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The effectiveness of transactional analysis group therapy on relationship belief and couples burnout in married male students

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Abstract

Introduction: The studies showed that one of the factors which diminishes love gradually between couples - sometimes completely obliterates, and provides causes of mental and psychological problems, cold and indifferent relationships resulting ultimately in ending relationships-is couple burnout. Couple burnout is associated closely with people's relationship beliefs that reveal the need for early interventions. This study aimed to examine the effectiveness of transactional analysis group therapy on relationship belief and couples burnout in married male students.

Materials and Methods: This study was a clinical trial with pretest-posttest design. For this purpose, using available sampling method, 24 students who referred to university counseling office from October to June 2015 – 2016 were selected voluntarily among married male students of humanities in Islamic Azad university, Quchan branch. They were then assigned to an experimental and a control group. Epstein and Eidelson's Relationship Belief Inventory (RBI), and couple burnout measure were taken from both groups as pre-test. The control group then participated in ten sessions of group therapy workshop based on transactional analysis. Two weeks after completing the sessions, they were evaluated again using the same questionnaires.

Results: The findings showed that transactional analysis group therapy was effective on subscales of beliefs; disagreement is destructive ($P=0.04$), spouse's lack of adjustability ($P=0.04$), sexual perfectionism ($P=0.04$) and irrational relationship beliefs ($P=0.04$). No significant effect was seen on subscales of belief in gender differences ($P=0.48$) and mind reading expectation ($P=0.65$). Furthermore, transactional analysis group therapy on marital burnout ($P=0.02$) appeared to be effective.

Conclusion: The results revealed that transactional analysis group therapy was effective on relationship beliefs and couples burnout in married male students.

Keywords: Behavior, Couples burnout, Group therapy, Relationship beliefs

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Introduction

During recent decades, a series of studies indicate an increase in mental, physical, and physical pressure in people's lives, a phenomenon called stress, and its final form is heartbreak in married life. According to the conducted

research, the cause of many incompatibilities and psychological abnormalities caused by value conflicts and lack of establishment of an organized value system in the individual has been mentioned. One of the necessary conditions for achieving mental health is having a coherent

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value system. It can be emphasized that values are the foundation of the integrity of a healthy personality. In fact, values are the main organizers of actions and behaviors of a developed personality, and mental health is undoubtedly a product of such a personality. Values are considered as the innermost layers of the personality system and cultural system of every society, and at the individual level, they are a factor for knowing the ultimate realities and desirable human perfection, which influence many actions, and choices. , the judgments and behaviors of people are affected, and they are also affected by the social, economic, political and cultural conditions of the society. Based on this, it can be useful to know the value system that prevails on different members and strata of the society, in evaluating its cultural, ethical and normative situation and adopting optimal and appropriate policies to create value agreement and reduce abnormality and solve social problems. . Researches show that one of the factors that fades the love and passion between couples over time and sometimes completely disappears and causes mental and emotional problems, cold and indifferent relationships and ultimately ending a relationship, is marital heartbreak. The research of family experts shows that the prevalence of heartbreak has increased today. So that 50% of couples face heartbreak in their marriage. Among the factors related to heartbreak are irrational and unrealistic expectations or the communication beliefs that different people have in dealing with their spouses. The heartbreak of couples depends on their compatibility with their beliefs (1). In this regard, other research also shows that one of the most important problematic factors between husband and wife is communication disorder. Communication problems are the most common problem of couples, and more than 90% of disturbed couples state these problems as the main problem in their relationship (2).

Although there are different points of view in explaining the causes of communication problems, but in this field, the cognitive approach has a special place. As Alice believes that the turmoil in a couple's relationship is not directly related to the behavior of the other party or hard failures in life, but rather because of the belief and opinion that this couple has about such behaviors

