



The effectiveness of couple therapy based on schema and ACT on marital boredom and emotion regulation in nurses with marital conflicts

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Abstract

Aim: The aim of this study was to compare the effectiveness of schema-based couple therapy approach and act on marital boredom, emotion regulation in nurses with marital conflicts.

Method: The present research method is experimental. The research design is quasi-experimental with pre-test-post-test design and one-month follow-up with the control group. The statistical population included all nurses serving in Imam Sajjad Government Hospital in Ramsar in 2020. Among them, 30 couples (90 people) were selected by available non-random sampling method and were replaced in the experimental group (couple therapy based on schema and act) and a control group by simple random sampling (15 couples in each group). Then, 10 90-minute sessions (2 sessions per week) of schema and act-based couple therapy (Leo and McKee, 2017) were performed in experimental groups. Data were collected using the Sanai and Barati Marital Conflict Questionnaire (2000), the Pines Marital Boredom Questionnaire (1996) and the Gross and John Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (2003). Data were analyzed using SPSS-24 software and repeated measures analysis of variance. **Results:** The results showed that schema-based couple therapy based on marital boredom ($P < 0.001$, $F = 13.53$) and emotion regulation ($P < 0.001$, $F = 49.86$) in nurses with Marital conflicts are effective. **Conclusion:** Considering the effectiveness of couple therapy based on schema and act in nurses with marital conflicts, it is recommended that therapists use this therapeutic and educational approach.

Keywords: Schema therapy, acceptance and commitment therapy, marital boredom, emotion regulation.

Introduction

Among the factors that can play a role in nurses with marital conflicts is marital burnout, which is a state of physical, emotional and psychological exhaustion resulting from long-term conflicts in situations where people (husband and wife) have many emotional and emotional demands. , it comes into existence gradually. Such situations usually arise due to the great difference between expectations and reality. In other words, the accumulation of roles and frustrations of daily life causes erosion and ultimately leads to boredom (Bahari, Fatehizadeh, Ahmadi, Molavi, and Bahrami, 2016).

Among the effective treatments that can play a role in nurses with marital conflicts is couple therapy based on schema and act, the increasing prevalence of marital conflicts in the present era and as result of its destructive effects on the health of couples, children and social problems has caused therapists and Psychologists provide theories and plans to help conflicted couples. Therefore, in order to improve and improve communication patterns and reduce couples' conflict, the effectiveness of several therapeutic approaches has been investigated and in the present research, the integrated schema therapy approach based on acceptance and commitment will be investigated. The approach of schema therapy by recognizing and adjusting dysfunctional schemas that challenge the relationship between two people and the approach of therapy based on acceptance and commitment by creating flexibility and performing committed actions towards values are effective in reducing conflicts and communication problems of couples (Alami, Timuri, Ahip and Bayazi) , 2020).

Schema therapy is a new and integrated therapy, which is mainly based on the expansion of the concepts and methods of classical cognitive behavioral therapy and the principles and foundations of cognitive behavioral schools, attachment, gestalt, object relations, constructivism and psychoanalysis in the form of a therapeutic and conceptual model. (Hayes, Pistorello and Levin, 2012) On the other hand, today we are facing the third generation of behavioral therapy, one of the most important of which is acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT). In this treatment, instead of changing cognitions, we try to increase the psychological connection of a person with his thoughts and feelings. In fact, the main goal is to develop the ability to make practical choices among different options that are more appropriate, and not simply to avoid thoughts, feelings, memories. (Hakmabadi, Bigdali, Asghari, Abad and Asadi, 2020).

According to the issues raised, the main problem of this research is to investigate and compare the effectiveness of schema and act-based couple therapy and emotion-oriented couple therapy on marital burnout, emotion regulation and coping strategies and internalized shame in nurses with marital conflicts in the selected community and the purpose of the present study. Comparing the effectiveness of schema-based couple therapy approach and act on marital burnout, emotion regulation in nurses with marital conflicts. The current research sought to answer the following questions:

1- Was the training of couple therapy approach based on the schema and act on marital boredom and emotion regulation effective in nurses with marital conflicts in the post-examination stage?

