



A Study on the Impact of Self-designed Counselling module for developing Psychological Hardiness in order to Reduce Self-harming Behavior among Youth

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ABSTRACT

Psychological hardiness refers to a personality trait which is allied with an individual's ability to manage and counter stressful life events using coping tactics that holds the potential to change uncertain circumstances into budding opportunities. It is described by a tendency to be intensely involved, a need to be in control and a desire to discover from one's life events despite of the outcomes. In present times, people who lack psychological hardiness or resilience are suffering from a lot of mental health issues such as stress, anxiety disorders, depression, fear, phobias, overthinking, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anger issues, frustration, borderline personality disorder (BPD), insomnia etc. which ultimately direct them to harm or hurt themselves (self harming behavior) since they are unaware about productive ways of venting out their feelings and emotions. As a result, there arises an absolute need to find out ways to develop resilient skills so that he/she can face life situations, reduce self harming behavior and gain courage and confidence in their life. The purpose of current research was to study the effect of developing psychological hardiness to reduce the acts of self harming behavior among young individuals. A standardized inventory namely Psychological Hardiness Scale, having 12 items, developed by Kobasa S.C. & Maddi S.R. (1982) was used which is possessing high reliability and validity. The test was conducted on 30 young adults of Delhi city suffering from the issues of self harming behavior. Appropriate techniques of counseling were applied during intervention. Pre & Post testing was conducted. It was found that people who were given psychological counseling developed a higher level of psychological hardiness amongst them. This research study is found to be exclusive and quite useful for reducing self harming behavior among young adults.

Keywords : Psychological Hardiness, Self Harming Behavior, Resilience, Potential, Opportunities.

Introduction

Hardiness

Hardiness is an attribute of personality that is linked with an individual's ability to handle and act in response to stressful life events with coping strategies that turn potentially adverse circumstances into favorable learning opportunities. It is characterized by a propensity to be intensely involved, a need to be in control and a wish to learn from life's events despite of the result. It is the ability of an individual to combat stress. Kobasa (1979) defined hardiness in terms of more explicit dimensions of control, dedication and challenge the characteristics that may persuade both cognitive appraisal & behavior in response to demanding stressful events.

Maddi and Kobasa (1984) believed that the establishment of an individual's ability to effectively cope with stress and stay healthy is personality style, which they termed as "Hardiness". Psychologically "hardy" individuals have a unusual view of themselves and of the world.

Psychological Hardiness

Psychological hardiness refers to the approach, attitude and expertise that allow an individual to make stressful situations become opportunities for development (Maddi, 2007). It is an idea that deserves in-depth research, since it reflects the extent to which individuals deal with different kinds of feelings in different situations.

Hardiness alternatively referred to as psychological, personality or cognitive hardiness in the literature, is a personality style initially introduced by Suzanne C. Kobasa (1979).

Self-harming Behavior

Self-harming behavior refers to the circumstances in which an individual attempts to hurt or injure oneself due to constant worry, trauma and anxiety in personal or professional life, regret, remorse, disgrace, embarrassment, failures etc. It consists of 2 types of behaviors: firstly, 'self-harming behavior without suicidal tendencies' which encompasses physically hurting oneself by cutting, intake of drugs, hitting, substance abuse etc. and secondly, 'self-harming behavior with suicidal tendencies' which embraces life threatening behaviors such as rigorous cuts, hanging oneself, jumping off from heights or in water, burning or shooting oneself etc. The earlier behavior gives a sense of gratification and contentment for a short span of time whereas the later behavior leads to fatality or death.

Review of Literature

Narad & Anshu (2018) administered a research study to investigate the psychological hardiness of senior secondary school students and to evaluate its connection with student's house environment. The study incorporated 200 senior secondary school students (100 from Government & 100 from Private schools, out of those 100 students, 50 males & 50 females). The research study revealed that students studying in private schools were found to have higher commitment, control, challenge and psychological hardiness (in total) as compared to their government school students' counterpart. Significant positive relationship was found between psychological hardiness of senior secondary school students and students of house environment.

Desai R. (2017) conducted a research study to know the differences of gender on psychological hardiness amongst college students. The random sampling method was used in this research study. The total sample size constituted of 240 subjects out of which 120 were boys and remaining 120 were girls. Participants were from the various colleges of Rajkot District. Dispositional Resilience Scale (DRS) developed by Bartone (1995), Bartone et al., (1989) which was used to evaluate psychological hardiness among students. The data were examined with the help of t-test. The results showed that there was a significant gender difference on psychological hardiness among college students.

Tantry A. & Singh A. (2016) in their study made an effort to establish the level of psychological hardiness amongst banking sector, education sector, health sector and police related professions of Kashmir valley. For the conduction of study, a sample size of 200 officials (50 subjects from each occupation) was randomly selected. The measure used for data collection was Kobasa S.C. & Maddi S.R. (1982) psychological hardiness scale. The data was analyzed by calculating Mean, SD, t-test, ANOVA & Turkeys Post-Hoc (HSD) test. The results discovered that there was a significant difference in level of psychological hardiness among different professions such as bank, education, police and health.