and failures. Because it is this thinking and belief that widely leads to the couple's anger and disturbed communication or their patience. Thinking, feeling and behavior are completely interacting with each other, and each one is continuously influencing and being influenced by the other two processes. Irrational communication beliefs include: belief in the destructiveness of opposition means not accepting, discomfort and negative interpretation of behaviors and their repetition in the future. Believing in the immutability of the spouse means believing in the inability of the spouse to change their behavior and repeating them in the future, and expecting mind reading means expecting that one should know the feelings, thoughts and needs of one's spouse without having to say or comment. Sexual perfectionism means expecting one's wife to have complete sexual intercourse in all situations regardless of her status and believing about gender differences means not having a correct understanding of the cognitive and physiological differences between men and women, expecting them to be the same, or congenital differences. The reason for the differences is knowing. Heartbreak is a painful state of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion that affects those who expect dream love to give meaning to their lives. This condition occurs when they realize that despite their efforts, this love has not and will not give meaning to life (3). One of the theories that has effective applications in improving human relations is the theory of mutual behavior analysis. Reciprocal behavior analysis is one of the most concrete theories of modern psychology. This theory, proposed by Eric Burn, is widely used with parent, adult, and child constructs in clinical, therapeutic, organizational, developmental psychology, communication, management, personality, relationships, and behavior (4). Interactional behavior analysis is a theory about personality and is a systematic method for psychotherapy for personal growth and changes. This is the definition provided by the International Society for Interaction Analysis. The analysis of mutual behavior as a personality theory provides us with a picture of the psychological structure of humans. For this purpose, he uses a three-part model as a model of his emotional states. This personality model helps

us to understand how people act and behave and how they reveal their personality in the form of their behavior. People relate to one of the three modes of parent, adult, and child model. Of course, which of them to communicate with depends on their feelings at the given moment. In addition, at any moment, a factor can take people from one state to another. People's answers are issued by one of these three ego states. The essence of mutual behavior analysis is the analysis of these stimuli and responses (5).

The analysis of relationships is mainly used in relationships and marriages and social bonds. In these situations, relationship analysis can provide useful and convincing predictions and revisions. In the analysis of relationships, more attention is paid to the relationships of people with each other and it is believed that if people have healthy, positive and satisfying relationships with each other and replace them with destructive, negative and humiliating relationships, they will be able to reduce their own and others' mental pressure and Enjoy your life more. According to Siokar and Pirot, the analysis of mutual behavior is one of the most effective psychological theories that helps to solve the problems in human relations and the growing process of happiness in people (6).

Considering the increase in the divorce rate in Iran (7) and its relationship with marital heartbreak and relationship beliefs (1,8), the present study, as an investigation of the effect of group therapy based on mutual behavior analysis on the relationship beliefs and heartbreak of male students of Islamic Azad University, can be a therapeutic method. It is useful for reducing the divorce rate or improving the lifestyle of families.

Materials and Methods

The current research is of an applied type and is considered in the clinical research group (pre-test-post-test design with unequal control group) based on the comparison of distracting and irrelevant factors, the effect of the experimental variable (reciprocal behavior analysis training) on dependent variables (positive emotion) and negative) to be evaluated. The statistical population of the present study includes all married male students of humanities majors of the Islamic Azad University, Qochan branch in the academic year 2015-2016 and in the present study, the sample consisted of 24 students, who

went to the counseling office during August to October of the academic year 2015-2016. They had applied to the university and were selected by available and voluntary sampling method. Then, they were randomly assigned to two test and control groups.

Research instruments

A) Eidelson and Epstein Communication Beliefs Questionnaire: This questionnaire has 40 questions and its purpose is to evaluate the amount of irrational communication beliefs in the marital relationship from different dimensions of belief in the destructiveness of opposition, belief in the immutability of the spouse, expectation of mind reading, sexual perfectionism, belief in gender differences. Its Likert-type response range is from completely false 5 points to completely true 0 points. This questionnaire has five dimensions, which include beliefs about the destructiveness of opposition, expectation of mind reading, belief in the immutability of the spouse, sexual perfectionism, and beliefs about gender differences. Eidelson and Epstein found that the scores of this questionnaire were correlated with general beliefs measured by Jones' irrational beliefs test had a positive correlation. Also, in the research of Imelkamp and his colleagues, there was sufficient evidence for content and construct validity and there was a positive relationship between communication beliefs and marital discord along with a significant negative relationship between most of the close relationship subscales (Bank Communication Questionnaire, Nijskens). In their research, Eidelson-Epstein showed that the reliability of this test with Cronbach's alpha for subscales ranges from 72 to 81% and all 5 subscales have a significant relationship with marital compatibility. And the retest reliability was 76%. The Farsi version of this tool has been translated by Mazaheri and Pour Etemad. In the research used by Mazaheri, the calculated Cronbach's alpha was 0.75.

