The Effectiveness of Group Narrative Therapy on the Reduction of Social Phobia Among 11 to 15 Years Female Adolescents

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Abstract The main objective of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of group narrative therapy in reducing social phobia among 11 to 15 years female adolescents. The research method was quasi-experimental with pretest-posttest and control group. In this research, using two groups of test and control, 50 students were selected by available sampling and were placed in two groups randomly. Social phobia was assessed before intervention in the two groups of test and control (pretest) using Social Phobia Inventory of Connor (SPIN) and then experimental intervention in the test group was conducted at eight 2-hour sessions and after the termination of the training program for the test group, pretest was taken of both groups. The results showed that group narrative therapy has had a significant positive effect on reducing social phobia in 11 to 15 years female adolescents. Due to the hypothesis confirmation and the effect of narrative therapy on reducing social phobia, it is suggested for school principals to be watchful enough for the social phobia of secondary school students and develop the education of problem solving skills at schools and design plans for strengthening social problem solving skills and the treatment of inconsistent cognitive schema in students.
Keywords: narrative therapy, social phobia, social communications, 11 to 15 years female adolescents.

Introduction

We are social beings and always need communication emotionally and physically. But this connection is not easily possible for all and factors such as lack of self-confidence, the evaluation of others about the person, fear of rejection, criticism or other factors cause people to feel anxious in social situations. In the case of severe anxiety, this disorder is called social anxiety or panic and the symptoms of which are severe and persistent fear of social situations or individual performance.

Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD) is defined as a certain and chronic fear of one or several social situations and the person views her in the verge of criticism by others and fears to do something causing embarrassment or humiliation. This disorder causes from the belief that the person in this situations will act so embarrassing or humiliating and will be severely anxious in explaining the mechanisms (Rheingold, Herbert and Franklin, 2003).

Various methods have already been used for the treatment of social anxiety disorder, and each of these treatments has been to some extent successful in the treatment of this disorder (Clark, Feske, Masia, Spaulding, Brown, Mammen and Shear, 1997). Due to the negative consequences of the anxiety and depression on the mental health of 11 to 15 years female adolescents, it is better to use treatments that do not have the side effects such as morbidity and fatality increase. Many studies have known Beck's group- cognitive counseling therapy

effective in reducing depression and anxiety. Most studies have shown that group- cognitive counseling is equal to drug therapy in terms of being effective and has less side effects and its follow-up is done easier (Sadock et al, 1993). But traditional therapeutic cognition only changes the rational beliefs of the individual while it affects their emotional beliefs less and group interventions makes them more effective.

On the one hand, narrative therapy, as a relatively new therapeutic approach, may be effective to reduce social anxiety disorder and increase self-esteem as one of the fundamental factors affecting interpersonal relations. Narrative Therapy is the process of helping people to overcome their problems through engaging in dialogue treatment. These dialogues involve outflow problem, extracting outcomes, highlighting the new plans and its connection to the past (Carr, 1998). In the narration treatment, it is believed that people give meaning to their lives and their experiences through narration and stories full of problems lead to distinct problems (Noori Tirtashi and Kazemi, 2012). The main purpose of narrative therapy is assisting clients to revise internalized stories (Polkinghorne, 2004). This process causes clients to feel that they are able to predict and control their lives (Faircloth, 2009).

The effect of group therapy treatment on the reduction of social phobia among 11 to 15 years female adolescents is been paid less attention in previous researches and there is a research vacuum in this field. By studying this new aspect of the subject, the present research has strengthened both the effect of group therapy treatment on the reduction of social phobia among 11 to 15 years female adolescents and its literature and has helped the generalizability of the subject.

Methodology

The research method was quasi-experimental with pretest-posttest and the control group. In this research, using two groups of test and control, 50 students were selected by available sampling and were placed in two groups randomly. Social phobia was assessed before intervention in the two groups of test and control (pretest) using Social Phobia Inventory of Connor (SPIN) and then experimental intervention in the test group was conducted at eight 2-hour sessions and after the termination of the training program for the test group, pretest was taken of both groups. This training program was done during eight 120-minute training session as lecture, group discussion, question and answer and role playing.

