Comparison between Effectiveness of Self-Cognition Resources and Self-Differentiation Group Trainings on Newly Divorced Women’s Mental Health Promotion, in Tehran City

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A B S T R A C T

This Study was performed to compare the effectiveness of self-cognition resources and self-differentiation group training on newly divorced women’s mental health promotion in Tehran City. The study was a semi-experimental survey which included a pre-post test design with both treatment and control groups. Statistical sample of the study incorporated 30 newly divorced women, who were selected in a random basis out of Health Center community in Tehran City, and then were put randomly in two different treatment groups and one control group. All the groups consisted of 10 women each, and the first treatment group was trained for self-cognition resources and the second for self-differentiation. Each treatment group was involved in a training course of 8 sessions; all the three groups of the study then were post-tested using General Health Questionnaire (GHQ), after 10 days from the last session of training, and finally Analysis of Co-Variance (ANCOVA) was applied for comparing the groups’ means. Findings of the study indicated that: Self-cognition resources group training is quite effective on newly divorced women’s mental health promotion. Self-differentiation group training is quite effective on newly divorced women’s mental health promotion. No significant difference was found between the degree of effectiveness of self-cognition resources and Self-differentiation group training on newly divorced women’s mental health promotion.

INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines mental health as “the ability to interact harmonically with others, the ability to change and modify individual and social environment, and the ability to resolve internal conflicts and personal desires appropriately, justly and logically [10].

Studies have shown that there is a strong relationship between family quality of life and family members’ mental health [15]. Divorce has many negative effects and consequences: Divorce is a mental phenomenen which affects not only the mental balance of parents, but also of children, relatives and friends [12].

There are many factors in leading parents toward divorce or protecting them against it, which include couples’ believes about divorce, family financial status and possibly couples’ financial status after divorce, children status after divorce of their parents and parent’s believes about negative effects of divorce on children, and couples’ expectations about their upcoming chances for marriage. Generally, unorganized and inappropriate relations between couples are defined by their mental evaluation of these relations. These continuous unorganized and inappropriate relations often lead to divorce. However, some couples continue their relations and do not face with the problem of divorce although they have some severe difficulties in their relations [5]. The solution which can be derived from Jung’s theory, is to build balance between powers and different parts of psyche and self, which can lead the self to unity, convergence of powers and typically the selfhood. In this step, the more we move toward selfhood, the more we approach to our mental health. Actually when God created human beings, make the self on a balanced basis between powers and their different parts. So, the initial structure of human beings’ existence has been built on mental health, and diseases and conflicts gradually
appear through inappropriate interaction of self, environment and different resources of self-genesis. Shonman defined three main resources of self-genesis after a review on past studies performed about self as:

1. Self-Observation
2. Social Comparison
3. Social Feedback

He believes that implementation of each of these resources is according to demands of each different step of psychological evolution [9]. One of the features of a mentally healthy family is to help its members toward self-differentiation. It means that the whole family helps its members to learn how to differentiate their rational and emotional operations. According to Bowen, human relations are derived from two forces of life balance as “Individuality” and “Togetherness”. All of us need companions and also some independence. Something which makes the life interesting and disappointing, is the tendency of our needs toward polarization [13].

In Bowen’s family systems theory, all the symptoms like mental and physical diseases, drug abuse and social disorders have significant direct relationship with failing to adapt with system, little self-differentiation and exaggeration in emotional processes [6]. Family is a complicated emotional system as a structure, which may consist of three or four generations at least [3]. Divorce will complicate the system of family more and more. It is an important crisis in family life which will have side effects on all the society [10]. According to the available divorce statistics of different countries, 10 to 30 cases of marriage lead to the tragic divorce event, which is increasing unfortunately [10]. The power of a society and its rise in different directions emerges from the families’ power and the stability and strength of family members. If the families in a society face with divorce, the society will gradually lose its basis of support and peace, since fragmentation in families will cause people stop producing and generating, and lead them into destruction, corruption, crime commitment and expanding more and more fear in society. All of these bad happenings will stop progress and evolution in society. Therefore, family preservation is equal to society preservation against many problems, the problems which stop efficiency and productivity in society and turns to fatal and destructive devices if not controlled [7].

Younesi and Mohammadi have done an interventional study about the self-cognition resources regulation to change the students’ attitude toward drug abuse; in this study, students under investigation showed a significant change in attitude toward drug abuse after implementing a strong social comparison. Moreover, the researches presented a model for drug abuse on basis of information distribution using self genesis resources and intensifying social feedback, and the efficiency of this among adolescents was proved.