B) Questionnaire of Marital Burnout (CBM): This questionnaire has 20 questions and its purpose is to evaluate the dimensions of people's citizenship behavior (altruism, conscientiousness, chivalry, politeness and kindness, civic virtue). Marital burnout scale is a self-assessment tool designed to measure the

degree of marital heartbreak among couples. This scale is adapted from another self-measurement tool that is used to measure boredom. This scale was invented by Pines.

This questionnaire has 20 items, which include 3 main components of physical fatigue (for example, feeling tired, weak, and having sleep disorders), emotional exhaustion (feelings of depression, despair, being trapped) and psychological exhaustion (such as feelings of worthlessness, frustration, and anger to the wife) all these items are answered on a seven-point scale. Level 1 represents no experience of the desired phrase and level 7 represents a lot of experience. The evaluation of the reliability coefficient of the marital heartbreak scale showed that it has an internal similarity between the variables in the range of 0.84 and 0.90. The validity has been confirmed by negative correlations with positive communication characteristics, such as a positive opinion about communication, the quality of conversation, and a sense of security, self-fulfillment, sense of purpose, pull and emotional attraction towards the spouse and the quality of their sexual relationship. Translated versions of CBM have been successfully used in cross-cultural studies. CBM has a high and satisfactory internal consistency and reliability coefficient and is suitable for measuring the level of marital distress.

C) Description of the group sessions of mutual behavior analysis:

The first session: after introducing the members, group rules and regulations were presented by the group leader. The process of the meeting was the use of verbal and non-verbal messages, simple structural analysis of emotional state (adult, parent, child). Clients were asked to provide a brief description of their life situation and history, interpersonal relationships.

Second session: In this session, the therapist discussed the history of interactional behavior analysis and provided conditions for the members to prepare for homework. Also, each member read one of the communication of their conversations and the members were asked to comment on the mentioned communication. Next, the members were given homework (drawing an autogram). The third session: The assignments of the group members were

reviewed and the therapist gave a brief explanation about the last state book and the four mental states. The treatment process in this session was the existence of rules and the role of communication rules regarding self-respect, others, friends, how to express yourself. In this meeting, the task (Ramagogram based on complex structural analysis) was presented.

Fourth session: After reviewing the assignment of the previous session, in this session, the group members got to know the role of communication patterns in their personal and social lives. Caressing training, complementary and cross-reciprocal relationships were among the interventions of this meeting.

The fifth session: Reviewing the assignment of the previous session, the involuntary reproductions of childhood (I am a child) and the basic situations of life were fully explained. Each of the group members read two pages from the book of psychological games (Eric Byrne), then replays of my parenting situation were done in simple language with examples.

The sixth session: The members were asked to express the mental preoccupations they are facing. These preoccupations can be away from family, future job concerns, student life, communication issues with family and friends, marriage, exams, etc. The treatment process consisted of teaching me to reproduce my adult state. Then the members were asked to discuss and exchange opinions about their occupations and interactions with others. In this session, training on hidden relationships and double reciprocity, as well as homework along with some examples of hidden relationships, were presented. Seventh session: At the beginning of the session, the homework of the previous session was reviewed. The therapeutic intervention of this session was the teaching of the four existential states and the healing of the inner child. In this meeting, the group members tried to analyze the states (child-adult-parent) and use the communication between these states in their daily behavior. Presentation of homework (questions and answers with dominant and non-dominant hands). The 8th session: review of the assignment of the previous session and practical work (practice acting) and practicing communication skills. Also, the life stories of each of the members who wanted to express it were told.

Also, teaching concepts of time management and ways to activate adults was one of the interventions of this session. Presenting the assignment (determining time management and using the mature self in one's behavior).

Ninth session: At first, the task of the previous session was reviewed and the group members presented some of their current emotional states and behavior to each other in the form of role-playing. Inhibitors, motivators and decision-making were taught. 10th meeting: Reviewing the homework of the previous meeting, answering questions and reviewing the previous meetings. In this meeting, all treatment plans and objectives

were reviewed and the feedback received by the members regarding the progress of the treatment was analyzed. The therapeutic intervention of the last session consisted of taking the executive power of the adult self in hand, applying the learnings of mutual behavior analysis in group, family and community environments in order to achieve self-leadership.

