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Effectiveness of group training of Beck's cognitive therapy in increasing assertiveness of female heads of household

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to study effectiveness of group training of Beck's model-based cognitive therapy on assertiveness of female heads of household in city of Tehran. The research hypothesis was: group training of Beck's model-based cognitive therapy has an effect on assertiveness of female heads of household. To test this hypothesis, a sample including 30 female heads of household who were members of municipality districts 15 and 16 was selected by randomized method, who were assigned to two experimental (15 persons) and control (15 persons) groups. In this research, Gambrill and Richey's assertiveness questionnaire was used. Experimental group underwent 10 sessions of training workshop (one session per week), while control group did not receive training during this period. In the beginning of the training course, the said questionnaire was administered to sample for pre-test, and after completion of training workshop, pre-test was applied. The present study had a quasi-experimental design. In inferential level, given the assumptions of covariance and for the purpose of avoiding biased data, analysis of covariance was used. Based on the results of analysis of covariance and significance coefficient of lower than 0.05, the research's hypothesis was confirmed, and it can be concluded that group training of Beck's model-based cognitive therapy has an effect on increase in assertiveness among female heads of household.

Keywords: group training, Beck's model, assertiveness, female heads of household.

INTRODUCTION

Human beings are social creatures, and inherently need to have relationships with their fellow humans. Such need is so essential that any disorder in satisfaction of it will lead to physical and mental stress, resulting in mental and physical collapse. People with disordered relation experience more disease, stress and suicide, compared with people with good relations (Carducci, 2005). Having relations with others is one of the life's pleasures. However, it is not pleasurable for some people, but it even annoys them like a nightmare, because they are afraid about what other people may think about them, how other people think they are, and if other people like them. When they are among other people, such people stay in a corner, avoid eye contact with other, and are sure that all other people are staring at them, or talking about them. They don't talk lest they may say something wrong, and they feel that other people are not interested in their opinions (Grade, 2000). Shy people are principally highly self-conscious, which cause them to concentrate on themselves and their behaviors in presence of others, and so, they fail to pay attention to

other people. They attribute their failures to internal and fixed causes, and their successes to internal and uncontrollable causes. Such people, who are called shy or affected with social anxiety disorder depending on degree and intensity of such features in them, are slow in establishing intimacy, and need more time to adapt with new stressor situations or even such situations as presence at conferences and daily conversations. Recent conceptualization of social anxiety in adult literature is based on the assumption that socially anxious people are anxious because they believe that they have social skills deficit. As a result, recent cognitive-behavioral approach focuses on changing clients' beliefs about their social competence rather than on improvement of social competence. The most important approach which believes individual cognitions and beliefs, attitudes and beliefs play essential roles in formation of mental problems is cognitive therapy. Cognitive therapy is a system of psychotherapy which emphasizes on importance of beliefs and thoughts system and determination of behaviors and feelings. According to this view, the cause of mental problems is a combination of physical, environmental and social factors, which act in interaction manner, and rarely there is only one cause for emergence of a disorder.

On this basis, given women's community is affected with many social damages and problems, which are in turn caused by deficient social skills, including assertiveness, and also, given existence of social and cultural grounds for gender roles, which in turn cause shyness, low self-confidence in women, especially women in eastern societies, such skill may be raised by increasing cognitive awareness.

In this research, the research seeks to answer this question: Does Beck's cognitive model-based group training have an effect on increasing assertiveness among female heads of household?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In terms of methodology, the present research was a quasi-experimental one, which used pretest/posttest design. Sampling was conducted using voluntary sampling method. Researcher had some control over whom to be included in the research, and what, and under what circumstances, happens to them. Experimental stimulus in this research was to provide Beck's cognitive therapy group training, which was directly manipulated by the researcher, to evaluate its effect on assertiveness of female heads of household. This design consisted of two experimental and control group. For testing the research hypothesis, a number of female heads of household were selected using voluntary sampling method and were assigned to two experimental and control group by randomized method. The two groups so formed were similar, and measurement of dependant variable was conducted for both of them at the same time and under the same circumstances. Because the numbers of subjects in both groups were equal and such similar attributes as gender, marital status, being head of family and events coinciding with performance of research had no effect on both groups, and therefore, could not have any effect on the results of the research. Due to randomized substitution of subject in two groups, variable of returns resulting from applied statistical tool had no effect on the findings of the research. Because measurement tool was applied to both groups under equal circumstances, it had no effect on the result of the study. All subjects continued to contribute to the research throughout the research, loss of subjects had no effect on internal validity of research. After applying independent variable to experimental group, both groups underwent posttest at the same time and under the same circumstances. Instrument used in this research was Gambrell-Richey's questionnaire (1975), which was translated by Bahrami (1996). This questionnaire had 40 items, each of which measures a situation involving assertive behavior.