2- Was the training of couple therapy approach based on the schema and act on marital boredom and emotional regulation in nurses with marital conflicts stable in the follow-up phase?

Method

The present research method is experimental. The research design is quasi-experimental with pre-test-post-test design and one-month follow-up with the control group. The statistical population included all nurses serving in Imam Sajjad Government Hospital in Ramsar in 2020. Among them, 30 couples (90 people) were selected by available non-random sampling method and were replaced in the experimental group (couple therapy based on schema and act) and a control group by simple random sampling (15 couples in each group). Then, 10 90-minute sessions (2 sessions per week) of schema and act-based couple therapy (Leo & McKay, 2017) were performed in experimental groups. Data were collected using the Sanai and Barati Marital Conflict Questionnaire (2000), the Pines Marital Boredom Questionnaire (1996) and the Gross and John Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (2003). Data were analyzed using SPSS-24 software and repeated measures analysis of variance.

Results

The results of the analysis of variance of the repeated measurement of several variables among the studied groups in the variables of marital despondency and emotion regulation showed that the effect between the subject (group) is significant and this effect means that at least one of the groups is with each other in at least one. They are different from the variables of marital boredom and emotion regulation. The within-subject effect (time) was also significant for the research variables, meaning there was a change in at least one of the average variables from pre-test to follow-up.

Variance analysis is significant for intra-group (time) and inter-group factors. These results mean that considering the group effect, the time effect alone is significant. Also, the interaction of group and time is significant. Bonferroni's post hoc test was also used for the pairwise comparison of groups.

Changes in the experimental group over time showed that the dimensions of marital boredom and emotion regulation in the experimental group were significant in the post-test compared to the pre-test ($P < 0.001$). Also, a significant difference was observed in the follow-up phase compared to the pre-test ($P < 0.001$). However, no significant difference was observed in the follow-up compared to the post-test ($p < 0.01$).

Conclusion

The purpose of comparing the effectiveness of the couple therapy approach based on schema and ACT on marital burnout was to regulate emotions in nurses with marital conflicts. The findings showed that couple therapy based on schema and act affects marital burnout in nurses with marital conflicts.

In explaining the findings, it can be said that couple therapy based on schema and act are two new-generation therapies that are associated with clinical applications in the field of interpersonal interactions, including couple therapy and family therapy. Schema therapy approach by recognizing and adjusting dysfunctional schemas that challenge the relationship between two people. The treatment

approach based on acceptance and commitment effectively reduces conflicts, communication problems, and marital boredom of couples by creating flexibility and performing committed actions towards values (Aalami, Teymouri, and Ahi, 2020). Liu and McKay concluded that the use of this therapy with schema formulation has a significant effect in reducing the interpersonal problems of couples. Therefore, this approach, by combining schema therapy techniques and therapy based on acceptance and commitment, makes couples know well the problem-causing schemas in a couple's relationship and instead of avoiding behaviors and negative confrontations, they find a suitable answer in line with their values. This reduces conflicts in couples' relationships and marital boredom (Benson & Nguyen, 2019).

In another explanation, we can mention the double combination of therapeutic effects of schema therapy and act therapy. Also, reducing marital conflicts and boredom depends on effective communication skills. The training of communication skills in the couple therapy protocol based on schema and act, which is a combination of schema therapy and therapy based on acceptance and commitment, has made this approach superior to the approach of only therapy based on acceptance and commitment (Arianfar & Pourshahriari, 2017).

Studies and clinical experiences show that in contemporary society, couples experience severe and pervasive problems when establishing and maintaining intimate relationships and satisfying each other's expectations and needs. Also, the incorrect regulation of emotions, which means that a person uses incompatible strategies to regulate emotions, is considered an important factor in the occurrence of incompatible behaviors and marital conflicts; Studies have shown that people who use uncompromising cognitive strategies such as rumination, self-blame and catastrophizing are more vulnerable to emotional problems; Therefore, emotion regulation affects marital relationship. In fact, the cause of marital heartbreak may be caused by various factors such as emotional distress, wrong documents, wrong beliefs and behaviors, myths, and other factors that can be fixed with proper training and improved relationships.

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