Results

To describe the data related to the samples, the statistical indices of the data in the test and control groups are calculated, which is as follows:

Table 1. Descriptive indicators of pre-test in students

	Variable	Mean	Standard deviation	Min	Max
Experimental Group	Disagreement is destructive	18.2	4.3	12	25
	Mind-reading expectation	13.1	5.4	8	24
	spouse's lack of adjustability	14.2	3.1	11	20
	Sexual perfectionism	12.7	4.3	8	20
	Gender differences	14.8	5.9	8	26
	Irrational relationship beliefs	73.1	11.4	55	91
	couple burnout	2.6	1.1	0.9	4.8
Control Group	Disagreement is destructive	18	3.9	10	24
	Mind-reading expectation	13.4	4.5	7	20
	spouse's lack of adjustability	11.9	2.9	8	19
	Sexual perfectionism	12.9	2.8	9	20
	Gender differences	13.7	5.6	8	26
	Irrational relationship beliefs	70	11.9	49	91
	couple burnout	2.7	1	1.09	4.8

Table 2. Mean and standard deviation of students' post-test scores

	Variable	Mean	Standard deviation	Min	Max
Experimental Group	Disagreement is destructive	12.1	3.1	8	20
	Mind-reading expectation	12.5	4.6	8	22
	spouse's lack of adjustability	8.3	2.7	5	15
	Sexual perfectionism	8.9	4.9	3	19
	Gender differences	12.5	4	6	21
	Irrational relationship beliefs	54.3	10.8	38	76
	couple burnout	1.6	0.58	0.5	2.5
Control Group	Disagreement is destructive	17.5	3.7	10	24
	Mind-reading expectation	13	4.1	7	19
	spouse's lack of adjustability	11.5	2.5	8	15
	Sexual perfectionism	12.2	1.9	9	15
	Gender differences	13.1	4.4	8	22
	Irrational relationship beliefs	67.4	93	48	79
	Couple burnout	2.7	0.99	1.2	4.6

In the present study, answering the research hypothesis is done with two-way analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) and one-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). In order to perform this analysis, it is necessary to fulfill the assumption of homogeneity of regression. In this section, this assumption will also be discussed. Before performing the analysis of covariance, the assumption of homogeneity of regression was

examined and the results of these assumptions showed that the analysis of covariance test can be used.

In order to test the significance of the difference between the experimental and control groups in the dependent variables (communication beliefs, marital heartbreak), multivariate covariance analysis was used to control the effect of the pre-test.

Table 3. Multivariate covariance analysis regarding the effect of the group variable on communication beliefs and marital burnout

Name of test	Value	Degree of freedom of hypothesis	Degree of freedom of error	F	P
Pillai's trace test	0.91	7	10	14.2	0.000
Wilks' Lambda test	0.09	7	10	14.2	0.000
Hotelling trace test	9.9	7	10	14.2	0.000
Roy's largest root test	9.9	7	10	14.2	0.000

As can be seen in Table 3, the results of the multivariate covariance analysis indicate that the multivariate F value (14.2) is statistically significant at the $P < 0.005$ level. Therefore, it can be said that there is a significant difference between the test group and the control group in at

least one of the dependent variables (communication beliefs, marital heartbreak and patience) and the hypothesis is confirmed. To find out this difference, the univariate analysis of covariance test was used.

Table 4. Covariance analysis of communication beliefs post-test scores (its components)

Variable	Changes source	Sum of squares	Sum of squares	Mean of squares	F	P	Squared Eta
Disagreement is destructive	Pre-test	131.6	1	131.6	25.2	0.000	0.49
	Main effect	23.3	1	23.3	4.5	0.04	0.15
	Remaining error	135.9	20	6.8	-	-	-
Mind-reading expectation	Pre-test	496.6	1	496.6	821.9	0.000	0.97
	Main effect	0.13	1	0.13	0.22	0.65	0.008
	Remaining error	15.7	20	0.78	-	-	-
spouse's lack of adjustability	Pre-test	98.6	1	98.6	291.4	0.000	0.92
	Main effect	9.17	1	9.17	0.51	0.48	0.02
	Remaining error	85.6	20	4.3	-	-	-
Sexual perfectionism	Pre-test	163.4	1	163.4	28.9	0.000	0.53
	Main effect	22.9	1	22.9	4.1	0.04	0.13
	Remaining error	146.7	20	7.3	-	-	-
Gender differences	Pre-test	457.7	1	457.7	291.4	0.000	0.92
	Main effect	0.8	1	0.8	0.51	0.48	0.02
	Remaining error	2184.3	20	2.04	-	-	-
Irrational relationship beliefs	Pre-test	2184.3	1	2184.3	86.3	0.000	0.76
	Main effect	56.4	1	56.4	4.2	0.04	0.13
	Remaining error	658.2	20	32.9	-	-	-

