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Effectiveness of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) on social wellbeing improvement and mother-child relationship of girls in mother-headed single-parent families

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Abstract

Introduction: Regarding to improvement in relationships and conflict resolution in families is one of the factors of improving individuals' social wellbeing, the present study is aimed at investigating effectiveness of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) on social wellbeing improvement and mother-child relationships of girls in mother-headed single-parent families.

Materials and Methods: Research method of this clinical trial is pretest-posttest with control group. In this research, 28 mother-headed girls with conflicts with their families were selected and randomly divided into two control and experimental groups. Then, Well-Being Scales and The Parent-Child Relationship Inventory (PCRI) were completed by members of the two groups. The experimental group received ten 90-minute weekly sessions of ACT. Data analyzed through descriptive and analytical statistics.

Results: Analysis of covariance showed that there is significant difference between experimental group and control group in the scores ($P < 0.05$).

Conclusion: According to the research findings, ACT is effective on individuals' social wellbeing as well as mother-child relationships.

Keywords: Acceptance and commitment therapy, Child, Mother, Social well-being

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Introduction

The family is the smallest social unit that can be introduced as the main basis of any society (1). This small communal unit is a dynamic system that includes a number of people with a very special relationship in a system that is completely separate from other social systems (2) and

therefore the home environment is known as the first and most important factor influencing the development of people's personality. (1). With a brief look at the family, it can be said that the family is responsible for various tasks, including the ability to adapt to new needs and conditions, creating and training communication skills,

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decision-making, compromise, problem solving, flexibility, resilience, planning, It refers to leadership, self-expression, envisioning the future, nurturing and growing children and parenting (2). Based on this and considering the importance of family duties, the direct effect of this system on other social systems cannot be denied, but the damage caused in the family and what has happened today with the transformation of the society's structure has caused disruption in the functions of the family (3). Perhaps it is safe to say that what is known as the basic harm in families today is the breakup of families and severe disruption in the relationships between its members, the consequences of which can be seen in society and other social systems. The breakdown of the family and various other factors in the Iranian society have faced many families with neglect or mismanagement of their children. Parental incompatibility increases children's vulnerability, especially when it leads to separation and divorce.

Losing a parent or one of them causes a defect in the family, and when the family breaks up over time, it has more negative effects on the children and prepares the ground for the occurrence of various social harms (4). Children who grow up in an environment devoid of family love and attachment and in an unsafe environment will be exposed to emotional, moral, social and spiritual crises. Deeper and inwardly, they make the society a problem (5).

This puts the social well-being of these people at risk. This concept, along with physical well-being and mental well-being, was introduced by the World Health Organization as one of the three pillars of public health in 1979 (6).

Keynes, who is considered as one of the experts in this field, defines social well-being as the personal report of people about the quality of their relationships with others, and Goldsmith introduces it as the evaluation of meaningful positive and negative behaviors of a person in relation to others, which is one of the most fundamental It is the health indicators of the people of every society and it leads to the increase of the efficiency of the individual in the society (7) and therefore it can be said that people with high social well-being consider life purposeful, consider themselves the ruler of life, and along with all aspects of their life, they belong to the

community. They know their surroundings and try to improve the relationships around them (8).

But learning and the main roots of this feeling of belonging and improving relationships in the community originate from the family of people, which is actually a huge part of the problems caused by the separation of families based on the disorder and problem in this area of people's health. In these families, the mother tries to play a more active role and perform the tasks of the absent parent, to improve the family's cohesion and improve her relationship with her children. An effort that may not be successful in spite of problems such as poverty, lack of communication skills of family members, and the heavy duties of the guardianship role (9). It cannot be said for sure who has the most influence in creating conflict between parents and children, but it can be said that the lack of knowledge of parents and children about communication skills and lack of skills in solving interpersonal problems causes incompatibilities and conflicts (10). A family that is disturbed due to conflict and interpersonal problems between parents and children, takes away the psychological and spiritual safe environment that should exist in it from the members and causes problems for its members (11). If it is handled correctly among the family members, it will help the growth of the relationship, and otherwise, not only this problem will not be solved, but it will cause damage in the continuation of the relationship of the members (12). Based on all the above, it should be stated that establishing and maintaining communication is very important and parents can solve problems by communicating with their children in such a way that they can live together under the same roof (11). Meanwhile, many psychological treatments have improved social well-being and interpersonal relationships. Treatments such as communication analysis approach training have been effective in a short period of time in improving communication and in the efficiency of family members in life situations (13), but the main question is whether these treatments are able to cause this improvement in relationships in the long term. One of the treatments that is effective and influential in interpersonal communication and social well-being of people (14) and perhaps it can be said that due to addressing individual values in life, it aims to

improve people's quality of life in the long term, treatment based on acceptance and commitment.