Chattopadhyay & Biswajit (2013) conducted a retrospective study in Kolkata to draw attention to the different patterns of defense wounds and their incidences among the lethal homicidal victims in relation to their age and sex. This research study affirmed that out of 189 homicidal deaths during 5-year time of study, safeguard wounds were noted in 90 cases. A huge portion of the injuries were supported by males in the age of 30-44 years. Imprinted injuries (52.2%) were the most eminent sort of safeguard wounds followed by slash wounds and scraped spots. In 70% of cases the wounds were on one side of the body, the left side being more normal. The lower arm and the hand were the most affected body parts.

Mathis, Michele, Lecci, & Len (1999) inspected whether hardiness can be used in identifying students who were having difficulties with academic, social, emotional and affection related modifications. Outcomes showed that hardiness on the whole was a better predictor of mental health rather than physical health.

As per the research conducted by Florian, Mikulincer & Taubman (1995), hardiness has been anticipated to safeguard the physical & psychological effects of stress on the body and was derived from the existential concept of a genuine personality. The research supported the idea that hardiness contributed to mental health with the help of coping and appraisal mechanisms.

According to Kobasa, S.C. (1982), individuals with high levels of hardiness be likely to put demanding circumstances into perspective and understand them in a less intimidating manner. As an end result of these optimistic appraisals, the impact of the stressful events is reduced and they have less probability to pessimistically or negatively affect the health of an individual.

Objectives

Following are the objectives designed for current research study:

- To study psychological hardiness among youth suffering from self-harming behavior.

- To see the effect of psychological counseling techniques for reducing self-harming behavior among youth.

Hypotheses

“There is a significant effect of psychological counseling module on enhancing psychological hardiness.”

“There is a significant effect of psychological counseling module on reducing self-harming behavior among youth.”

Test Description

For the assessment of self-harming behavior, Inventory for statements about Self-Injury (ISAS) developed by E. David Klonsky & Catherine R. Glenn was taken into account which is a measure designed to comprehensively assess the functions of non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI). The ISAS assesses 13 functions of NSSI, as well as the frequency of 12 NSSI behaviors.

For the assessment of psychological hardiness, Kobasa S.C. & Maddi S.R. (1982), psychological hardiness scale was used. The scale consists of 2 sections i.e. section A and B, sections A consists of 1-14 items each having 4 options which measures commitment and sections B of 15-20 items each having 2 options which measure commitment hardiness.

Methodology

Locale

The locale of the present research is the city of New Delhi.

Sample

The selected sample size of the present study consisted of 30 young adults purposively selected from mental health professionals (private practice) of New Delhi.

Method of Data Collection

Prior consent was taken from the selected participants regarding the tests to be conducted. After rapport establishment, they were told about the purpose of the research. They were assured that their responses will be kept confidential and will be used for research purpose only.

Initially, the purposively selected students (30) were given the test of Inventory for statements about Self-Injury (ISAS). On finding that they were having high scores on ISAS scale were then given Psychological Immunity System Inventory (PISI) in order to know the state of their psychological immune levels during pre testing. After giving necessary instructions about the conduction of the tests, participants have completed the test in given time and scoring was done as per the manual.

Afterwards, all the selected participants were prepared for psychological counseling and subsequently a self-designed ‘counseling module’ comprises of psychological counseling techniques were given as an intervention and their post effects were noted based on post testing.

Counselling Module



The Counseling module has been explained using an acronym named ‘**COUNSEL**’.

C - Controlling the emotions

In this, the individual is taught to identify the thoughts and resultant emotions and just control the negative ones which are forcing you to take any undesirable actions. Mere identifying and controlling them develops an insight manage one's emotions.

O - Opposing the threats

When an individual is aware about his/her negative or maladaptive thoughts and emotions, it has now been taught to oppose what he/she feels threatening or harming for oneself. Whenever any such thought or feeling arises, divert oneself and reach out for help immediately to nullify them.

U - Understanding the consequences of your act

In this step, an individual has been made aware about the importance of understanding the result of what he/she is doing or about to do. Once the intimidating consequences are being informed, the person automatically reduces it out of fear of pain or other losses etc.

N - Neutralizing the stressors

When a person is well aware about the problematic behavior and its consequences, it is now vital to neutralize it so that whenever any such thought or feeling arises, the individual should have all the possible techniques such as deep breathing, backward counting, rubberband techniques, water technique, journaling etc. to nullify that momentary thought and reduces the act of self-harming.

S - Supervising your routine activities

Now, the individual is been taught about how to keep a check over one's routine activities, thoughts and behaviors, so that the negative ones can be clocked out and can be replaced with few productive ones to ultimately stop self-harming.

E - Eliminating negative thoughts

Another important act taught to a person is to eradicate all the negative thoughts and emotions and start with small ones, he/she is been asked to reduce one thought every day so that he/she can steadily eliminate all such harmful ones.

