

## The effectiveness of cognitive – behavioral training on depression and psychological wellbeing of the divorced women

By

<sup>1</sup>*Shahram Mami*, <sup>2</sup>*Farideh Narengi* and <sup>3</sup>*Farkhondeh Malk Zadeh*

<sup>1</sup>Department of Psychology, Islamic Azad University Science & Research, Ilam Branch, Iran.

<sup>2</sup>MA student in Psychology, Islamic Azad University, science and research, Ilam, Iran.

<sup>3</sup>MA student in Psychology, Islamic Azad University, science and research, Ilam, Iran.

### Abstract

*The aim of this research was investigate the effectiveness of cognitive – behavioral training on both depression and psychological wellbeing of the divorced women. The statistical society of the research included all of the divorced women of Sarableh who referred to social emergency of this city. Of these women, 30 were selected through availability method as the sample of the research. Those selected were randomly divided into two 15 – members groups (one group as the experiment group and the other as the control group). Both of the groups had pretests and post test. The experiment group was offered 12 in group session of cognitive – behavioral psychotherapy training according to the instruction of Muñoz, Aquilar – Gaxiala & Guzmán (1986). To collect data the scale of Beck's depression inventory – II and Ryff's psychological well – being inventory (1994) were used. The results of research analysis revealed that there is a significant difference between experiment group and control group with regard to depression variables ( $F= 14.86, P< 0.001$ ) and psychological well – being ( $F= 21.47, P< 0.001$ ). Based on these findings, it can be claimed that cognitive behavioral intervention reduces depression on one hand, and increases psychological well – being of the subjects of the experiment group, on the other, compared with control group in post – test stage. Therefore, it can be concluded that. This training reduces depression divorced woman and increases the psychological well – being*

**Keywords:** *Cognitive – behavioral training, depression, psychological well – being, divorced women.*

### 1. Introduction

One of the main problems which has been intensified in recent years and has had a devastating effect on both family system and the society is the phenomenon of divorce. According to Briscoe (1974), divorce is often counted as a process of mourning which through targeting his/her integrity and feeling secure, predicts his/her anxiety. Lack of social status, financial security and social security network, such as married and common friends, are the consequences of divorce and absence of spouse. So, it is not surprising that putting an end to a marriage is accompanied with depression and sadness.

Bruce (1992) believes that divorce is social problem which severely influences the individuals' lives who involve it. Divorce not only tears apart the matrimonial ties, but also, due to its tense nesses, leads to disjoining the relationships between individuals.

Although both spouses, that is, husband and wife suffer from the unpleasant consequences of divorce, no doubt, according to previous research, the women are much more vulnerable than men after divorce (Gahler, 2006). The most significant negative result of this grievous event, is the out break of mental disorders, especially depression. In our country, Iran, the prevalence of depression disorder in women is twice that of their fellow men (Kaviani *et al*, 2002). According to Bohannan (1970), the divorced feel that they are hated and have been rejected from the groups to which they have been related. The most valuable thing for the divorced individual is the feeling of being supported by the others. The divorced women are more exposed to mental, physical, and social damages such as anxiety, depression, suicide and heart diseases than the married are (Gahler, 2006; Kendler, 2003; Simon, 2002, qotbi *et al*, 2004). The results

## The effectiveness of cognitive – behavioral training on depression and psychological wellbeing of the divorced women

of the research by Haffarian and colleagues (2009) revealed that the mean scores for all of the aspects of life quality (physical and mental health, social relationships, and life environment) of the divorced women in significantly lower than that of no divorced women. Free (1992) believes that in therapeutics, the referee learns first to indentify his illogical ideas and understand their roles. Then the therapist begins exploring the experiences of the referee and changes his/her illogical values and incorrect reasons. The results of the researches show the effectiveness of – behavioral – therapeutics on depression disorder (Shamaei *et al*, 2009; Hollon and Beck, 1995; Roth and Fonagy, 2005; Smits *et al*, 2009; Siegle *et al*, 2011). The results of the researches by Ranjbar and colleagues (2010) showed also that behavioral – therapeutic group is effective on reducing the depression of the patients who have a mild depression. The results of the work by Faramarzi (2008) illustrated that behavioral – therapeutics is one of the most frequently used interventions for depression therapy. According to Ryff's model, psychological well – being is composed of 6 factors: self – acceptance, positive relationship with others, independence, aimed life, personal growth, and controlling the environment (Ryff and Keyes, 1995). According to Ryff and Singer (2000) following meaning full objects, development and progress and conducting qualified connections with others are effective on individual's well – being and supports him/her in fundamental problems of life.