Therapy based on acceptance and commitment is a new form of cognitive behavioral therapy (15), which reflects the experimental work on the effect of language on evolved behavior (16) and is based on the theory of relational frameworks (17). This treatment was developed and introduced in 1999 by Hayes, Strossal and Wilson and it is a combination of mindfulness along with behavioral principles and a person's correct perception of their personal values (18).

The main goal of this treatment is to reduce the influence of thought on people's behavior and performance. In fact, what is important in this treatment is to achieve a general process called psychological flexibility, which makes a person open and aware of his thoughts and feelings, fully in touch with the present and performing behaviors that lead him on the path Life moves towards values and introduces commitment towards these values (19).

All these values and these processes cause a person to observe the improvement of quality in his life, which can be known as the existence of health and well-being of the person and the factor that improves interpersonal relationships. Therefore, in this research, an attempt was made to answer the question of whether the treatment based on acceptance and commitment is able to improve the social well-being of people and mother-child relationships like many other treatments.

Materials and Methods

This clinical research was done with pre-test-post-test and control group. The statistical population of this research is all the children of abusive families or with mothers who work and study in charity centers.

The sampling method of this research was available, one of them was selected from among all the charitable educational centers and after evaluating the applicants, 28 people were selected from among these people and they were randomly divided into two groups, the test and the control. . A pre-test was taken from everyone and the test group received 10 weekly 90-minute group therapy sessions.

During the treatment period, the control group did not receive any treatment. After finishing the

treatment sessions, a post-test was taken from both groups. To comply with the ethical principles, after the completion of the treatment period, the control group also received the treatment.

Research instruments

A) Mental Well-being Scale: This scale is used by Keyes and Magyarmo (2003) to measure emotional, psychological and social well-being, which consists of 45 questions.

The first 12 questions are related to emotional well-being, the next 18 questions are related to psychological well-being, and finally the next 15 questions are related to social well-being. Social well-being (15 questions) This scale includes 5 sub-components: social acceptability and acceptance, social realism, social participation, social cohesion, solidarity and social integration. A 7-point Likert scale is used to score this subscale.

A score between 15 and 30 indicates low social well-being. A score between 30 and 60 indicates average social well-being, and scores above 60 indicate high social well-being.

B) Parent-Child Relationship Questionnaire: The original version of this questionnaire was created by Fine, Moreland and Schaubel (1983) with the aim of measuring the quality of parent-child relationships (20).

This scale is a 24-question instrument to measure the opinion of teenagers and young adults (even minors) about their relationship with their parents. This scale has two forms, one to measure the child's relationship with the mother and one to measure the child's relationship with the father. In this research, the child-mother form is used.

This scale has an alpha coefficient of 0.89 to 0.94 for the subscales related to the father, as well as an overall alpha of 0.96, and alpha coefficients of 0.61 (identification) to 0.94 for the subscales related to the mother, as well as alpha Overall, 0.96 has excellent internal consistency (21).

Results

After collecting the questionnaires in the post-test and grading stage, the collected data were analyzed by the analysis of covariance test method.

Table 1. Mean and standard deviation of girls' social well-being scores

Variable	Stage	ACT		Control	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Social well-being	Pre-test	63.42	5.43	61.64	9.58
	Post-test	90.50	13.73	62.07	41.10

As can be seen, Table 1 shows the statistical indicators of the studied groups in social welfare based on the pre-test and post-test scores in different research groups.

Before using the analysis of covariance test, it is necessary to test the presuppositions, by checking

Levine's test about the equality of error variances, the assumption of equality of variances was observed and the variance of the dependent variable error was equal in the groups ($F= 6.97$ and $\alpha= 0.01$) Therefore, analysis of covariance can be used to check the hypotheses.

