

## The Effectiveness of Drama Therapy on the Anxiety of Labor Children

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### Introduction

In recent years, various methods have been used to treat anxiety in children, art therapy is accepted today as one of the most effective methods of treatment. One of these art programs is play (Holmwood, 2017). Drama therapy is group therapy and active and experiential therapy (Berger, 2019) that uses a combination of various theatrical techniques such as role-play, pantomime, puppetry, improvisation, and other methods (Leather & Kewley, 2019).

### Method

This study was quasi-experimental using a pretest-posttest design with a control group and follow-up stage. The statistical population included all labor children in the age range of 8-12 years living in Ahvaz in 2020-2021 under the supervision of a welfare organization. The Spence Children Anxiety Scale was used to choose the main participants of the study and 30 children with the highest anxiety scores were selected and then divided into two groups of 15 (experimental and control).

**Children's Anxiety Scale (CAS):** The instrument was designed by Spence in Australia in 1997 to assess the anxiety of children aged 8-15 years based on the DSM-IV diagnostic and statistical classification. The Spence questionnaire has two versions of the child (with 45 items) and the parents (with 38 items). In the present study, the reliability of this scale was 0.90 using Cronbach's alpha.

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Intervention sessions in the welfare organization were held for 13 sessions of 90 minutes and two sessions a week. This intervention is designed based on the five-step integrated method of Emunah (1999).

### Results

The results show that the difference between the pretest-posttest scores of the experimental and control groups is significant for the anxiety variable ( $p \leq 0.05$ ,  $F=39.9$ ). Therefore, the obtained results indicate the effect of drama therapy on reducing the anxiety of the experimental group. Also, the difference between the pre-test and follow-up scores of the experimental and control groups is significant for the anxiety variable ( $p \leq 0.05$ ,  $F=18.377$ ). Therefore, the results indicate the effect of drama therapy on reducing the anxiety of the experimental group.

### Conclusion

One of the most important problems in today's world is the issue of labor children. Psychological problems of these children, especially high anxiety, are among the factors that make these children more vulnerable. Accordingly, the drama therapy method is effective in reducing the anxiety of labor children. Drama therapy seems to be able to reduce the anxiety of labor children by using techniques such as characterization, role play, pantomime, etc. It seems that changes in cognitive insight, establishing a link between consciousness and unconsciousness, direct and indirect training of coping strategies with anxiety, self-awareness, real-world experience in a safe environment, and refining and suppressing repressed and hidden negative emotions are among the reasons for reducing anxiety and stability of treatment. The results of comparing the control and experimental groups in a one-month follow-up show that the difference between the experimental group and the control group has been stable over time. drama therapy can be considered as a sustainable therapy in reducing the anxiety of labor children, and therefore, the condition should be provided for the use of these methods to reduce the anxiety of labor children.

**Keywords:** Labor children, Drama therapy, Anxiety

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