The results of various studies (Hamid, 2011; Chobfroush Zadeh *et al*, 2011; Chobfroush Zadeh *et al*, 2010) showed that managing stress through cognitive – behavioral method leads to depression and anxiety reduction, mental well – being, and qualifying the infertile women's lives.

According to the above – mentioned material, the aim of this research was to investigate the effectiveness of cognitive – behavioral training on depression and psychological well – being of the divorced women of Sarableh. In line with this research 2 hypotheses have been provided and tested:

1. Cognitive – behavioral training is effective on the divorced women's depression reduction
2. Cognitive – behavioral training is effective on the divorced women's psychological well – being

## 2. Method

This research is semi experimental pretest – post test with control group. The statistical universe includes all of the divorced women referring to social emergency of Sarableh. Of these women, 30 were selected through availability method. Then they were divided into two 15 – member groups (one experiment group, and one control group). The experiment group had 12 sessions of in group cognitive – behavioral therapeutic training which were conducted according to the instructions of Munoz, Aquilar – Gaxiola & Guzman (1986). Before the beginning of the training sessions, both of two groups had a pre – test. Then, the experiment group had the cognitive – behavioral training. In the end, each of the groups had a post test. To analyze data, descriptive statistics and inferential statics (Covariance analysis test) was used.

### ***Instrument***

**Beck's depression inventory** (BDI – II): This is a self- report scale which is composed of 21 items, designed for depression assessment. Each of the questions has for choices. The score of each question varies between 0 and 3. The object should check the choice which is corresponding to his/her present conditions. Total score ranges from 0 to 63. The internal reliability of this instrument varies between 0.73 and 0.92 with the mean of 0.86; its Cronbach alpha for the groups of patients and no patients is reported to be 0.86 and 0.80, respectively (Hassani, 2008). In this research, the internal reliability is reported to be 0.81 by Cronbach alpha.

Ryff's psychological well – being inventory (1994): This scale includes 77 questions which has been provided by Zanjani – Tabasi (2004) based on psychoanalytic principals and method to assess psychological well – being. This test includes 6 subscales having been graded on 5 – point Linkert scale

(Totally agree to totally disagree). This questionnaire has 23 questions which are scored inversely. The sum of the scores of all of the items shows the level of psychological well – being. In the research by Shoja'i (2009), the reliability coefficient of this questionnaire by Cronbach alpha and dissection has been reported at 0.94 and 0.92, respectively.

In this research, Cronbach alpha and bisection were used. The reliability coefficient of this research was 0.78 and 0.76, respectively.

### 3. Findings

The results in table one shows that the mean and the standard deviation for the scores of depression in pre – test stage for experiment group have been 41 and 6 and 42 and 6 for the control group, respectively. The same results in post – test stage have been 33.13 and 4.42 for experiment group and 41.60 and 7.27 for control group, respectively. This means that the mean score of depression for experiment group in post – test stage has reduced, compared to pretest stage and control group. On the other hand, the mean and standard deviation of the scores of psychological well – being in pre – test stage have been 45.42 and 5.80 for experiment group, and 44.47 and 6.01 for control group, respectively. The same results for control group have been 53.80 and 5.43 for experiment group and 44.13 and 5.99 for control group. This means that the mean score of psychological well – being for experiment group in post – test stage has increased, compared to pre – test stage and control group.

**Table 1: The mean and standard deviation for experiment and control groups in pre – test and post test stage**

variable	Groups	Pre-test		Post-test	
		mean	SD	mean	SD
<b>depression</b>	experiment	41	6	33.13	4.42
	Control	42	6	41.60	7.22
<b>Well-being</b>	experiment	45.52	5.80	53.80	5.43
	Control	44.47	6.01	44.13	5.99

In present research, in order to test the hypotheses 1 and 2 and determine the level of the significance of the given intervention on reducing depression and increasing psychological well – being for both groups in pre – test and post – test stages, multivariate co – variance analysis (MANCOVA) was used.