Table 2. The results of one-way covariance analysis of the effect of acceptance and commitment treatment on social well-being

Source of reference	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F-value	Sig.	Eta-squared
Pre-test	2426.59	1	2426.59	42.29	0.001	0.63
Groups	5621.03	1	5621.03	97.97	0.001	0.80
Error	1434.34	25	57.37			

As can be seen in Table 2, after controlling the effect of pre-test on social well-being by analysis of covariance, F calculated for the test and control groups is 42.29 at the level of significance ($P < 0.000$). Therefore, there is a significant difference between the average post-test scores of social well-being of the test group and the control group.

The impact rate is equal to 0.63, which shows that 63% of the variance of the social well-being of the participating girls can be explained by the implementation of the therapeutic approach. Therefore, according to the results, the above hypothesis was confirmed.

Table 3. Mean and standard deviation of mother-child relationship scores in the samples

Variable	Stage	ACT		Control	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Mother-child relationship	Pre-test	108.92	13.10	110.64	16.57
	Post-test	131.35	11.02	110.28	17.27

As can be seen, Table 3 shows the statistical indicators of the studied groups in the mother-child relationship based on the pre-test and post-test scores in different research groups. Before using the analysis of covariance test, it is necessary to test the presuppositions, by checking

Levine's test about the equality of error variances, the assumption of equality of variances was observed and the variance of the dependent variable error was equal in the groups ($F= 14.53$ and $\alpha=0.00$) Therefore, analysis of covariance can be used to check the hypotheses

Table 4. The results of one-way covariance analysis of the effect of acceptance and commitment therapy on the mother-child relationship

Source of reference	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F-value	Sig.	Eta-squared
Pre-test	4687.07	1	4687.07	151.59	0.001	0.86
Group	3566.64	1	3566.46	115.34	0.001	0.82
Error	773.00	25	30.92			

As can be seen in Table 4, after controlling the effect of pre-test on the mother-child relationship by the analysis of covariance method, the F calculated for the experimental and control groups is 151.59 at the level of significance ($P < 0.000$). Therefore, there is a significant difference between the average scores of the mother-child relationship post-test of experimental and control group women. The impact rate is equal to 0.86, which shows that 86% of the variance of the mother-child relationship of participating girls can be explained by the implementation of the therapeutic approach.

Discussion

The results of covariance analysis on the post-test scores of the test and control groups showed that the treatment based on acceptance and commitment was effective in improving the overall social well-being and mother-child relationship of abused girls in the test group compared to the control group subjects. Regarding the effectiveness of different treatments on the improvement of social well-being, the researcher did not find any information, but since this variable is one of the mental well-being variables, it can be said that the findings of the present study are similar to the findings of Sakhawat and Attari (10), Bahramabady et al. (8) and Akbari Zardkhaneh and Mahmoudi (22) agree on the effectiveness of various treatments on parent-child relationships.

During the recent years, a large number of treatments and concepts have investigated social well-being and health and how parent-child relationships are. But what separates this research

from other researches is dealing with treatment based on acceptance and commitment to different aspects and dimensions of every human's needs and improving the quality of life in people (22).

By expressing the values, this treatment makes the important concepts in each person's life clear and bold, and reminds them of their commitment to each of these values, and helps the person to change their current behavior and lifestyle and movement. To improve social well-being and parent-child relationships towards values. Because of the presence of rejection thoughts in the children of abusive families, many of them have problems in their social and even family life, perhaps the most important part in the effectiveness of treatment and improvement of social well-being and parent-child relationships was to express the part of fault and values for these people. . In addition to these two cases, another part of the hexagon of treatment based on acceptance and commitment, called acceptance, reminds all people that the existence of these thoughts and feelings is due to being human and the existence of a mind in all people, and we should not fight with them. Expressing how to accept internal problems, including uncomfortable thoughts and feelings, during sessions, the client learns this skill so that he does not see internal problems as an obstacle to improving his relationships in society and does not stop trying in the path of his values.

Conclusion

According to the results, treatment based on acceptance and commitment effectively improves people's social well-being and mother-child relationships.

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