L - Learning new ways to express emotions

Finally, after practicing all the above practices, the individual was asked to opt a more creative and productive way to vent out his/her emotions in order to reduce suppressing one's thoughts as well as the self-harming behavior.

Statistical Techniques

The major statistical technique applied in the current research is T-test (which was applied with the help of mean, standard deviation) and the analysis was conducted in SPSS (Statistical Packages for Social Sciences), version 21.0.

Analysis of Result and Discussion

Table no. 1
Comparing Pre and Post scores for Self-Harming behavior

| | | Self-Harming behavior |
|------------------------|-------------|------------------------------|
| Pre | Mean | 59.45 |
| | S.D. | 6.24 |
| | N | 20 |
| Post | Mean | 46.25 |
| | S.D. | 6.30 |
| | N | 20 |
| Mean Difference | | -13.20 |
| t | | 76.888 |
| p value | | 0.000 |

Table no. 1 shows the comparison between pre and post scores for self-harming behavior. The pre scores for mean and standard deviation (SD) were found to be 59.45 and 6.24 and post scores for mean and standard deviation (SD) were found to be 46.25 and 6.30. The mean difference was found to be -13.20 and the 't' score was 76.888 which was significant at 0.01 level ($p < 0.01$). It infers that there is significant difference between the scores of self-harming behavior (Pre-Post testing). It infers that psychological counseling module is successful in reducing self-harming behavior among young adults.

Table no. 2
Comparing Pre and Post for Psychological Hardiness

| | | Control | Commitment | Challenge | Hardiness |
|------------------------|-------------|----------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Pre | Mean | -2.60 | -0.95 | -0.65 | -4.20 |
| | S.D. | 1.88 | 1.00 | 1.46 | 3.00 |
| | N | 20 | 20 | 20 | 20 |
| Post | Mean | 2.50 | 2.75 | 2.25 | 7.50 |
| | S.D. | 0.83 | 1.33 | 1.16 | 1.47 |
| | N | 20 | 20 | 20 | 20 |
| Mean Difference | | 5.10 | 3.70 | 2.90 | 11.70 |
| t | | 11.129 | 11.103 | 8.961 | 16.283 |
| p value | | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 |

Table no. 2 depicts that there are majorly three factors forming Hardiness i.e. *Control*, *Commitment* and *Challenge*. Therefore, the pre and post testing scores of each factor individually as well as pre and post factors of overall Hardiness has been shown.

For *Control*, the pre scores for mean and standard deviation (SD) were found to be -2.60 and 1.88 and post scores for mean and standard deviation (SD) were found to be 2.50 and 0.83. The mean difference was found to be 5.10 and the 't' score was 11.129 which was significant at 0.01 level ($p < 0.01$). It infers that psychological or mental control over oneself has been clearly increased which also shows that appropriate counseling tools and techniques sounds quite supportive in increasing the controlling authority of an individual.

For *Commitment*, the pre scores for mean and standard deviation (SD) were found to be -0.95 and 1.00 and post scores for mean and standard deviation (SD) were found to be 2.75 and 1.33. The mean difference was found to be 3.70 and the 't' score was 11.103 which was significant at 0.01 level ($p < 0.01$). It infers that the commitment levels for initiating and accomplishing a given task visibly increased and this too depicts that counseling module is turn out to be helpful in realizing the significance of commitment and consistency.

For *Challenge*, the pre scores for mean and standard deviation (SD) were found to be -0.65 and 1.46 and post scores for mean and standard deviation (SD) were found to be 2.25 and 1.16. The mean difference

was found to be 2.90 and the 't' score was 8.961 which was significant at 0.01 level ($p < 0.01$). It infers that the positive spirit to challenge one's own limits, pushing them to excel and taking challenges in sporting manner also enhanced and this also infers that suitable counseling helps in maintaining one's enthusiasm and fighting spirit.

For **Hardiness**, the pre scores for mean and standard deviation (SD) were found to be -4.20 and 3.00 and post scores for mean and standard deviation (SD) were found to be 7.50 and 1.47. The mean difference was found to be 11.70 and the 't' score was 16.283 which was significant at 0.01 level ($p < 0.01$). It infers that since all the 3 factors have shown a positive effect, therefore the overall hardiness in an individual also give evidence for improvement and enrichment after application of psychological counseling module.

Conclusion

From the above acknowledged result and discussion, it can be concluded that application of '**psychological counseling module**' comprises of several guidance and counseling tools and techniques was found to be an efficient treatment technique not only for reducing the levels of self-harming behavior but also act as an aid in increasing the levels of psychological hardiness and ultimately provides a valid support to fight against self-harming behavior & develop one's will to live.

Consequently, on the basis of the analysis of results, the hypotheses, "*There is a significant effect of psychological counseling module on enhancing psychological hardiness.*" and "*There is a significant effect of psychological counseling module on reducing self-harming behavior among youth.*" are **accepted**.

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