The data were collected using Connor's Social Phobia Inventory (SPIN). Social Phobia Scale (SPIN) was first made by Connor and colleagues (2000) to assess social phobia. The scale is a 17-item self-report scale. Each scale is graded based on a five-point Likert scale. This questionnaire is designed to evaluate a wide range of symptoms of social anxiety disorder. SPI has three subscales: the fear in social situations (6 Articles), avoiding performance in social situations (7 Articles) and physiological discomfort in social situations (4 Articles). Participants will be asked to rate their sufferings at any of these symptoms during the past week as 0 (not at all), 1 (low), 2 (partly), 3 (high) and 4 (very high) respectively. The total scores of the questionnaire are from 0 to 68.

The questionnaire has high validity and reliability. Its reliability was reported by test-retest in groups with a diagnosis of social anxiety disturbing equal to 78% to 89% and the its inner similarity coefficient is been reported as 94% by Cronbach's alpha in a normal group and as 89%for sub-scales of fear, 91% for avoidance and 80% for psychological distress (Fathi Ashtiani, 2012, quoted in Jafari and Fatehizadeh, 2012). In this study, the reliability is been determined as 0.89 using Cronbach's alpha.

The statistical population of this study included 11 to 15 years female adolescents in Shiraz

and the sample is 50 students who were placed in two groups of test (25 students) and control (25 students) randomly.

Results

The hypothesis states that group narrative therapy has a significant positive impact on the reduction of social phobia among 11 to 15 years female adolescents. Analysis of covariance was used to analyze the data of this study. To use this statistical method, first the main assumptions of this statistical method as the normality of the variables scores, the equality of the regression line slope, similarity of variances and the linearity of the relationship between the helping variable (pretest) and the dependant variable (posttest) was studied and all of them were confirmed. The statistical findings of the dependent variable of the study are provided in table 1.

Table1. Statistical findings related to the hypothesis

Change resources	Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Mean of sum of squares	F statistics	The significance
Model	75.144	2	37.572	3.228	0.001
Fixed value	67.420	1	67.420	5.739	0.769
Pretest	76.644	1	76.644	6.413	0.001
Group	1.019	1	1.019	0.088	0.001
Error	547.036	47	11.639		
The mean of the reduction of social phobia variable in the control group		The mean of the reduction of social phobia variable in the test group			
3.47		3.72			

As it is seen in the table above, and since the significance probability related to the helping variable (the pretest of the social phobia reduction) has been 0.001 and this value is smaller than test level as 0.05, it can be understood that there is a significant relationship between the dependant variable (the posttest of the social phobia reduction) and the helping variable. If the effect of the pretest of the social phobia reduction is controlled (at the level related to the group), it can be observed that the group variable is significantly related to the social phobia reduction variable in posttest due to the low significance probability (0.001) of the test level (0.05). By studying the obtained mean scores of social phobia in the control group is 3.477 and in the test group is 3.721. It can be concluded that the amount of social phobia reduction in the test group students has been higher that the control group after group narrative therapy. In other words, group narrative therapy affects the reduction of social phobia among 11 to 15 years female adolescents and consequently the research hypothesis is confirmed.

Discussion

Narrative therapy, as a relatively new therapeutic approach, may be effective to reduce social anxiety disorder as one of the fundamental factors affecting interpersonal relations. People give meaning to their life and their experiences through narrative therapy. The researcher has concluded that narrative therapy has been very effective in the mental discharge of the sample (11 to 15 years female students) and the reduction of their stress.

Accordingly, the research hypothesis is confirmed and narrative therapy, as a relatively new therapeutic approach, may be effective to reduce social anxiety disorder and increase self-esteem as one of the fundamental factors affecting interpersonal relations. Narrative Therapy is the process of helping people to overcome their problems through engaging in

dialogue treatment. These dialogues involve outflow problem, extracting outcomes, highlighting the new plans and its connection to the past. People with social phobia usually avoid stressful situations and rarely tolerate social or operational situations. But if they face these situations, they experience a severe stress. The results of this study are consistent with the results of Ghavami et al. (2014) and Beirami et al. (2013) and Pourfaraj (2011) in the country. For example, Pourfaraj (2011) in his study entitled as "Effectiveness of Acceptance and commitment group therapy on students' social phobia" showed that acceptance and commitment therapy is effective in the treatment of social anxiety disorder among students. In general, group narrative therapy is significantly and positively effective on the reduction of social phobia among 11 to 15 years female adolescents. Accordingly, it is suggested for school principals to focus on the social phobia of adolescent students and use psychological treatment methods such as narrative therapy to reduce social phobia.

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