Summary proceedings of therapeutic sessions:

First session covered acquaintance of group members with each other and description of rationale of the work by the counselor.

Second session covered study of some cognitive distortions and group experience, objectification of thoughts and establishing relation between thoughts and feelings.

Third session covered some other cognitive distortions and training some assertiveness skills.

Fourth session covered explanation of two distortions and application of two other techniques to increase assertiveness.

Fifth session covered use of two cognitive techniques and also use of a form to increase self-awareness.

Sixth session covered training non-verbal skills to raise communication skills and also use of a form on the subject.

Seventh session covered group training of other communication skills and also presentation of book.

Eighth session covered conversation about distinguishing between passive, aggressive and assertive behaviors and group experience thereof.

Ninth session covered negotiation skill and emotional expression skills, and rejection toleration skills in some assertiveness situations.

Tenth session covered revision of negative thoughts, objective comparison of negative thoughts tables, probable changes, and conclusion, and obtaining feedback from group members.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research hypothesis: group training of Beck's model-based cognitive therapy has an effect on assertiveness of female heads of household. In this section, significance of hypothesis is tested using analysis of covariance.

Table 1 Kolmogorov–Smirnov test for comparing normal distribution of post-test with normal distribution

Significance level	Kolmogorov–Smirnov	Number	
0.26	0.71	30	Pretest score

As the results of K-S test shows, since significance level of Kolmogorov–Smirnov is higher than criterion significance criterion (0.05), it can be concluded with 95% confidence that distribution of pretest scores is the same as normal distribution.

Table 2 Inferential statistics of scores in experimental and control groups

Number	Standard deviation	Mean	Group
15	5/12	89/14	Test
15	4/13	90/11	Control

Table 3 Levene's test for equality of variances presumptions

Significance level	F
0/39	1/02

Because significance level of Levene's test (0.39) is greater than significance criterion (0.05), therefore, equality of variances presumption is satisfied, and parametric test can be used.

Table 4 Results of analysis of covariance

Significance level	F	Mean squares	Degree of freedom	Sum of squares	Source
0/007	89/11	2013/87	1	2013/87	Pre-test
0/006	19/31	705/941	1	705/941	Group membership

According to the above table, significance level, which is lower than 0.05, shows that null hypothesis is rejected, and research hypothesis is confirmed. That is, there is significance difference between experimental and control groups in terms of post-test scores. And it can be concluded that group training of Beck's cognitive therapy resulted in increased assertiveness in experimental group.

Peirovi studied the effect of training on increasing assertiveness using role-playing method, the results of which suggest positive effect of this method. Jowhari studied the effect of life skills training on assertiveness ability of adolescents using Bandura's social learning method, which concluded this relation was significant. Cofrin studied the relationship between parental emotion coaching and emotion dismissing (ED) which included anger management, assertiveness, and conflict resolution. After data collection through questionnaire, which was made by the researcher based on Gottman's theory, it was found out that there was high correlation between these two variables even if intervening variables were controlled. Healy studies effectiveness of school training-based life skills interventions in increasing assertive behavior and rate of asking help from adults. He also addressed cultural differences between white American students and Mexican students. His results suggested that increase in assertive behaviors and asking help from adults was more significant among white American students, compared with Mexican students. Magusa and Kang studied effectiveness of conflict resolution approach in increasing assertiveness of couples given factor of cultural differences between Indian-British couples and African couples. The results of this research confirmed effectiveness of this approach.

Bolandi, studied the relation between illogical believes and test anxiety and effect of Beck's cognitive therapy on reduction of test anxiety, the results of which confirmed significant effect of cognitive therapy.

CONCLUSION

Study of the results from post-test revealed that mean assertiveness score of female heads of household in experimental group was significantly higher, compared with control group. However, no such difference was observed in pretest. It is inferred from results that significant difference observed in assertiveness of two groups in post-test resulted from group sessions. Thus, such training increased assertiveness of these women. Thus, research hypothesis that group training of cognitive therapy has an effect on increasing assertiveness was confirmed, and the result of this research is consistent with results of the following researches.

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