (0.2) in the post-test, and 27.4 (1.9) in the follow-up, $P < 0.001$. In the emotion-focused treatment group, the mean (SD) of the spouse's comprehension perspective increased from 13.9 (1.1) in the pre-test to 21.8 (0.1) in the post-test, and 24.1 (1.2) in the follow-up, $P < 0.001$. In the positive cognitive-behavioral therapy group, the mean (SD) score of the spouse's comprehension perspective increased from 14.4 (0.7) in the pre-test to 25.2 (2.1) in the post-test, and 27.4 (1.1) in the follow-up, $P < 0.001$. In the control group, the scores of both variables in the pre-test, post-test and follow-up were not different. Positive cognitive-behavioral therapy was more effective than emotion-focused therapy in improving self-understanding (cognition and strategy) and spouse's understanding of vision (cognition and strategy) in post-test and this effectiveness lasted until follow-up.

Discussion

Emotion-based therapy was effective on the cognitive perspective of participants. In this regard, Stiegler et al. (10) showed that emotion-focused therapy is effective on empathy. Emotion-oriented therapy, by targeting the emotional aspect of empathy, has increased the understanding of the spouse, which in turn leads to a positive view of the partner, trying to meet his needs and enjoy the relationship. Positive cognitive-behavioral therapy was also effective on the cognitive perspective of couples, which was also consistent with a study by Morrison et al. (11). In the present study, positive cognitive-

behavioral therapy has emphasized the success of cognitive efforts to receive the views of the spouse, which in turn has led to an understanding of emotion and improved understanding of the views of the spouse in married women. Also, positive cognitive-behavioral therapy with emphasis on strengths, positive aspects and proper functioning has led to success in cognitive efforts to receive his and her husband's perspective. It has created an understanding of emotion and improved understanding in married women. In the present study, the effectiveness of positive cognitive-behavioral therapy was more effective than emotion-oriented therapy because, in this intervention, the principles of cognitive-behavioral therapy are combined with solution-oriented therapy and positive psychology, making it a richer therapy.

Conclusion

Emotion-oriented therapy and positive cognitive-behavioral therapy led to increased

empathy and understanding among married women. Positive cognitive-behavioral therapy was more effective than emotion-focused therapy in improving self-understanding and spouse's understanding of vision in post-test and this effectiveness lasted until follow-up.

Acknowledgment

The 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.TON.REC.1399.024.

REFERENCES

1. Bannink FP. Positive CBT: From reducing distress to building success. *Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy*. 2014;44(1):1-8.
2. Taylor LK, O'Driscoll D, Dautel JB, McKeown S. Empathy to action: Child and adolescent out-group attitudes and prosocial behaviors in a setting of intergroup conflict. *Social Development*. 2020;29(2):461-77.
3. Dalgleish TL, Johnson SM, Burgess Moser M, Lafontaine MF, Wiebe SA, Tasca GA. Predicting change in marital satisfaction throughout emotionally focused couple therapy. *Journal of marital and family therapy*. 2015;41(3):276-91.
4. Gehlbach H, Brinkworth ME, Wang MT. The social perspective taking process: What motivates individuals to take another's perspective?. *Teachers College Record*. 2012.
5. Johnson SM, Simakhodskaya Z, Moran M. Addressing issues of sexuality in couples therapy: emotionally focused therapy meets sex therapy. *Current Sexual Health Reports*. 2018;10(2):65-71.
6. Rathgeber M, Bürkner PC, Schiller EM, Holling H. The efficacy of emotionally focused couples therapy and behavioral couples therapy: A meta-analysis. *Journal of marital and family therapy*. 2019;45(3):447-63.
7. Li X, Bian C, Chen Y, Huang J, Ma Y, Tang L, Yan Q, Ye X, Tang J, Yu Y. Indirect aggression and parental attachment in early adolescence: Examining the role of perspective taking and empathetic concern. *Personality and Individual Differences*. 2015;86:499-503.
8. Khojasteh Mehr, R., roshanravan, N., Abbaspour, Z. Self Dyadic Perspective Taking (SDPT) and Other Dyadic Perspective Taking (ODPT) as predictors of marital satisfaction. *Biannual Journal of Applied Counseling*, 2018; 7(2): 33-44.
9. Long, E. C., & Andrews, D. W. Perspective taking as a predictor of marital adjustment. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 1990; 59(1), 126.
10. Stiegler JR, Molde H, Schanche E. Does an emotion-focused two-chair dialogue add to the therapeutic effect of the empathic attunement to affect?. *Clinical psychology & psychotherapy*. 2018;25(1):86-95.
11. Morrison AS, Mateen MA, Brozovich FA, Zaki J, Goldin PR, Heimberg RG, Gross JJ. Changes in empathy mediate the effects of cognitive-behavioral group therapy but not mindfulness-based stress reduction for social anxiety disorder. *Behavior therapy*. 2019;50(6):1098-111.