

Research paper

Comparison of Effectiveness of Self-Compassion Therapy and Emotionally Focused Therapy on Family Functions of Women Experienced Domestic Violence

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Abstract

The present study aimed to compare the effectiveness of self-compassion-focused therapy and emotionally focused couple therapy on family functions among women experienced domestic violence. This was a semi-experimental study with two experimental groups and one control group. The design was conducted using the pre-test, post-test and follow-up method. Based on this, 60 women of Tehran city in 2022 and randomly assigned to three groups. In order to collect information, family assessment device was used. After the end of the training, the post-test was conducted on all participants, with an interval of one week. Two months later, the follow-up test was completed by 3 groups. The results of variance analysis with repeated measurements applied to data. The results showed that both methods were suitable, but the emotionally focused couple therapy had a greater and more meaningful effect.

Keywords: Domestic violence, emotionally focused couple therapy, family functions, self-compassion-focused therapy,

Introduction

Domestic violence within marital life is a pervasive issue that affects various dimensions of women's personal and social lives. In this regard, there are different perspectives on enhancing the desirable functioning of women in domestically violent families. This research was conducted based on two approaches: compassion-focused therapy and emotion-focused couple therapy. Previous studies on the subject of the present research have separately examined the effectiveness of these two treatment methods in improving marital problems (Marren, et al., 2022; Golmohammadi, et al., 2022). However, this study simultaneously investigated and compared the effectiveness of these two treatment approaches on the functioning of families with women who are victims of violence. Furthermore, from a cognitive perspective, there are fewer studies comparing the effectiveness of self-compassion treatment and emotion-focused therapy in improving the functioning of families with women who were victims of domestic violence. This makes it difficult to identify the effective and necessary treatment for these women. Therefore, based on logical and scientific reasons for comparing these two treatments, it can be said that when an intervention or psychological approach is identified as more

effective compared to other treatments based on empirical studies, it can assist psychologists and couple therapists working in the field of reducing problems faced by women who are victims of domestic violence. Therefore, based on the aforementioned points, the hypothesis of this study is that there is a difference in the effectiveness of self-compassion treatment and emotion-focused therapy on family functioning in women who are victims of domestic violence.

Method

The present study employed a semi-experimental design with pretest-posttest and a control group, along with a two-month follow-up. The target population consisted of all married women who were victims of domestic violence seeking assistance from welfare centers in Tehran in 2022. A sample of 60 women who were purposefully selected from the welfare seekers in Tehran and divided into two experimental groups and one control group (each group consisting of 20 individuals), were on the bases of their welfare records, age ranged 25-40 years, with at least, 2 years of marriage. Exclusion criteria included missing more than 2 therapy sessions, concurrent participation in other courses or interventions, and incomplete questionnaire completion. After this stage, the experimental groups received self-compassion therapy and emotion-focused therapy (10 sessions, once a week, 90 minutes per session), while the control group did not receive any interventions from these approaches and remained on the waiting list. After the completion of therapy sessions, a posttest was administered to each group under similar conditions. Additionally, a two-month follow-up phase was conducted. The study adhered to ethical principles, including voluntary participation in the research, the right to withdraw from the study, addressing the questions of women with experience of domestic violence, providing intensive intervention sessions to the control group women after the post-test or follow up, also, obtaining an ethical code IR.IAU.ARDABIL.REC.1400.046 from the Islamic Azad University, Ardabil Branch. The data were analyzed using repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Bonferroni post hoc test with SPSS version 24 software.

Tool

Family Assessment Device (FAD) of Epstein, et al. (1983): The family assessment device, consists of 60 questions and measures 7 dimensions: problem-solving, communication, roles, affective responsiveness, affective involvement, behavior control, and general functioning. It is scoring by 4-point Likert scale. The criterion validity of the questionnaire has been examined using the Locke-Wallace Marital Satisfaction Scale, with a reported correlation coefficient of 0.73, Cronbach's alpha coefficients for reliability have been reported in the range of 0.72 to 0.92 (Epstein, et al., 1983). In an Iranian study, correlation coefficients between the subscales were obtained in the range of 0.33 to 0.64, which were statistically significant at the 0.001 level (Yousefi, 2012). In the present study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient for total score was 0.90.

Results

Table 1 presents the results of within-subjects and between-subjects effects analysis of variance with repeated measures for family functioning, shows significant differences between 3 groups,

meaning that self-compassion therapy and emotion-focused therapy have effect on family function.

Table 1. Results of within-subjects and between-subjects analysis of variance with repeated measures for family functioning.

Dependent Variables	Source	F	Sig	Eta	Power
Problem Solving	Factor	148.32	0.001	0.72	1.00
	Group	37.96	0.001	0.57	1.00
	factor × group	36.65	0.001	0.56	1.00
Communication	factor	120.96	0.001	0.68	1.00
	group	47.94	0.001	0.63	1.00
	factor × group	37.55	0.001	0.57	1.00
Roles	factor	212.84	0.001	0.79	1.00
	group	17.08	0.001	0.37	1.00
	factor × group	51.17	0.001	0.64	1.00
Affective Responsiveness	factor	132.55	0.001	0.70	1.00
	group	40.71	0.001	0.59	1.00
	factor × group	40.15	0.001	0.58	1.00
Affective Involvement	factor	200.02	0.001	0.79	1.00
	group	18.14	0.001	0.39	1.00
	factor × group	52.98	0.001	0.65	1.00
Behavior Control	factor	119.83	0.001	0.68	1.00
	group	47.40	0.001	0.62	1.00
	factor × group	35.39	0.001	0.55	1.00
General functioning	factor	338.72	0.001	0.85	1.00
	group	75.91	0.001	0.73	1.00
	factor × group	84.96	0.001	0.75	1.00
Total Score	factor	643.69	0.001	0.62	1.00
	group	210.61	0.001	0.78	1.00
	factor × group	171.61	0.001	0.76	1.00

Also, results of the Bonferroni post hoc test to compare the effectiveness of treatments with the control group showed that the difference between the average of the emotionally focused couple therapy and the control group is greater than the average difference between the self-compassion therapy and the control group, which indicates that emotionally focused couple therapy is more effective on family functioning

Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of this study was to compare the effectiveness of self-compassion therapy and emotionally focused couple therapy on family functioning in women who are victims of domestic violence. The results showed that emotionally focused couple therapy had a greater

effectiveness than self-compassion therapy on the overall family functioning scores of women who are victims of domestic violence .In explaining these findings, it can be said that in Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy, the emotional skills defined as the ability to recognize and express emotions, as well as the ability to empathize with others, contribute to increased intimacy, a sense of security, and (in the positive dimension) constructive criticism in individuals. It also helps the conflicting couple to restore calmness to their lives and maintain and sustain their marital relationship. Additionally, emotionally focused therapy helps partners involved in marital problems such as domestic violence to reconnect and work towards reducing turmoil through emotional interventions, leading to improved intimate interactions and increased affectionate relationships. Since this study was conducted on married women who are victims of domestic violence in Tehran, caution should be exercised in generalizing the results to similar women in other cities.

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Conflict of Interests

Authors found no conflict of interests.



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