Mojtabai [11] in his study “Social Comparison and Mental Health in American Ordinary People with Anxiety and in Need of Help” showed that social comparison for people with anxiety has a significant relationship with their mental health. In social comparison, anxious people have individual differences. The more anxious and in need they are, the more social comparison will be. Greene [4] in his study “The Effect of Self-Observation on Mental Health” showed that self-cognition may improve mental health, and then he suggested a new theory in the field for future studies. In this study, self-observation method was defined as a device for self-cognition. Self-observation method leads to concentration on mental calmness and peace and also the change in genitive structure of the self. Bunk & Spinvall [1] in their study “The Relationship between the Effects of Social Comparison on Adolescents’ Anxiety” showed that those adolescents who implement social comparison intensely, do not dare to speak against others’ opinions and are involved with a high social anxiety. Findings of Saeghi Mamaghani’s [14] study showed that group consultation based on self-cognition resources method leads to self-confidence improvement. The findings reveal a necessity to work on self-cognition elements in adolescent prisoners. Korean [8] in his study “The Effects of Self-Differentiation and Family Performance on Adolescents’ Mental Health” published in “Adolescents’ Health” showed that self-differentiation and family performance has affect mental health. Sandage [20] in his study “Forgiveness, Spiritual Disease, Mental Health Signs, Interventional Effects of Self-Differentiation” showed that those with more self-differentiation have more tendencies to forgive others and so are healthier mentally.

Findings:

Newly divorced women’s mental health scores were studied and analyzed, which the summary is shown in table 1. As you can see in table 1, the self-differentiation treatment group’s average of the pre-test scores is 25.90 and the standard deviation is 6.33. The average of the post-test scores is 20.00 and the standard deviation is 4.78.

As you can see in table 1, the self-cognition treatment group’s average of the pre-test scores is 29.90 and the standard deviation is 8.37. The average of the post-test scores is 20.20 and the standard deviation is 4.32.

Moreover, the same results for control group are 26.20 and 4.96 as pre-test, and 24.80 and 4.78 as post-test scores.

Hypotheses Analysis:

Hypothesis No.1: Self-cognition resources group training is quite effective on newly divorced women’s mental health promotion.
The first hypothesis analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was performed after assuring that all needed pre-assumptions are there; summary of this analysis is shown in table 2.

**Table 1: Group-separated Mental Health Scores Description.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment Methods</th>
<th>Pre-Tests</th>
<th>Post-Tests</th>
<th>Bowen Self-Differentiation</th>
<th>Cognition Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>25.90</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std</td>
<td>6.33</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>29.90</td>
<td>20.20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std</td>
<td>8.37</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>26.20</td>
<td>24.80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std</td>
<td>4.96</td>
<td>4.78</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As you can see in table 2, the resulted F amount as 14.7 for difference between groups, with df 1 and 17 for p<0.001 is significant. Based on this result, it can be stated with %95 assurance that Self-cognition resources group training is quite effective on newly divorced women’s mental health promotion by degree 0.464.

**Table 2: Hypothesis No.1 Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) Results.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change Resources</th>
<th>Eta</th>
<th>sig.</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Ms</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>ss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Test Effect</td>
<td>0.443</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>165.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>165.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Among Groups</td>
<td>0.464</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>179.7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>179.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>207.7</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>479.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypothesis No.2: Self-differentiation group training is quite effective on newly divorced women’s mental health promotion.

The second hypothesis analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was performed after assuring that all needed pre-assumptions are there; summary of this analysis is shown in table 3. As you can see in table 3, the resulted F amount as 17.47 for difference between groups, with df 1 and 16 for p<0.001 is significant. Based on this result, it can be stated with %95 assurance that Self-differentiation group training is quite effective on newly divorced women’s mental health promotion by degree 0.522.

**Table 3: Hypothesis No.2 Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) Results.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change Resources</th>
<th>Eta</th>
<th>sig.</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Ms</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>ss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Test Effect</td>
<td>0.754</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>49.05</td>
<td>298.3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>298.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Among Groups</td>
<td>0.522</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>17.47</td>
<td>106.2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>106.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>97.3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>479.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hypothesis No.3: No significant difference was found between the degree of effectiveness of Self-cognition resources and Self-differentiation group training on newly divorced women’s mental health promotion. The third hypothesis analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was performed after assuring that all needed pre-assumptions are there; summary of this analysis is shown in table 4. As you can see in table 4, the resulted F amount as 0.729 for difference between groups, with df 1 and 16 for p>0.406 is significant. Based on this result, it can be stated that no significant difference was found between the degree of effectiveness of Self-cognition resources and Self-differentiation group training on newly divorced women’s mental health promotion.
As discussed, mental health depends on the mentioned balance. In Jung’s point of view, a healthy body is someone having a balance between his/her different self-powers and parts; any extravagancy in every part may lead to disorder and cause problems like depression, anxiety, lack of self-confidence, self-alienation, jealousy and loss in mental health. Studies even showed that unbalanced usages of social comparison and feedbacks can lead to dissatisfaction in marital relations and cause to divorce. In this study we tried to improve group members’ mental health through building a balance between the above mentioned resources by providing them with the needed information and appropriate tasks such as participating in fear, hope and desire experiences in a group, familiarity with self-genesis resources, self-alienation, drawing self-circles and others, making their cognitive believes grey, role-taking game and etc. Notifying group members through the related games about how much they use self-observation and social comparison, social feedbacks, comparing these resources, their effects and providing applicatory tasks based on self-regulatory system could lead to a balance in their self-genesis resources, and finally reach to a desired level in mental health. According to the above mentioned points, the study came to this conclusion that self-cognition resources group training is quite effective on newly divorced women’s mental health promotion.