The results in table two shows that there is a significant difference between experiments groups and control group in depression and psychological well – being elements with the significance level of  $p < 0,001$ . Therefore, it can be said that there is, at least, a difference between one of the variables of experiment group and control group. To find this difference, we used co – variance analysis.

**Table 2: the results of MANCOVA analysis on the mean scores of post – test for depression and psychological well – being in experiment group and control group with pre – test control**

test	quantity	F	df	df error	significance
<b>Hypothesis</b>					
<b>Pillae effect</b>	0.57	18.03	2	27	0.001
<b>Lambday wilkz</b>	0.43	18.03	2	27	0.001
<b>Holling effect</b>	1.34	18.03	2	27	0.001
<b>Greatest stemming</b>	1.34	18.03	2	27	0.001

As it can be observed in table 3, the results of one – way co – variance analysis showed that cognitive – behavioral training has a significant effect on depression and psychological well – being variables; that is

The effectiveness of cognitive – behavioral training on depression and psychological wellbeing of the divorced women

to say, cognitive – behavioral training has been effective on reducing depression on one hand, and increasing psychological well – being on the other.

**Table 3: The results of one – variation co – variance analysis on the mean scores of post – test for experiment and control groups with pre – test control**

	Change source	Sum of squares	df	Mean of squares	F	significance
<b>Depression</b>	Pre-test group	835.27	1	835.27	126.65	0.001
	error	445.05	1	445.05	67.48	0.001
		178.07	27	6.59		
<b>Well-being</b>	Pre-test group	384.92	1	384.92	19.64	0.001
	error	620.60	1	620.60	31.66	0.001
		529.21	27	19.60		

With regard to table 4, it can be seen that there is a significant difference between experiment and control group as to depression variables ( $p < 0.001$ ,  $F = 14.86$ ) and psychological well – being ( $p < 0.001$ ;  $F = 21.74$ ). According to these findings, it can be claimed that cognitive – behavioral training leads in reducing depression and increasing psychological well – being in the subjects of experiment group, compared to control group in post – test stage.

**Table 4: The results of one – variation analysis in MANCOVA context on the mean scores of post – test of depression and psychological well – being elements in experiment and control group**

Dependent variable	Total squares	df	Mean square	F	significance
<b>Depression</b>	537.63	1	537.63	14.86	0.001
<b>Well-being</b>	700	1	700	21.47	0.001

#### 4. Results and Discussion

The results show that cognitive – behavioral training leads to reducing depression and increasing psychological well – being in divorced women in sum, this research is in line with the other researches which have been done on this context (Siegle *et al*, 2011; Roth & Fonagy, 2005; Hollon & Beck, 1995; Smits *et al*, 2010; Chobforoush Zadeh *et al*, 2011; Hamid, 2011; Ranjber *et al*, 2010).

Legal divorce, even for the women who applied for it, is not necessarily an end to the tensions which results from marriage, but, in the final stages of marriage, after the marriage and even after divorce, some new events and process intermediaries emerge which are able to effect the affection, behavior, and the well – being of the divorced women. These intermediaries include: Taking care of the children (among those women whose lawful custody of their children has been taken from them), continuation of the conflict with their ex – husband on support, visiting children or their custody, lack of effective support due to the reduction of relationship with causal relatives, married friends and neighbors, reduction in economical activities, and the events which disorganize the routine of life such as moving from an expensive, suitable place to lead to adjustments by which divorce effects the performance and happiness of the divorced women of the area and reduces their quality of life (Hafarian *et al*, 2009).

The individuals having high positive characteristics (happiness and mental well – being) have, in general, some ideal features: They participate in meetings more than others, love others, have less divorce, have longer lives, and have higher job performance and income. Because making use of these methods is not dedicated to a special situation or age, the public people can make use of them (Lyubomirsky, 2007).

In order to explain the results of this research, it should be said that, the thinking system of the depressed individual is composed of his/her negative feelings as to his/her own experiences, current experience and future experience. The negative thoughts about one self include: The belief of the depressed one who sees him/her self as an inefficient one; as he/she believe he/she is defected, he/she thinks he/she will not reach happiness. The negative feeling about the experience includes his/her interpretation of the events which take place for him/her. She/he sees the negative obstacles as impassible, even when there are more reasonable in sights about his/her experience. She/he tends to what which happened for him/her in the most negative interpretation.

