



Effectiveness of Group Counseling Based on Choice Theory on Improving the Life Quality of Married Women

Reza Borumand * and Eghbal Zarei

Hormozgan University, Bandar Abbas, Iran

*Corresponding Author: reza.brmminab@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT: The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of group counseling based on choice theory on improving the life quality of married women. This study was conducted using a quasi-experimental method, pre-test - post-test plan and control group. The population of the study included women referred to Mehr Jonoob Counseling and Psychological Services Center to improve their marital life quality. 30 women have formed the study sample in two groups of control and experimental on the basis of life quality score and Matching Familiar Figures Test, based on the available sample. The experimental group received group counseling based on choice theory. Control group did not receive any counseling program until the completion of the group consultation. The WHO Quality of Life questionnaire was the data collection tool. The results of this study showed that group counseling based on choice theory effects on improving the couples' life quality ($p=0.001$) and group counseling based on choice theory is a suitable model for improving the couples' quality of life.

Keywords: Group Consulting, Choice Theory, Quality of Life

INTRODUCTION

The new branch of the science of psychology and its new perspectives entitled "A Holistic Approach to Positive Psychology" seeks to investigate the psychological capacities and powers rather than psychopathology. The fundamental belief in the new approach is that the positive measurable features can be as a shield to protect people against the risk of adverse events¹. This approach aims to identify and define the concepts that ensure the health and happiness of individuals and their enjoyment of a healthy life. One of these concepts is the quality of life. Quality of life helps to ensure the health and happiness of individuals and their enjoyment of a healthy life. In the past three decades, many efforts have been made to define and measure the concept of quality of life objectively².

Marital life quality is one of the most widespread implications for determining and showing happiness and stability of the relationship. It is a situation in which a husband and wife often have feelings of happiness and satisfaction from each other³.

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According to William Glaser couples begin their life together with love, but gradually their primary intimacy loses its color. Glaser believes that the cause of failure of most couples in addition to using external control character is the difference in intensity of the spouses' fundamental needs. He argues that all human beings are born with five genetic needs and all of our behaviors are to meet these requirements. These five genetic needs include: The need for love and belonging, freedom, power, recreation and survival. If married people understand that they are influenced by their five basic needs, and employ choice theory and from the beginning of their life try to satisfy these needs, their marital relationships will be improved significantly and the recognition of these needs is the main key to provide strong and permanent relationships⁴.

Glaser began with the belief that current treatments of mental health have not been effective and thereby he established Reality Therapy. When he went further, to obtain the consent of the other experts, he must describe how Reality Therapy works⁴.

Reality therapy is a method based on "doing" and it is an attempt to meet the needs quality world images through satisfaction. Therapist associated with the client will create an achievable plan with positive steps that at first puts him/her towards the needs gratification. "There are many secrets in the plan; the control meaning exists in it and the plan is what you can do it, not what he can do" (Glaser, 1998). Apart from what the disorder diagnosis is, kindness, support, compassion, and reinforce are different tools of reality therapy. In reality therapy, the individual need to be engaged highly and any disavowal of responsibility for the behavior is despicable and learning better solutions opportunities are provided for better handling of behavior in the face of reality⁵. The objective of reality therapy is to make clear what kind of behavior can generate a return that can lead to better meet individual needs⁶. The reality therapist also will ask questions to explore the clients' wishes and perceptions. The questions are:

W: What are the clients' wishes and perceptions ?

D: what does the client do with regard to doing, thinking, feeling and physiology ?

E: How does the client do the things that make him farther or closer to his demands ?

P: How should the plan for the change be? ⁷

Reality therapy feature includes the observations and feedback focused on how to facilitate the qualitative world, the therapist's level of commitment and control resource (W), behavior generality (D), very meaningful self-evaluation (E) and effective planning (P)⁸.

Glaser after reviewing the work of William Powers, founded "control therapy". This method of therapy was known in 1984. He believed that control therapy was a good start because it provided the framework for the application of reality therapy. After 14 years of teaching this belief, he changed its name to "choice theory". His argument for renaming was its low consistency with the human guidance principle, which refers to 1964: "The idea that humans have choice right"⁹.

Glaser in his psychotherapy theory is seeking as far as it is possible to increase the level of humans' responsibility towards their behavior. Control theory in this respect does not satisfy him. The control is the outcome of a feedback process similar to what occurs in the mechanical or biological structures, without the system itself has responsibility. In a mechanical or biological control system, the "system" does not control its behavior, but reciprocating actuator series will shape its behavior, without its demand or decision. Glaser wanted to go beyond it, so he put the choice theory forward. According to this view, human control over his behavior is a conscious control. So that he chooses his "overall behavior" {behavior generality} and he is responsible for his choices. Human chooses his desires, expectations, thoughts, beliefs and actions so that he can create the best and most pleasant state in himself. Behavior is the result of human choice ⁹.