**Discussion and Conclusion:**
Findings of this study showed that:

Self-cognition resources group training is quite effective on newly divorced women’s mental health promotion.

The intervention applied for the first treatment group was self-cognition resources group training. The solution which can be derived from Jung’s theory, is to build balance between powers and different parts of psyche and self, which can lead the self to unity, convergence of powers and typically the selfhood. In this step, the more we move toward selfhood, the more we approach to our mental health. Actually when God created human beings, make the self on a balanced basis between powers and their different parts. So, the initial structure of human beings’ existence has been built on mental health, and diseases and conflicts gradually appear through inappropriate interaction of self, environment and different resources of self-genesis.

Since mental health is the compatibility to make evolution and coordination between environment and human needs, and some mental pressuring happenings such as divorce can put this coordination in danger, a balance and coordination between group members was seeking in this study. There are some solutions which can be used to make a balance between powers and different segments of self-leading the man toward unity and convergence of the powers. When analyzing a human being at a glance, three resources of self-observation, social comparison and social feedback can be seen through self-genesis process. There were individual differences between group members in this regard; people can control their inappropriate behaviors and habits through self-observation resource and reduce and control any instability in self-assessment through social comparison, and finally be informed about others’ opinions about themselves through social feedbacks. So, by training in these three resources we can help group members to move toward selfhood and improve their mental health. As discussed, mental health depends on the mentioned balance. In Jung’s point of view, a healthy body is someone having a balance between his/her different self-powers and parts; any extravagancy in every part may lead to disorder and cause problems like depression, anxiety, lack of self-confidence, self-alienation, jealousy and loss in mental health. Studies even showed that unbalanced usages of social comparison and feedbacks can lead to dissatisfaction in marital relations and cause to divorce. In this study we tried to improve group members’ mental health through building a balance between the above mentioned resources by providing them with the needed information and appropriate tasks such as participating in fear, hope and desire experiences in a group, familiarity with self-genesis resources, self-alienation, drawing self-circles and others, making their cognitive believes grey, role-taking game and etc. Notifying group members through the related games about how much they use self-observation and social comparison, social feedbacks, comparing these resources, their effects and providing applicatory tasks based on self-regulatory system could lead to a balance in their self-genesis resources, and finally reach to a desired level in mental health. According to the above mentioned points, the study came to this conclusion that self-cognition resources group training is quite effective on newly divorced women’s mental health promotion.

**Self-differentiation group training is quite effective on newly divorced women’s mental health promotion.**

The intervention applied for the second treatment group was self-differentiation group training. Since self-differentiation plays an important role in chronic anxiety reduction and leads to a healthy life, and since a person’s personality is formed through the degree of his/her self-differentiation related to others, this group training has a key role in forming a healthy personality and reducing chronic anxiety in future.

According to Bowen’s systematic family therapy, therapists and consultants follow two main objectives in related to families, which are:

**Reduction in anxiety and eliminating the diseases’ symptoms**

**Improvement in individual self-differentiation leading to more efficient reaction in strongly emotional situation**

Since, in one hand, divorce is a situational crisis damaging family members’ health and in other hand according to family systems theory, a person can improve his/her mental health through the senses of belonging to family and self-differentiation, this study benefited from self-differentiation group training to improve mental health. Self-differentiation, the basis of Bowen’s theory, implies that a person has reached to a degree of maturation in which he/she can relate healthily with family members, without any abnormal or emotional reactions in different situations.

### Table 4: Hypothesis No.3 Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change Resources</th>
<th>Eta</th>
<th>sig.</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Ms</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>ss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Test Effect</td>
<td>0.481</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>14.829</td>
<td>172.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>172.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Among Groups</td>
<td>0.044</td>
<td>0.406</td>
<td>0.729</td>
<td>8.45</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11.59</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>185.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>357.7</td>
<td></td>
<td>675</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Self-differentiation group training is quite effective on newly divorced women’s mental health promotion.

The intervention applied for the second treatment group was self-differentiation group training. Since self-differentiation plays an important role in chronic anxiety reduction and leads to a healthy life, and since a person’s personality is formed through the degree of his/her self-differentiation related to others, this group training has a key role in forming a healthy personality and reducing chronic anxiety in future.

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**Reduction in anxiety and eliminating the diseases’ symptoms**

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Since, in one hand, divorce is a situational crisis damaging family members’ health and in other hand according to family systems theory, a person can improve his/her mental health through the senses of belonging to family and self-differentiation, this study benefited from self-differentiation group training to improve mental health. Self-differentiation, the basis of Bowen’s theory, implies that a person has reached to a degree of maturation in which he/she can relate healthily with family members, without any abnormal or emotional reactions in different situations.
Anxiety is an element found in divorced women’s state leading to mental health loss. In this study we tried to improve these women’s self-differentiation degrees and train them in drawing their movement path in life, not to obey family members or others’ recommendations, in order to reduce their anxiety and move toward mental health.

REFERENCES