

Investigating the effect of life skill trainings on reducing the addicted men's anxiety and stress in the psychiatric hospital of professor Moharerri in Shiraz

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ABSTRACT

Life skill trainings to people causes changes in their knowledge and attitudes toward drugs. The present study was conducted with the aim of evaluating the effect of life skill trainings on reducing the anxiety and stress of male addicts in the psychiatric Hospital of Professor Moharerri. The method of this study was quasi-experimental with the experimental and control groups having pretest and post-test design. The statistical population included all addicted men in the Psychiatric Hospital of Professor Moharerri. The research sample included 30 individuals selected through convenient sampling which were randomly assigned into experimental and control groups and had responded to the anxiety and stress scales two different times. After implementing the post-test (completion of the questionnaire in the first stage), the experimental group samples participated in the life skill training sessions, while the control group did not receive any trainings during this period. The research results were analyzed using one way analysis of covariance. The results showed a significant difference between two groups in terms of total scores of anxiety and stress. Analysis of the table of means showed that the mean of total scores of anxiety and stress was significantly lower in the experimental group compared to that of the control group. The results showed that the mean score of anxiety in the experimental group was significantly lower than that of the control group. Moreover, the mean score of stress in the experimental group was significantly lower than that of the control group.

Keywords: Life skills trainings, Anxiety, Stress.

Introduction

Addiction is a physical, psychological, social and spiritual illness^[1]. A great number of people are taking drugs daily. Many factors can be involved in this regard^[2]. Many of the psychologists believe that inadequate individual skills play a major role in future failures of people. People who have not learned the skills required to perform effective individual and interpersonal functions are aggressive and isolated^[3,4]. They are

hated by others and unable to cooperate effectively with others and they are highly exposed to physical and psychological hazards Sajjadinejad et al, (2008)^[5]. In a study conducted by Honarmand et al, (2009), it was concluded that neurotic tendencies are one of the most important predictors of drug abuse in individuals^[6]. Moreover, Yadollahi et al, (2018) revealed that effective beliefs can act as a protective factor against addiction^[7]. Yadollahi et al, (2018) concluded that the drug use is rooted in low self-efficacy of people^[8]. Khorasani Baghini et al, (2018) compared the personality traits and problem-solving styles in addicted and non-addicted men^[9]. Fahimeh Khorasani Baghini et al, (2018) also conducted a study entitled "The risk factors and protective factors toward drug use tendency in students"^[10].

The life skills are specific abilities that a person needs them to act adequately when he or she sends messages symbolically to other individuals. These skills often include listening, speaking, self-assertiveness, and managing the emotion^[11]. However,

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some people do not act effectively while communicating with others. Paying attention to communication skills and training them has been considered as one of the strategies for reducing communication problems and improving the quality of life over the recent decades ^[12]. These skills help one to solve interpersonal conflicts and establish the basis for healthy social relationships ^[13]. Training individual skills pursues different goals, such as identifying stressful situations and applying effective coping strategies, as well as restricting and controlling negative psychological outcomes such as anxiety. Rostami et al, (2019). showed that life skill trainings decreased anxiety and aggression ^[14].

Leila Bazrafkan & Mitra Amini (2019) showed that life skill trainings affected people's mental health ^[15]. Laila Bazrafkan, Javad Kojuri & Mitra Amini (2019) and Bazrafkan I, Kalyani MN. (2018) and Jaafari F, Delavari S and Bazrafkan L. (2019) conducted studies on the effects of life skill trainings ^[16-18]. Stress is an event considered to be threatening individuals since it invokes physiological and behavioral responses ^[19]. Jane Cranwell argued that stress occurs when one fails to meet the needs and requirements of a situation. In other words, stress is a result of imbalance Rafat Rezapour-Nasrabad, (2018), it is also a multi-dimensional phenomenon. It has both objective (such as physiological effects) and subjective (such as perceived effects) aspects ^[20].

In fact, stress can be viewed as inherent perception and imbalance and lack of harmony between expectations and the possibility of responding to them, especially under the conditions where not meeting the demands and expectations is considered to be disastrous Rafat Rezapour-Nasrabad, (2018) ^[21]. Azita Amirfakhraei et al, (2019). has viewed the stress as an external condition that imposes unusual or extraordinary demands upon the person. If stress is prolonged, it might impose a heavy burden on the individual's initiative and may cause disrupted function or neutralize the individual compensation power ^[13]. Based on the theory of physical weakness, stress along with a specific psycho-physiological disorder causes weakness in certain physical organs ^[22]. Genetic factors, heart diseases, diet, and so on might disrupt certain organs. Thus, this organ will be vulnerable to future stresses, even weak and mild stresses. Based on this theory, the disease will be caused by the interaction between an individual's physiology and stress Pirmoradi et al, (2017). The individual's decision on which stimulus should be processed in a short-term memory or which should be neglected, is involved in the occurrence and exacerbation of the stress Training individual skills also affects the control of negative psychological outcomes such as anxiety. The anxiety is one's reaction to a threatening situation, that is, the situation affected by increased stimulations, whether external or internal, in which the person feels unable to control it ^[23]. Forum examined the anxiety in relation to the set of community reactions and human needs. Ellis linked the anxiety with irrational thinking. According to Perez, anxiety is the gap between the present and future. Anxiety is a multidimensional concept considered as a psychological phenomenon Pirmoradi et al, (2018). It is considered as a physical phenomenon, which