In the end the attitude of a depressed one about the future is the attitude of a helpless one. When he/she thinks about future, he/she believes that due to his/her inefficiencies; the negative events will continue (Beck, 1979). In fact cognitive – behavioral therapy in depression emphasizes on the negative tendency in data processing which results from deviating the interpretations of one self, environment and the future which is related to unjustified beliefs which are aroused by the individual. The most of recent attitudes of this model emphasize on the relationship between the nature of depression events and the patients' interpretations of them. Through challenging negative thoughts cognitive – behavioral techniques, reinforce planning for reaching objectives and reduce depression. More over, the basics of well – being mean the general evaluation of the individual about his/her life which is formed according to personal objectives and accessibility to these objectives (Huebner, 2000). This factor is one of the most important psychological needs of the man in their lives. Therefore, it has important influences on the formation of men's personality, and in total, on the whole life of the mankind and afterwards affects their performance in all levels. As depression is related to psychological well – being (Roini *et al*, 2003), there is a possibility of increasing well – being by reducing depression.

Insufficient training sessions and lacking the stage of follow up to assess long – term therapy are among the limitation of this research. So, the generalization should be done very carefully. It is suggested that in future research the number of the training sessions and making use of follow up stage be taken into account, so that, the generalization will be possible. Moreover, as this research has been done after divorce has taken place, it is suggested that some researches be performed on the couples who either are deciding to separate or have martial conflicts in their martial lives

## References

- Beck, A. T., Rush, A. J., Shaw, B. F., & Emery, G. (1979). *Cognitive therapy of depression*. New York: Guilford press.
- Bohannon, Paul, ed. 1970. *Divorce and After*. Garden City, NY, USA: Anchor Books.
- Briscoe, C. William, and James B. Smith. 1974. "Psychiatric Illness: Marital Units and Divorce." *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Diseases* 158(6):440–445.
- Bruce, Martha L., and Kathleen M. Kim. 1992. "Differences in the Effects of Divorce on Major Depression in Men and Women." *American Journal of Psychiatry* 149(7):914–917.

The effectiveness of cognitive – behavioral training on depression and psychological wellbeing of the divorced women

- Choobforoushzade A, Kalantari M, Molayi H. [The effectiveness of cognitive behavioral stress management on subjective well-being in infertile women] [Article in Persian]. *J Clin Psychol* 2010;1(4):1-9.
- Choobforoushzade A, Kalantari M, Molayi H. [The effectiveness of cognitive behavioral stress management therapy on quality of life in infertile women] [Article in Persian]. *Iran J Obstet Gynecol Inferti* 2011 Spring;14(1):14-21.
- Dierendonck , D. ( 2005 ). The construct validity of Ryff Scale of psychological well – being its extension differences. 36 , 629 – 643.
- Faramarzi M, Alipor A, Esmaelzadeh S, Kheirkhah F, Poladi K, Pash H. Treatment of depression and anxiety in infertile women: Cognitive behavioral therapy versus fluoxetine. *J Affective Disord* 2008; 108: 159-164.
- Francisco. Clínica de Depresión Gahler M. To divorce is to die a bit a longitudinal study of marital disruption and psychological distress among Swedish women and men. *The Family Journal Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families* 2006; 14(4): 372-82.
- Free, M. (1999). *Cognitive therapy in groups: guidelines and resources for practice*. Translated by M. Mohammadi., & R. Farnam (2005). Tehran: Roshd.
- Gahler, M .) 2006). To divorce is to die a bit a longitudinal study of marital disrupt and psychological distress among Swedish women and men. *The Family Journal Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families*; 14(4): 372-82.
- Ghotbi M, Holakoei K, Jazayeri A, Rahimi Foroushani A. Evaluation of Divorce and its Factors in Divorced Person Lived in Doulat Abad (Tehran). *Social Welfare Quarterly* 2004; 12(3): 271-86.
- Hafarian, Leila; Aqa'e, Asghar; Mohammad Baqer-e, Kajbaf; and Kamkar, Manouchehr (2009). Comparing the life style and its dimensions in divorced and married women, and its relationship with demographical features in Shiraz; Knowledgege and research in applied psychology; Islamic Azad University, Xorasgan (Isfahan); 41; 46-86
- Hamid N. [The effectiveness of stress management on depression, anxiety and fertilization of infertile women] [Article in Persian]. *J Behav Sci* 2011 Spring;5(1):55-60.
- Hassani, Fariba (2008). Comparing the internal effectiveness of the couple's cognitive- behavioral therapy and emotion-centered on depression, anxiety, disappointment, and martial satisfaction of infertile man; PhD thesis on counseling; Islamic Azad university; science and research; Tehran, Iran
- Hollon, S. D. (1981). Comparisons and combinations with alternative approaches in L .P .Rehm (ed), *behavior therapy for depression: Present status and future directions* ,New York:Academic Press.
- Hollon, S. D., & Beck, A. T. (1995). Cognitive and Cognitive behavioral therapies. In: *Handbook of psychotherapy and behavior chang* (4th edn), ed. S. L. Garfied & A. E. Berrgin. 428-66. New York: Wiley.
- Huebner, E.S., Funk, B.A., & Gilman, R. (2000). Cross- sectional and longitudinal psychosocial correlates of adolescent life satisfaction reports. *Canadian Journal of School Psychology*, 16, 53-64
- Kaviani H, Ahmadi-Abhari SA, Nazari H, Hormozi K. Prevalence of depressive disorders in Tehran resident population, 2000. *Journal of Tehran Facultyof Medicine* 2002; 60(5): 393-9.
- Kendler KS, Thornton LM, Gardner CO. Stressful life events and previous episodes in the etiology of major depression in women: an evaluation of the "kindling" hypothesis. *Am J Psychiatry* 2000; 157(8): 1243-51.