Choice Theory was founded by William Glaser in 1998 (with an extension of his earlier work on control therapy) and five basic human needs (survival, love and belonging, power, freedom and fun) are stressed that all human motivation comes from these needs. These needs are inner, universal, dynamic and consistent with each other. In the choice theory it is believed that we're excited to build our special "quality world" to satisfy the needs.

Quality world includes favorite people, ideas and "our desires". Doing means all behaviors we act and these doings are usually targeted. In any case, when there is a perceived difference between what we have achieved and what we want, we will make effort to become closer to satisfying the needs and achieving our desires to minimize or eliminate this "failure" ⁷. World of quality has been made up people's understandings, situations, and positive things. These conceptions and perceptions for the person are highly related to his needs meeting. Our needs are often associated with images and these images represent life with satisfaction of needs. We would like to experience such a life ⁴.

However, each individual will choose a particular behavior to achieve the basic needs satisfaction, which is unique to that individual ¹. Another choice theory concept is that "behavior generality" encompasses all human behavior. Behavior generality includes four separate but connected parts that are: doing, thinking, feeling and physiology (physiological sensations). These four parts are like the four wheels of a car that the front wheels are doing and thinking. We always have direct control over these two wheels since we have direct control over what we choose to do and think. No one can force us to do and think what we do not want. But we are in the direction of our behavior generality car. Humans can pick out the most effective and appropriate ways to attain pleasure, power, freedom, love and dedication to create better situations ¹⁰.

Severely emotionally disturbed behavior is the best choice for a person who has been able to achieve the goals and satisfy his needs. According to Glaser what is called mental illness in traditional psychiatry, is improper choice, ineffective and inadequate behavior choice, by which the person wants to satisfy his needs ⁴.

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Glaser noted: "what is known as a mental illness actually includes the hundreds of ways that people choose when they are unable to satisfy their genetic basic needs to behave. Glaser emphasizes on the effectiveness of relationships creation as an alternative for psychiatric medications. Many people feel medications can help them, but according to Glaser psychiatric medications not only can cause brain damage, but also they can lead to the notion that external forces are needed to improve mental health. Glaser has repeatedly pointed out that the choice theory and reality therapy form the internal control system (C2005); as he previously noted that the choice theory is an internal control system and describes why and how choosing the options determine our lives direction ⁶.

When people choose more efficient and more useful behaviors to satisfy their need, the symptoms are quickly relieved. He frequently uses the term "bad connection" to describe a relationship in which ineffective and inefficient behavior is applied. In the bad connection, the person selects destructive and troublemaking behavior that generally is called mental illness, crime, addiction, and marital conflict. Choice theory says that 99 percent of those who have difficulty with others, use the ancient or vulgar idea that is the external control psychology ⁴.

Glaser's description of the behavior is more humanistic than behavioral, and he uses five basic needs to describe how we behave. William Glaser teaches us that human behavior motivation is internal and through the impulses that are rooted in genetic structure and human happiness depends very much on how to handle these impulses. This is an ultra-physical statement about human nature ¹¹.

Hamamci examined the impact of group therapy on marital satisfaction and came to the conclusion that the impact of this training, in the experimental group relative to the control group is significant ¹². Fincham et al found that when couples assess (cognitively) their relationship positively, this manner of thinking and method can help solve everyday problems associated with the interaction. When the spouses consider their partner as responsible for negative events, their overall assessment of the relationship becomes weak over time ⁹.

MATREALS AND METHODS

This study was conducted using a quasi -experimental method, pre-test - post-test plan and control group. Since the study has been conducted using a quasi -experimental method, determining the sample size according to most of research books is at least 15 subjects per group. In order to determine the sample size of the study 30 couples were selected. 15 couples were considered as control group and 15 couples were considered as experimental group. The couples were selected, based on the available sample method, among the clients of Mehr Jonoob Counseling and Psychological Services Center in Bandar Abbas and were replaced in two groups of control and experimental on the basis of life quality score and Matching Familiar Figures Test.

Consultation process based on choice theory with experimental group was conducted according to the following table.

Table 1. Group counseling program based on choice theory for married women

Session Number	Topic
First	Introducing choice theory and the concepts of internal and external controls and how to use internal controls instead of external control in couple relationships
Second	Introducing the ideal world and its constituent components in couple relationships
Third	Introduction to basic needs in marital life and familiarity with the needs severity and needs profile outlining in couple relationships
Forth	Teaching how to discuss the five marital needs, and the desirable world (the quality world)
Fifth	Introduction to concept of general behavior and make sense of responsibility to satisfy needs
Sixth	The introduction of external control destructive habits and replacing kindness habits, entering the desirable world of each other, making sensitivity, inviting to conversation, using kindness habits in dialogues and reaching an agreement and reinforce adaptive behaviors

At the beginning of the sessions, first about 30 minutes the subject of each session was explained. Then, the topic in the form of group counseling is discussed and the experiences are presented, solutions and evaluation of solutions are debated. Two sessions per week were considered. In total, group counseling was completed in 3 weeks. 3 weeks after group counseling, life quality questionnaire was performed between the two groups of control and experimental. The results are as follows.