is manifested as an interpersonal experience or between an individual and an external subject, or as a characteristic in a person ^[24]. Although some believe that anxiety and psychosocial behavior are learned, some others believe that these behaviors are due to the lack of proper behavioral patterns that the person has not learned the responses and the skills required. Behavioral perspective states that individuals can quickly and directly learn the ways of correcting and modifying their problematic emotions and behaviors. In psychoanalysis school, anxiety is the result of inner conflicts between super-ego and self-defenses Mohammad Reza Pirmoradi et al, (2016). Anxiety is synonymous with the feeling of fear, but the fear has an external and specific origin and anxiety has an internal and obsessive source. Anxiety is involved with the prediction of a negative or harmful event or threat. One's perception of threat is explained by his or her judgment of prediction of the occurrence of a negative event and the consequence of that event ^[25].

Methodology

The method of this study was quasi-experimental having experimental and control groups accompanied with pretest and post-test design. The statistical population included all addicted men in Psychiatric Hospital of Professor Moharerri. The research sample included 60 people selected through convenient sampling which were randomly assigned to two groups of experimental and control (each group included 30 people). Both groups completed the anxiety and stress scale. Then, the experimental group participated in 12 life skills training sessions and the questionnaires were re-completed by both groups. Finally, the collected data were analyzed. Anxiety and stress scale (Lovibond & Lovibond) was used to collect the data. The questions 2, 4, 7, 9, 15, 14, 29, 20 examined the subscale of stress and the questions 1, 6, 8, 11, 12, 14, and 18 examined the stress subscale. The life skills training program included self-awareness, coping with stress, effective communication, problem solving and decision-making. It was held in 12 sessions of 1 hour. Data were analyzed at two descriptive and inferential levels. The descriptive section included the characteristics of the samples, mean and standard deviation and the inferential statistics included the one-way covariance analysis. This was performed using SPSS, version 20, software.

Results

Table 1. Distribution of frequency and percentage of the respondents

Group	Classes	f	%
Experimental	Secondary school	11	66.36
	Diploma	15	50
	Bachelor	4	33.13
	Self-employed	24	80
	Employee	6	20
	Single	12	40

	Married	18	60
	Secondary school	12	40
	Diploma	16	33.53
	Bachelor	2	67.6
Control	Self-employed	25	83/33
	Employee	5	67.16
	Single	10	33.33
	Married	20	66.66

Table 2. The mean and standard deviation of the studied variables

Variables	Groups	Pre-test		Post-test	
		mean	SD	mean	SD
Anxiety	Experimental	26.14	58.2	63.12	34.2
	Control	9.14	27.2	86.14	31.2
Stress	Experimental	3.15	52.2	3.13	8.2
	Control	93.15	98.2	8.15	88.2

The first hypothesis: Life skill trainings affects the anxiety of addicted men in the psychiatric hospital of Professor Moharerri in (Table 1 & 2).

Table 3. Leven's test results for examining the equality of the variance of the scores

Variable	F	DF1	DF2	P
Anxiety	58.4	1	58	09.0

As shown in (Table 3), the results of the Leven's test were not significant, so the hypothesis of equality of variances was accepted. Then, the hypothesis of the equality of regression was investigated through examining the interaction of pretest scores and independent variable levels in affecting the posttest scores. The results indicated that this interaction was not significant, so the mentioned hypothesis was accepted [F (1 and 56) = 1.12, P=0.16] hence covariance analysis could be used.

Table 4. Using One-Way Analysis of Covariance for investigating the effect of life skill trainings on anxiety of addicted individuals

Source of variance	SS	DF	MS	F	P	η^2
Pretest (control variable)	93.221	1	93.221	75.136	001.0	71.0
Group (independent variable)	87.43	1	87.43	03.27	001.0	32.0
Error	5.92	57	62.1			
Total	11733	60				

The results of the analysis of covariance in (Table 4) showed that there was a significant difference between the groups in terms of mean scores of anxiety [F (1 and 57) = 27.03, P=0.001]. The examining of the table of the means (Table 2) showed that the mean scores of anxiety reduced in the experimental group (12.63) significantly compared to that of the control group (14.86). In addition, examining the differential Eta-square (size

of effect) indicated that life skill trainings explained 32% of the variance of depression in addicted individuals.

The second hypothesis: Life skill trainings affects the stress of addicted men in the psychiatric hospital of Professor Moharerri.