Table 5. Covariance analysis of marital burnout post-test scores

Changes source	Sum of squares	Sum of squares	Mean of squares	F	P	Squared Eta
Pre-test	10.9	1	10.9	70.9	0.000	0.73
Main effect	0.93	1	0.93	6.1	0.02	0.19
Remaining error	3.9	20	0.19	-	-	-

Discussion

According to the test group and the control group, there is a significant difference in at least one of the dependent variables (communication beliefs, marital burnout, and patience). The results of this research are consistent with the findings of other researches (9-22).

In explaining these findings, it can be said that women who participated in psychotherapy based on the approach of mutual behavior analysis, by focusing on their interpersonal relationships, beliefs, and emotions, using emotion-oriented techniques, can resolve their marital conflicts and irrational thoughts.

Therefore, the belief in the destructiveness of opposition, the belief in the immutability of the spouse, sexual perfectionism, irrational communication beliefs in marital relationships have an effect on the entire relationship. Research shows that conflicted couples show the lowest level of satisfaction with marriage and the highest probability of divorce. In addition to psychological differences, conflict also affects physical health. People who have satisfying and supportive relationships are less likely to develop major illnesses compared to troubled couples. Therefore, it can be said that psychotherapy based on the approach of mutual behavior analysis has been effective on spouse's immutability, sexual perfectionism, irrational communication beliefs in marital relations and marital conflicts and has been able to reduce these changes as much as possible. However, this effectiveness was not significant for the two variables of gender differences and the expectation of mind reading.

Group therapy based on mutual behavior analysis has an effect on the depression of married female students, and these findings are consistent with the results of other researches (23-26). In explaining this hypothesis, it can be said that marital heartbreak occurs due to a set of non-idealistic expectations and ups and downs in life. Contrary to the opinion of most of the clinical approaches used in couple therapy,

heartbreak in couples is not due to the existence of problems in one or both people or a disturbance in their relationship (27).

According to Lingren, heartbreak means physical, emotional, and mental breakdown that results from the disproportion between reality and expectations. According to Lingren, marital heartbreak is a set of unrealistic expectations from the spouse and marriage together with the stresses, realities, and vicissitudes of life. From the point of view of existential-psychoanalytical authenticity, heartbreak is an experienced state of physical, emotional, and mental fatigue that results from the disproportion between expectations and realities (27).

According to Naalt, the symptoms of heartbreak are general lack of passion, dissatisfaction, emotional exhaustion, insensitivity and lack of interest. Depressed people may feel that they are less able to achieve their desired results despite a lot of effort. They may become angry earlier than usual and feel that they have lost their ability to have fun and sense of humor (24). Therefore, psychotherapy based on the approach of mutual behavior analysis with an emphasis on the general increase of passion, increasing marital satisfaction, reducing emotional exhaustion and insensitivity, increasing the interest of couples, reducing unrealistic expectations from the spouse and marriage, reducing stress, adapting to reality, reducing idealistic expectations, adjusting and vicissitudes of life, and creating a balance between expectations and realities on the one hand, and changing the communication style of the subjects and creating and strengthening the bold communication style, it gives marital heartbreak and has an effect on the communication style of the subjects, and by reducing and changing the aggressive communication style of the subjects, the communication style Strengthen the courage in them. Among the limitations of this research is the

lack of attention to different groups of subjects because this research was conducted on married male students and it is not possible to generalize the results to all members of the society, the lack of control of the intelligence variable is another limitation of this research, the hard cooperation of the subjects and they pointed out their low motivation to complete the questionnaires, the lack of control of other factors influencing the subjects such as heredity, developmental history

of individuals, economic and social class or the level of social support of individuals and other cases.

Conclusion

The results indicated that the group therapy based on mutual behavior analysis is effective on communication beliefs and burnout of married male students.

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