In this research to collect the required data, the World Health Organization Quality of Life Questionnaire was used. Reliability and validity of the questionnaire, which was translated into Persian by Nejat, have been evaluated in the general population and in patients who suffer from multiple sclerosis in Iran. The questionnaire is consisted of 26 provisions and 4 dimensions of physical, psychological, social and physical environment health, which is used as a comprehensive scale, and totally, includes the overall quality of life and levels of public health. The reliability of the questionnaire in this study is equal to 0.86.

RESULTS

To test the effectiveness of group counseling based on choice theory on improving the quality of life for women, the life quality state of the studied sample has been shown before the consultation. Then, through an analysis of covariance the effectiveness of group counseling based on choice theory is discussed.

Table 2. Results of the t test of the quality of life of the studied sample before group consultation

Quality of life and its dimensions	Group	Mean	Standard deviation	t	p
Quality of life	Control	103	6.979	-1.151	0.2
	Experimental	105.73	5.993		
Physical health seeking	Control	26.53	3.09	-1.826	

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	Experimental	28.47	2.695		0.07
Mental health	Control	17.4	1.404	1.677	
	Experimental	16.33	2.023		0.1
Social relationships	Control	9.06	2.604	0.483	
	Experimental	8.66	1.877		0.6
The environment and living conditions	Control	23.13	3.907	0.105	
	Experimental	23	3		0.9

With regard to the average quality of life and its dimensions in the experimental group and control group and according to the mean values and $t < 1.96$ and $p > 0.05$, the results showed that there is no significant difference between the life quality of control group couples and the experimental group couples before group counseling based on choice theory.

Table 3. ANCOVA of emotional control training on enhancing the quality of life of couples in the control group and the experimental group

Quality of life and its dimensions	Group	Mean	Standard deviation	Sum of squares	F	p	Share Coefficient
Quality of life	Control	106.3	5.851	741	33.127	0.001	0.675
	Experimental	117.8	5.28				
Physical health	Control	27.53	4.172	47.632	40.842	0.003	0.728
	Experimental	31.93	2.25				
Mental health	Control	19.4	2.354	245.17	56.422	0.001	0.677
	Experimental	24.8	2.177				
Social relationships	Control	9.53	2.065	84.449	34.153	0.001	0.606
	Experimental	12.73	1.533				
The environment and living conditions	Control	24.33	3.221	445.425	46.493	0.001	0.647
	Experimental	32	3.229				

ANCOVA test results on the effectiveness of group counseling based on choice theory on improving the quality of life between the experimental group and control group according to the above table indicate that the mean of control group quality of life is equal to 106.333 and the mean of the experimental group quality of life is equal to 117.8. The situation with regard to the F value and significance level ($p = 0.001$) show that group counseling based on choice theory at 99% confidence level can be effective in improving quality of life. Statistical results also show that group counseling based on Choice Theory 67.5% will explain the improvement of women's life quality.

Effectiveness results of group counseling based on choice theory on improving the quality of life of the sample indicated that according to the state of averages in each dimensions, including physical health and hygiene dimension (control group 27.53 and experimental group 31.93.) mental health dimension

(control group 19.4 and experimental group 24.8) social relationships dimension (control group 9.53 and mean of experimental group 12.73) and the environment and living conditions dimension (control group 24.33 and experimental group 32) and the F value is greater than 1.96 and p-value is less than 0.05 in each dimension, group counseling based on choice theory has a significant effect on women's quality of life.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study showed a significant effect of group counseling based on choice theory on improving the quality of life of women. In other words, group counseling based on choice theory is effective on improving the women's quality of life. Group counseling based on choice theory is derived from William Glaser's choice theory¹². This theory focuses on the action based on the realities. So we can say that realism is effective on improving the quality of women's lives. The results obtained in this study is consistent with the research findings of Kellogg⁶, Barnes and Parish⁵, Davidson et al.⁷, Aghai¹⁰, Mashayekhi¹¹. As women typically to make decisions and to have mental perception act and behave on the basis of feelings, group counseling based on choice theory has been able to improve their quality of life. As mentioned before, group counseling based on reality therapy can be effective on individuals' reasonable attitudes and people would act prudently and in accordance with what exist; Glaser believes that if a person chooses more efficient and useful behaviors for fulfilling his needs, the symptoms will go away quickly. Since the main core of mental therapy in reality therapy focuses on the responsibility dimension, the reality therapy can be effective in improving the quality of life of the individual, and as a result it can prevent inappropriate behaviors and actions. In fact, the individual make a correct decision based on realities⁴.

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