Table 5. Leven's test results for examining the equality of the variance of the scores

Variable	F	DF1	DF2	P
Stress	.523	1	58	12.0

As shown in (Table 5), the results of the Leven's test were not significant, so the hypothesis of equality of variances was accepted. Then, the hypothesis of the equality of regression was investigated through examining the interaction of pretest scores and independent variable levels while affecting the posttest scores. The results indicated that this interaction was not significant, so the mentioned hypothesis was accepted [F (1 and 56) = 0.55, P=0.45], thus the covariance analysis could be used.

Table 6. Using One-way analysis of covariance for investigating the effect of life skill trainings on stress among the addicted men

Source of variance	SS	DF	MS	F	P	η^2
Pretest (control variable)	44.209	1	44.209	13.98	001.0	63.0
Group (independent variable)	01.57	1	01.57	71.26	001.0	31.0
Error	65.121	57	13.2			
Total	13127	60				

The results of the analysis of covariance in (Table 6) showed that there was a significant difference between the groups in terms of mean scores of the stress [F (1 and 57) = 26.71, P=0.001]. The examining of the table of the means (Table 2) showed that the mean scores of anxiety reduced in the experimental group (13.3) significantly compared to that of the control group (15.8). In addition, examining the differential Eta-square (size of effect) indicated that life skill trainings explained 32% of variance of stress in addicted men.

Discussion and Conclusion

The first hypothesis: The results revealed a significant difference between two groups in terms of the mean scores of the anxiety. Examining the table of means showed that the mean scores of the anxiety decreased significantly in the experimental group compared to that of the control group. In similar studies, Galantar, (2006). found that those personality traits, such as resilience, which could provide more conditions for controlling the life-threatening problems such as anxiety and stress, could be used to prevent high-risk behaviors. The research conducted by Bahadori Khosrowshahi and Khanjani, (2013). showed that life skill trainings decreased the anxiety and aggressiveness in the Experimental group compared to the control group. The results of the research conducted by Saber et al, (2011). indicated that

life skill trainings affected people's mental health, so that increasing the person's life skills increased his or her ability to control his or her life impulses and anxiety. The research conducted by Sheikhi Fini, AA and Kavousian, J and Ramezani, VA (2009). showed that life skill trainings significantly increased mental health and significantly decreased the anxiety of the subjects. The study conducted by Sajjadinejad et al, (2008). showed that life skills significantly decreased the social anxiety. The research carried out by Honarmand (2009), showed that life skill trainings reduced the anxiety and increased the level of self-assertiveness. In explaining this result, it can be stated that anxiety is the most common response to a stressful stimulus that all individuals experience at various levels in the form of the words such as concern, stress, and fear. Anxiety is multidimensional and is a psychological and physical phenomenon. It is manifested as an interpersonal experience or between a person and an external person or subject or a characteristic. Generally, anxiety is a state of psychological and physiological arousal and the way of conscious perception of panic, disgust, fear, and stress in a particular situation. Thus, all individuals have experienced a level of anxiety as usual throughout the day. What is important and makes a difference between people is the way of coping with the experienced anxiety. The assumption of this study was that lack of proper communication skills has provided the conditions for anxiety experience in addicts. Thus, life skill trainings can lead to achieve the skills required to control anxiety and it finally, leads to reduced tendency toward addiction and looks for more effective ways to reduce the anxiety.

The second hypothesis: The results showed a significant difference between two groups in terms of the mean scores of stress. Examining the table of means showed that the mean score of anxiety in the experimental group decreased significantly compared to that in the control group. Honarmand et al, (2009), showed that when a person had the adequate skill to cope with the problems, the likelihood of addiction would decrease. Martinez et al. (2012) concluded that poor control of the impulses and lack of adequate skill in life skills provided the conditions for drug addiction. Tezel and Guzom (2006) showed that training problem-solving skills reduced the depression. In explaining this result, it can be stated that stress is one of the threatening events for the person which invokes physiological and behavioral responses (Yadollahi et al, 2018). Therefore, stress is a situational stimulus that requires changing one's current model Bazrafkan and Kalyani (2018). What defines one's ability to cope with the stress is the level of life skills that shows to what extent one can change his or her current behavioral model and pursue a more effective model for the new outcome. Lack of these skills causes stress, and training these skills increases the control and management of the stress in the future. Thus, life skill trainings help people use more effective methods to cope with the stress.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the research project to be implemented at a larger population with more samples.
2. The implementation of longitudinal experimental designs is another recommendation to show the continuity of the treatment.
3. Using other measurement methods such as observation and interviewing might yield more useful results in future research.
4. Designing integrated treatments that can target all family members is another recommendation of this study.
5. Investigating other important variables involved in addiction such as personality traits, problem solving styles and identity styles can be an important subject for another study.
6. Using more accurate methods of measurement such as MRI, might result in more accurate results in determining the effect of treatment in the groups.

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