

The effects of narrative therapy based on cognitive-behavioral perspective on symptoms of depression and dysthymic disorders in children

Fatemeh Shahabizadeh*
Fatemeh Khajeamani**

Introduction

One of the common psychiatric disorders in childhood and teenage age group is depression; therefore, the use of therapeutic measures to increase the participatory motivation of children with depression disorder is necessary. On the other hand, children's cognitive and linguistic limitations and their low motivation to participate in the process increase the importance of narrative therapy as a useful method in counseling and treatment. Thus, this study was conducted to evaluate the efficacy of narrative therapy based on cognitive behavioral approach in depression symptoms and dysthymic disorders of primary school children.

Method

Research method: This is an experimental method with pretest-posttest control group design.

Population: The population consisted of all third and fourth grade girls with depression disorders in Yazd city during the school years of 2013 to 2014.

Sampling method: In this research, the available sampling method was used due to some problems which collaboration of some school teachers and parents. An elementary school in Yazd was selected from a list of all elementary schools. In a meeting with parents of third and fourth grade students, the parent form of CSI-4 (Children Symptom Inventory) was completed by 110 parents. Ninety questionnaires were returned. Twenty six students were identified with depression symptoms and high depressed mood by the parents, and they were

* Assistant professor, department of psychology, Birjand branch, Islamic Azad University, Birjand, Iran. *Corresponding Author:* f_shahabizadeh@yahoo.com

** Master of clinical psychology, Birjand branch, Islamic Azad University, Birjand, Iran.

selected according to the criteria of the questionnaire. Then, they were randomly assigned to experimental and control groups.

Instruments

The instrument used in this study was Children Symptom Inventory (CSI-4), the parent form. The Children Symptom Inventory (CSI-4) is a common screening tool for psychiatric disorders, based on diagnostic and statistical guidelines for mental disorders for screening 18 behavioral and emotional disorders in children aged 5 to 12 years old. These disorders include Hyperactive Disorder (AD/HD), Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD), Conduct Disorder (CD), Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD), Social Phobia (SP), Separation Anxiety Disorder (SAD), Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD), Special Phobia (SI), Major Depression Disorder (MDD), Dysthymia, Schizophrenia (SC), Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PPD), Asperger and Vocal and Motorcycle Tick (Sprafkin, Gadow, Salisbury and Loney, 2002). In the present study, the scales of major depression and dysthymia were studied.

Kind of intervention

Narrative therapy based on cognitive behavioral perspective was conducted on the experimental group for 12 sessions, each lasting 45 minutes. Also, the data were analyzed using the analysis of covariance. In the narrative therapy sessions, the main axis of the story was focused on self-awareness skills, identifying inefficient thoughts, problem-solving skills, relaxation education, positive reinforcement, positive self-esteem training, anger control, and identifying the positive and negative emotions of children. Moreover, in order to increase the level of attention and motivation in children, complementary activities, including playing and painting, were also used. The structure of narrative therapy sessions was designed based on the Meichenbaum cognitive approach.

Results

The results of covariance analysis showed that narrative therapy based on cognitive behavioral perspective has significantly reduced the high and mild depressed students' mood.

Conclusion

Based on the results of this study, narrative therapy, as an effective method, can be used to reduce the symptoms of depression in children.

Keywords: narrative therapy, cognitive-behavioral, symptoms depression, dysthymic disorder, primary school girls