- Lyubomirsky, S. (2001). Why are some people happier than others? The role of cognitive and motivational processes in well-being. *American Psychologist*. 56(3): 239-49.
- Muñoz, R. F., Aguilar-Gaxiola, S., & Guzmán, J. (1986). *Manual de Terapia de Grupo para el Tratamiento Cognitivo-conductual de Depresión*. Hospital General de San
- Ranjbar, Farahdoxt; Ask Torab, Tahereh; Dadgari, Atena (2010). Investigating the effectiveness of cognitive-behavioral therapy by grouping method on the level of depression; *Journal of medicine in Shahid Sadouqi medical science*; Yazd; 18(4): 299-306
- Roini, C., Ottolini, F., Raffanelli, C, Tossani, E., Ryff, CD., & Fave, A.G (2003) .The Relationship of psychological well-being distress and personality. *Psychotherapy Psychosomatics*. 72, 268–375.
- Roth, A., & Fonagy, P. (2005). *What Works for Whom? Second Edition: A Critical Review of Psychotherapy Research*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Ryff , C. D. & Singer , B ( 2000 ). Interpersonal flourishing : Appositive health agenda for the new millennium. *Personality and social psychology review* , 4 , 30 , 44.
- Ryff , CD , & Keyes , C.L. ( 1995 ). The structure of psychological well – being revisited. *Journal of personality and social psychology*.69 , 119 – 129.
- Shamsaei ,F., Rahimi ,A., & Zarabian ,M.K.(2009). P01-288 Efficacy of pharmacotherapy and cognitive therapy, alone and in combination in major depressive disorder. *European Psychiatry*; 24,( 1), 34-56.
- Shoja'e, Ameneh(2009). The relationship of emotional intelligence and social skills with mental well-being of girl students of Shahid Chamran University; MA thesis for Educational Psychology, Shahid Chamran University
- Siegle, G. , Steinhauer, S. , Friedman, E. , Thompson, W., &Thase, M.(2011). Remission Prognosis for Cognitive Therapy for Recurrent Depression Using the Pupil: Utility and Neural Correlates *Biological Psychiatry*; 69( 8):726-733.
- Simon RW. Revisiting the relationships among gender, marital status, and mental health. *AJS* 2002; 107(4): 1065-96.
- Smits, J., Minhajuddin .A., & Jarrett ,R.(2009). Cognitive therapy for depressed adults with co morbid social phobia. *Journal of Affective Disorders*; 114: 271-278.
- Zanani Tabasi, Reza (2004). Introductory building and normalization for psychological well-being test; MA thesis for psychology; Tehran University